

Clinton Neighborhood Focus Area Action Plan



Introduction:

A Focus Area Plan is an important neighborhood revitalization strategy within the City of Lincoln which concentrates resources in small areas (12 to 30 blocks). This strategy was developed to achieve significant results in three to five years, encourage private investment and increase confidence in the area.

To become a Focus Area, a neighborhood must:

- be located in a low to moderate income area,
- show signs of decline, such as deterioration of housing or public facilities,
- have a neighborhood association that wants to have a Focus Area and is committed to working with the City to make improvements,
- be a visible area, near busy streets, public institutions (such as schools) or commercial areas, and
- be identified as an area of concern by other city departments.



Lintel City Park north of Holdrege at 20th Street.



Clinton Elementary School at Holdrege and 29th Streets.

In the Clinton Neighborhood, the Antelope Valley Design Team worked with the Clinton Neighborhood Advisory Group to determine the focus area. The southwest quadrant of Clinton was chosen as a Focus Area due to its proximity to the Antelope Valley Major Investment Study and because of the encroachment of commercial and industrial uses into the nearby residential areas. This quadrant was further divided into an east and west area because the problems facing these areas were distinct and required separate analysis. Strategies were developed to deal with these issues and are summarized in an Action Plan for the area. This is essentially a “blueprint” for revitalization for the next three to five years.

The strategies for the Clinton neighborhood, including two maps, are presented within this Focus Area Action Plan.

Acknowledgments:

The Clinton Neighborhood Association,
City of Lincoln's Department of Urban
Development, The Antelope Valley Design
Team, and the Clinton Advisory Group.

November, 1998



New duplexes located near 29th and Hitchcock Streets.

Clinton Neighborhood History

According to a 1979 Clinton Neighborhood Design Plan prepared by the City of Lincoln and Urban Development, Clinton was originally settled from 1864 to 1879 by settlers who either purchased land from the U. S. Government or acquired land by farming under the Homestead Act. The proximity of Clinton to the newly designated State Capitol encouraged early development of the land. By 1897, the entire Clinton area had been annexed into the City of Lincoln.

Many of Clinton's streets including Potter, Sheldon, Leighton, Baldwin, Merrill and Hitchcock were named after early settlers. The name 'Clinton' is thought to have come from McClintock, an early settler in

the area. As early as the 1880's, Clinton was served by horse-drawn street cars. The University Place trolley later ran along 27th to Holdrege Street making Holdrege a primary link between Lincoln and the communities of University Place and Havelock. Holdrege Street became an attractive location for residences. Today, many of Clinton's finest older homes are still located along Holdrege Street.



Industrial sites on northern edge near 28th and Merrill Streets.

The University of Nebraska has affected Clinton's growth as well. The University's City Campus, originally located at

11th and R Streets, grew to the north and the east. It currently extends to 19th and Holdrege Streets where it forms the western boundary of the Clinton neighborhood. To the east is UNL's East Campus, originally known as the Agriculture College, for which land was first purchased in 1894 and which forms the eastern boundary of the neighborhood. Today, Clinton lies between the two campuses. This proximity to UNL has made Clinton a convenient location for students.



An older home in focus area in need of repair.

The railroad has also had an effect on the development and growth of the Clinton neighborhood. Railroads border the Clinton neighborhood on three sides. Typically, industry locates adjacent to the railroads and Clinton followed this pattern. This early industrial development helped identify Clinton as a working class area. Industrial development continued into the 1950's with grain storage elevators constructed along the Burlington Northern Railroad line. Many of the early industries are still operating in Clinton today. Recently, a new influx of industry

to the southwest quadrant has taken place as several small industrial companies have taken advantage of available land in the industrial zones. Some of this land was previously residential in use, and the transition has destabilized the adjacent residential areas.

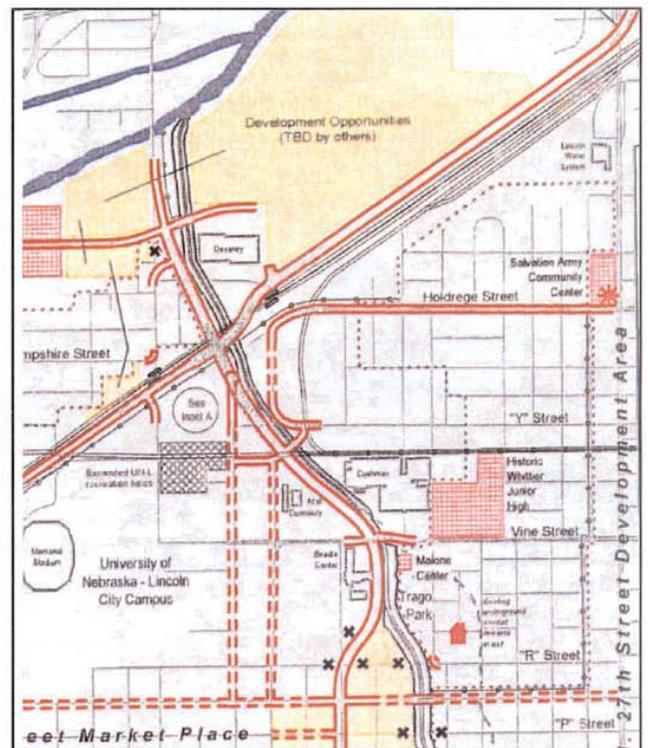
During recent history, a failed plan to create a Northeast Radial corridor changed the physical nature of the western and northern boundaries. Although the plan was defeated in a City vote, many properties were already purchased by the City and removed. Most of these vacant lots were restored to residential use, but others were used for an extension of the Lincoln bike trail network. The John Dietrich Trail was created on part of this land.

Antelope Valley Major Investment Study

The Antelope Valley Major Investment Study is a three-year study to address storm water management, transportation and community revitalization in the core of the city. The impacts to the Clinton neighborhood of the Antelope Valley Plan include a proposed six lane roadway that would extend north-south along the west boundary of the neighborhood, an open channel which would minimize the chance of flooding in the southwest corner of the neighborhood, and a neighborhood revitalization plan. A community wrap-around center is being considered at the current Salvation Army location at 27th and Clinton Streets. A new Police substation is planned for the corner of Holdrege and 27th Streets. Several bike routes are being considered, including an expansion of the MoPac Trail which currently ends near 33rd and Apple Streets, as well as connections of this trail to UNL City Campus and to the John Dietrich Trail from the north.

The Focus Area

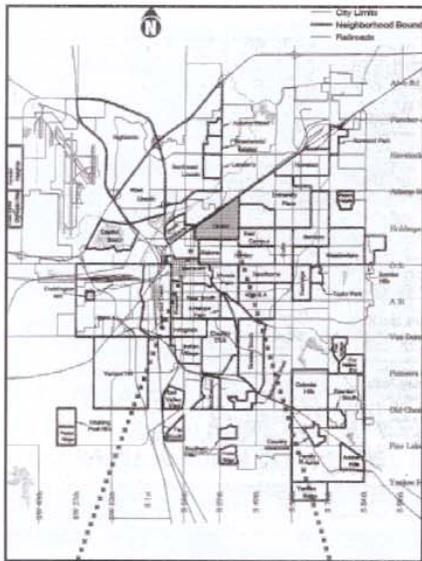
The Focus Area was determined by the Clinton Neighborhood Advisory Group working in conjunction with the Antelope Valley Design Team. Considering current problems facing the neighborhood and the impacts of the Antelope Valley Major Investment Study on the Clinton neighborhood, the southwest quadrant of the neighborhood was selected as a Focus Area.



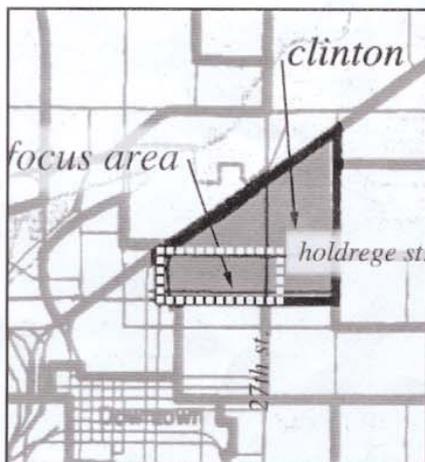
Antelope Valley Major Investment Study map.

The southwest quadrant will be directly affected by the Antelope Valley Major Investment Study which includes a proposal for a new six lane road and an open channel to cross the southwest corner of the quadrant. This will cause changes in the traffic patterns of this quadrant and the removal of flood plain areas, which historically have been a barrier to development.

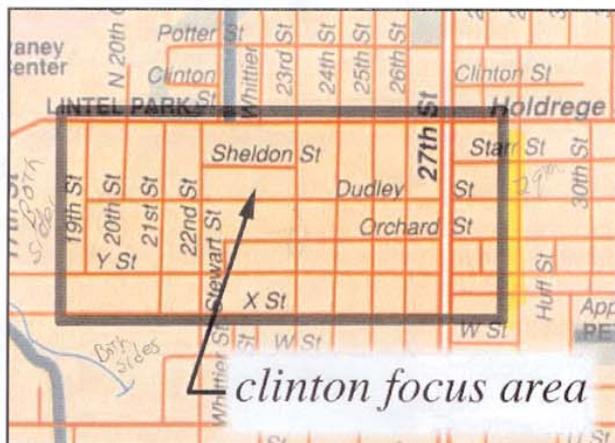
The Clinton Neighborhood Advisory Group views the recent encroachment of industrial and commercial uses into the residential areas of the neighborhood as a problem. This encroachment is causing a deterioration of the residential stock. This is believed to cause neglect and abandonment of the neighborhood, resulting in the rise in crime.



Neighborhood within the City.



Focus Area within the Neighborhood.



Focus Area boundaries and streets.

This Action Plan divides the focus area into two distinct areas, the east and the west ends, and outlines an action plan specific for the problems facing each area. The east end of the focus area includes the commercial areas along 27th Street. This area has historically been a place of auto-oriented commercial uses. Recently, the residential units bordering this commercial area are beginning to decline. There is also an increase in crime in this area.

On the west end of the focus area, the property currently in the flood plain will become more attractive to industrial development because of the removal of the threat of flooding. Several homes located in the industrial-zoned areas are being squeezed by industry. Additionally, the boundary between the residential and industrial uses suffers from litter, abandoned and neglected homes, and visual blight.

Land Use and Zoning

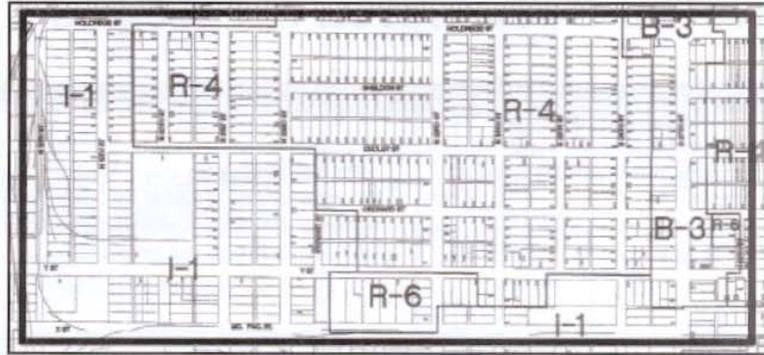
Clinton has a strong industrial tradition and some of the problems facing the focus area are a result of this long tradition. The land along the southern and western edges of the focus area currently has an I-1 zoning. Within this area are residences that are incompatible with the industrial uses.

Adjacent to the I-1 zoning, a residential area of R-4 and R-6 zoning exists. Additionally, along the northwest edge of the focus area are residences which are located within an I-1 zone. These factors create areas not suitable for encouraging owner-occupants and housing renewal. Therefore, it is recommended that the zoning be changed to reflect the actual condition of the properties. The residential areas should be re-zoned as R-4, and a boundary can be drawn which is contiguous with the existing R-4 zone. This would ease pressure on

this area to convert to industrial, and prevent additional industrial development. Additionally, the edge of the zoning transition should be strengthened visually and physically so there is a clear boundary between what is industrial and what is to remain residential.

At the east end of the focus area, the land bordering 27th Street is typically B-3 zoned. The B-3 zone resembles a saw cut as the zoning boundary adjusts to exclude existing residences along 27th Street. Due to the density of traffic currently on 27th Street, the adjacent lots struggle to survive as residential uses. One strategy for the resulting conflicts of these

disparate land uses is to create a highly visible and permanent edge. This edge would communicate a stronger message of separation, and reassure those living along 26th Street, and one block east of 27th Street, that commercial uses will not encroach further into the neighborhood.



Current zoning map of focus area.

Housing Conditions

In the summer of 1998, the Antelope Valley Design Team conducted a Housing Condition Survey of the Focus Area. The housing survey was based on site conditions, as well as obvious structural deficiencies.

There were four categories identified: excellent, good, fair, and poor. Homes were rated for overall appearance. The following questions were asked about each property.

- Was the property well kept, with little or no maintenance needed?
- Did the roof and structure show signs of settlement or damage?
- Was the paint, siding and roofing in good maintenance?
- Was the landscaping kept in good order?

Rating	Owner Occupied Structures		Renter Occupied Structures		All Structures	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Excellent	41	76%	13	24%	54	16%
Good	99	55%	80	45%	179	53%
Fair	32	34%	63	66%	95	28%
Poor	1	12%	7	88%	8	3%
Total	173	52%	163	48%	336	100%

Table A: Housing Conditions; Antelope Valley Design Team, Summer '98.

The results of this survey are listed in Table 'A' on this page. Of all occupied structures, 52% were owner-occupied homes, compared to 48% in use as rentals. In areas where complaints about crime and blight were expressed, the number of rental properties tends to be significantly higher. The table also shows that 60% of properties rated "excellent" or "good" are owner-occupied. And, significantly, 88% of the properties rated "poor" are rental.

In conclusion, a goal of the neighborhood is to attract owner-occupants and to discourage rental property. Additionally, several of the blocks with the highest percentage of rental property are along the boundaries of the industrial and commercial zones. Creating permanent boundaries between zoning districts may ease the apprehension new owners have about purchasing and living on these blocks.

Neighborhood Priorities

Based upon an analysis of the neighborhood and goals identified by the Clinton Neighborhood Advisory Group, this Action Plan identifies specific strategies for neighborhood improvements. The following two pages outline Focus Area Strategies and identify an implementation schedule for each strategy. The actions have been prioritized, based upon neighborhood organization voting. Those actions with a ranking of 1 have the highest priority and those with 5 have the lowest.

Clinton Focus Area Strategies

Residential Goals	Actions	Priority	Schedule	Implementation
* Rehabilitate existing housing stock.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide funding for major rehabilitation of owner-occupied homes and rental units. • Provide funding for minor rehabilitation of owner-occupied and rental units. 	1	1999 - onward	Urban Development
* Assist with improvements of residential exterior sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide funding for removal of dangerous secondary structures and trees. 	4	1999 - onward	Urban Development
* Increase the number of owner occupied dwellings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage investor-owners to sell to owner-occupants and provide funding for the purchase and rehabilitation of single family rental units by owner-occupants. 	1	Ongoing	Urban Development, Neighborhoods Inc., Heart of Lincoln
* Infill vacant residential land with new or relocated housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage development of new contextual housing and provide funding to relocate existing housing to more appropriate locations. 	5	Ongoing	Urban Development, Habitat for Humanity

Commercial/Industrial Goals	Actions	Priority	Schedule	Implementation
* Improve condition of commercial and industrial structures and sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage building owners to maintain property and provide proper screening and landscaping. • Report zoning violations to Building and Safety, monitor sites for compliance. • Encourage voluntary clean up. 	3	2000 - onward	Neighborhood & City
* Reduce land use conflicts where possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider relocation of existing housing in areas zoned commercial or industrial. • Modify existing zoning boundaries to better reflect residential and industrial areas. 	3	2001- onward	City

Crime and Security Goals	Actions	Priority	Schedule	Implementation
* Improve the security of the residences and properties in the focus area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess lighting needs for apartment parking areas, alleys and sidewalks, and make appropriate recommendations for additional street lighting. • Encourage neighbors to report criminal activity to police and start neighborhood watches. • Improve police involvement with neighborhood association. 	1	1999 - onward	Neighborhood, City & Civic Groups

Infrastructure Goals	Actions	Priority	Schedule	Implementation
* Improve deteriorated sidewalks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair and replace sidewalks, currently in progress through the Public Works Dept. 	3	1999 - onward	City

Infrastructure Goals (cont.)				
* Improve deteriorated alleys.	• Complete alley graveling currently in progress through the Public Works Dept.	4	1999 - onward	City
* Improve curbs and gutters.	• Complete repairs of curbs and gutters currently in progress through the Public Works Dept.	5	1999 - onward	City

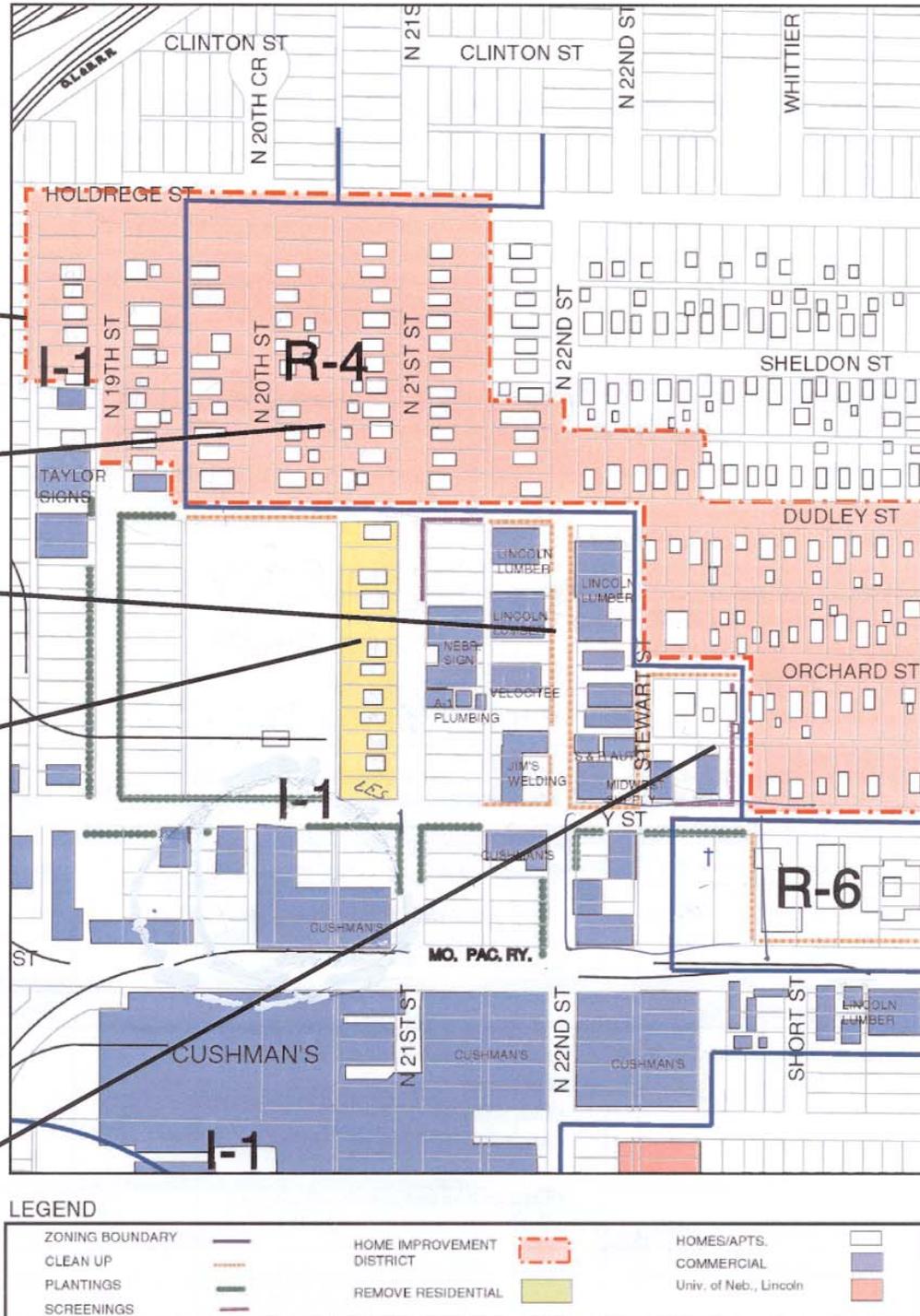
Environment Goals	Actions	Priority	Schedule	Implementation
* Remove, replace and trim street trees.	• Establish types of trees (including flowering trees) and replacement schedule; and establish tree trimming schedule.	4	2000 - onward	City
	• Provide financial assistance to property owners for tree management & maintenance activities.	3	1999 - onward	Urban Development & Neighborhood
* Clear alleys and other public right of way of overgrown vegetation, volunteer trees, etc.	• Report noncompliance to the proper authorities. • Encourage neighbors to keep surveillance on offensive properties.	2	1999 - 2001	Neighborhood & City
* Abate solid waste problems including junk cars, garbage, litter, porch couches, junk tires, etc.	• Establish amnesty day for junk cars and other solid wastes, if none exists. • Establish litter clean up program. • Encourage renters to clean up their property, too. • Initiate ordinance requiring garbage service for all rental properties.	2	1999 - 2001	Neighborhood & City
* Improve landscaping in commercial & industrial areas, especially where adjacent to residential areas.	• Encourage landscaping of apartments as well as single family residences. • Develop buffering for industrial property for areas visible from residential areas.	3	1999 - onward	Neighborhood & City
* Improve unpaved driveways.	• Develop driveway paving program and work with Public Works to install concrete drive aprons.	5	1999 - onward	City

Transportation Goals	Actions	Priority	Schedule	Implementation
* Increase bike paths.	• Extend bike path north & south along 26th St. from Holdrege to Vine St. • Link bike paths to University. • Add additional bike/pedestrian crossings on 27th St. • Enhance bike trail at west end of Focus Area.	4	Ongoing	City
* Reduce traffic on Holdrege St.	• Work with Antelope Valley Major Investment Study to ensure this goal is achieved.	3	Ongoing	City

West End Focus Area Strategy

Goal: The West Focus Area Strategy is to improve the separation of the industrial uses and the residential uses. This can be accomplished by these actions:

- Create green buffers where visual blight exists.
- Screen storage and parking areas with opaque fencing or landscaping.
- Revise the zoning boundary to reflect current conditions.
- Create a residential improvement district adjacent to industrial areas.
- Remove trash and overgrowth, keep area clean of industrial debris.
- Remove or relocate homes within industrial zoning.
- Enhance or expand bike trails to further connect the focus area to other parts of the city.
- Improve and repair curbs, streets, and alleys.
- Screen industrial from residential with opaque fencing and landscaping.





A residence surrounded by industrial uses.



An unscreened parking area adjacent to a residential area.



An unscreened industrial storage area adjacent to a residential area.

The strategy proposed for the west end of the focus area identifies the desire to create better definition between residential and industrial uses. Based upon evaluations by the Clinton Neighborhood Advisory Group, it was determined that issues identified on the facing page collectively improve the neighborhood.

Currently, the west end area is a mixture of residential and industrial uses. One major problem identified is that several residences are located within industrial zoned areas. This strategy proposes that either zoning is modified to better coincide with existing residences or residences are removed or relocated wherever possible to alleviate this undesirable mixture.

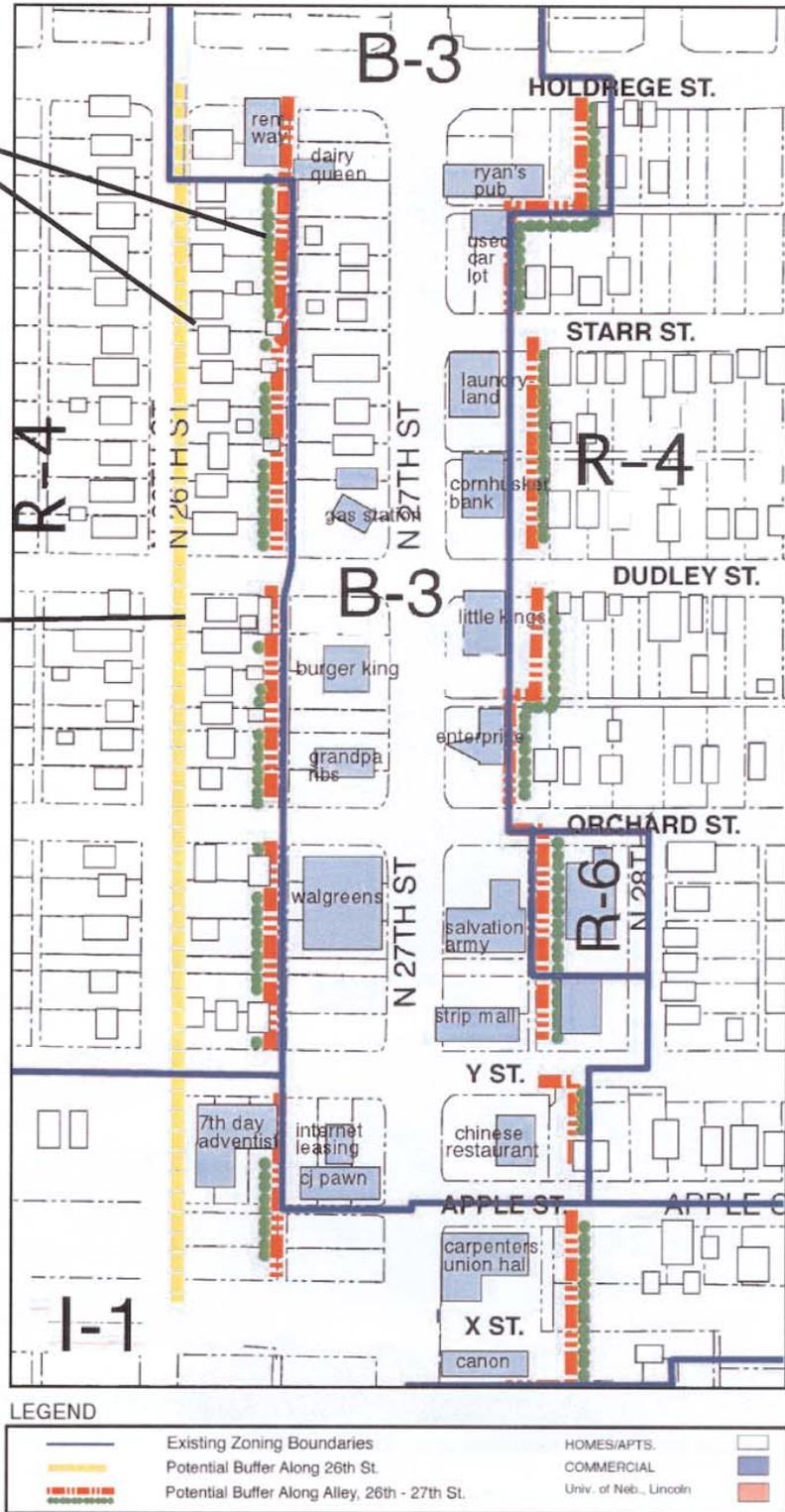
This strategy also proposes that the neighborhood work closely with local businesses and city officials to develop better trash removal, screening and maintenance policies for businesses, especially where they abut residential areas. Exterior improvements of businesses will greatly enhance the visual relationship between the two uses.

Another major component of the west end strategy is to concentrate available funds toward the enhancement of residential properties. Funds made available for home improvements such as painting, roofing, porches, various facade repairs, and landscaping enable significant improvement to occur in a concentrated area.

East End Focus Area Strategy

Goal: The east focus area strategy is to improve the separation between the commercial and the residential uses. This can be accomplished by these actions:

- Create green buffers where visual blight exists, either at 26th Street or at the alley between 26th & 27th.
- Screen parking lots with berms, fences, and landscaping.
- Remove trash and overgrowth; keep area clean of commercial debris.
- Create new bike trail along the alley or 26th Street to connect Holdrege to Vine Street, and to the proposed overpass at the MoPac location.
- Improve and repair curbs, streets, and alleys.
- Provide funds to enhance residential properties along 26th Street and improve landscaping.
- Increase setback requirements between residential and commercial properties for future development.



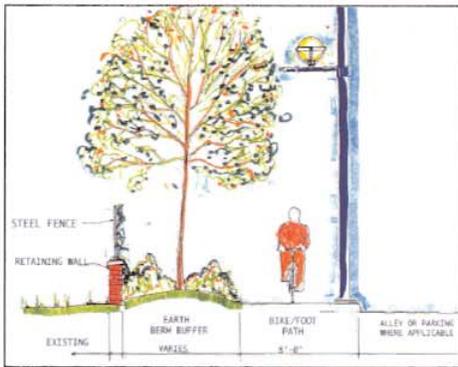


Figure A: Bike path along alley creates pleasant and highly visual boundary between commercial and residential.

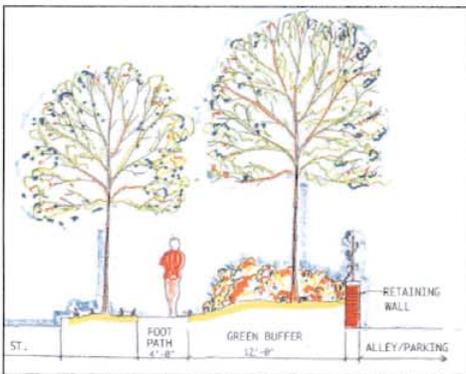


Figure B: Berms and green buffers shield neighborhood from commercial views.

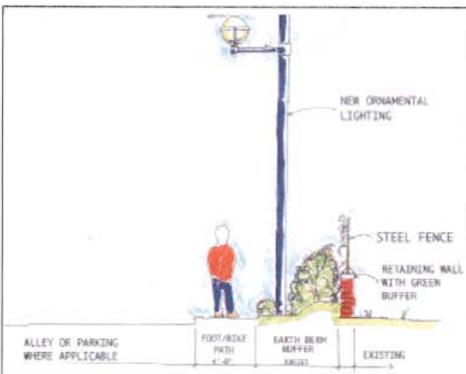


Figure C: West side foot path with wall, landscaping, and new lighting.

The strategy proposed for the east end of the focus area identifies the desire to create a buffer between the commercial areas along 27th Street and the residential areas along 26th and 28th Streets. Based upon evaluation by the Clinton Neighborhood Advisory Group, it was determined that two buffer concepts are to be considered. One concept is to develop a buffer in the alleys between 26th and 27th Streets and between 27th and 28th Streets. A second concept is to create the buffer along 26th street rather than in the alley.

The map on the facing page indicates current zoning boundaries with a solid blue line. On the west side of 27th Street, the zoning boundary runs along the alley between 26th and 27th Streets, dividing the block into commercial development on the east and residential development along the west. Given this existing boundary, one proposal is to develop a buffer area in the alley between 26th and 27th Streets to exist concurrently with the present zoning boundary. As shown in Figure 'A', this proposed buffer in the alley might include a pedestrian/bike path, enhanced landscaping with trees, berms and plantings, and an ornamental continuous fence or wall. This proposal would establish a distinct edge for commercial development and enhance the views for residences along the west side of the alley. This would also visually strengthen the edge for the residential area giving residents added interest in improving their properties, with the confidence that this area would remain residential. This buffer would also provide a safer pedestrian/bike path along 27th Street.

A second alternative is to create a buffer area along the east side of 26th Street rather than in the alley. Some believe that businesses along 27th Street need to have the entire block available for development. However, residents are concerned that commercial development expanded to 26th Street will harm the residences west of 26th Street. In an attempt to address both these concerns, the second alternative incorporates a wide, landscaped pedestrian/bike path along the east side of 26th Street. As shown in Figure 'B', this wide buffer area could include trees, plantings, a bike trail, and an ornamental fence or wall. Additionally, any new commercial developments along 27th Street would be required to maintain a wide setback along 26th Street to enable the buffer to be maintained. This 26th Street buffer would provide adequate screening of businesses and would also provide an excellent bike path connecting the John Dietrich Bike Trail at Holdrege to Vine Street at the south end.

Similar to the alley proposal west of 27th Street, Figure 'C' depicts the idea of creating a buffer area east of 27th Street, behind current businesses. This concept again includes an ornamental fencing or wall, landscaping, a pedestrian/bike path and ornamental lighting. Similar to the plans west of 27th Street, this concept provides a buffer for residences east of 27th Street.