

### Near South Neighborhood Association Comments and Requested Changes to LPlan 2040

The draft LPlan 2040 Comprehensive Plan contains many goals and strategies that will benefit not only the Near South and other existing neighborhoods, but the entire community. We are very supportive of the LPlan 2040 goals including: Strong Neighborhoods, Quality Community Services, a Strong Downtown, a Healthy Community, Economic Opportunity, Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability, Historic Preservation, and Urban Design that encourages Walking & Biking.

We respect and appreciate the work that has occurred to prepare the draft plan for public review and comment. For almost 40 years, the Near South Neighborhood Association has been involved in helping guide city plans and policies to help promote, preserve, and grow the Lincoln community. We have been proud to participate in the development of the last four major (10 year) updates to the Lincoln Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan along with the intervening periods of amendment.

The NSNA Board has reviewed both the draft plan and the 8-12-11 recommended changes. NSNA asks that the following changes and additions be forwarded to the Planning Department and Planning Commission for amendment into the LPlan 2040. We feel that these changes will help promote the stated plan goals and help create a stronger, more vibrant community into the future.

### **NSNA recommended changes/additions to LPlan 2040**

*(NOTE: The first four change requests are part of the Planning Department recommended changes dated 8-12-11 and are listed here to indicate NSNA support)*

- 1) **CHANGE:** Insert the phrase “well-designed and appropriately placed” where the plan refers to increasing residential density through infill development. **REASON:** Good design and appropriate placement are the keys to successful infill according to the plan vision. This cannot be overstated and should be reminded in all sections dealing with infill. *(INCLUDED IN PLANNING DEPT RECOMMENDED CHANGES 8-12-11)*
- 2) **CHANGE:** On page 6.10 rename the section heading “Strategies for removing Obstacles for Redevelopment” to “Strategies for encouraging well-designed, appropriately placed redevelopment”. **REASON:** Plan strategies are better understood as goals when stated in the positive. *(INCLUDED IN PLANNING DEPT RECOMMENDED CHANGES 8-12-11)*
- 3) **CHANGE:** On page 6.11 change the bullet that reads “Revise the Zoning Ordinance to provide more flexibility, particularly in older *neighborhoods*” to “Revise the Zoning Ordinance to provide more flexibility, particularly in older *commercial districts*”. **REASON:** We believe this was meant to reference commercial district redevelopment and not residential zoning protections. *(INCLUDED IN PLANNING DEPT RECOMMENDED CHANGES 8-12-11)*
- 4) **CHANGE:** Chapter 7 Neighborhoods & Housing: This chapter needs to include more language that describes community services and policies that protect and support existing neighborhoods. **REASON:** It should be recognized that the vast majority of neighborhood investment and activity will be in maintaining and improving existing houses and properties. *(INCLUDED IN PLANNING DEPT RECOMMENDED CHANGES 8-12-11)*
- 5) **CHANGE:** On page 6.11 change the bullet that reads “Reduce the minimum size for Planned unit Developments...” to “Consider reducing the minimum size for Planned Unit Developments...”. **REASON:** PUD’s can be a very useful tool for redevelopment, but reducing the size needs very careful consideration to avoid issues like spot-zoning, inadequate buffers, and incompatible uses.
- 6) **CHANGE:** Remove the section on page 6.10 (included as reference below) that refers to “Obstacles to Redevelopment”. **REASON:** This section containing solely the comments of “a few developers” is not an appropriate thing to include in a comprehensive plan designed

to represent the vision of the entire community. The 8-12-11 version removes the word “few”, but the lack of counterpoint comments on why neighborhood associations and good zoning are important to the community remains a problem. In addition, while the first four statements about land prices, financing, and incentives speak to general community conditions, the last three statements about zoning and dealing with neighbors and neighborhood associations represent a single-sided negative opinion about the value and legitimacy of neighbors and neighborhood associations. At a minimum, we ask that those bullets be removed. The Planning change dated 8-12-11 attempts to soften the criticism of neighborhoods, but remains unsatisfactory. Overall, it seems like that entire “Obstacles” section could just be removed. The rationale for redevelopment strategies already flows from the plan vision and goals laid out in the preceding chapter(s). **REFERENCE TEXT ON PAGE 6.10: Obstacles to Redevelopment**

*Although there have been a few successful developers pursuing redevelopment projects in Lincoln, most developers choose to do projects on the city’s fringe. A few developers, when asked why they do not do infill or redevelopment projects, responded that:*

*“Land is too expensive in the existing city.”*

*“Land assembly is too expensive and unpredictable.”*

*“Local banks are uncomfortable lending money for that type of development.”*

*“The public process for development and financial incentives (such as Tax Increment Financing) is too long and unpredictable.”*

*“Zoning issues, including parking and setbacks, can be problematic.”*

*“Dealing with existing neighbors and neighborhood associations is unpredictable and time consuming.”*

*“Another challenge for infill and redevelopment projects is the potential for neighborhood opposition. Change can be difficult for older neighborhoods, and without clear design standards, the developer, neighbors, and city officials may have very different visions which can require time-consuming negotiations and public meetings.”*

- 7) **CHANGE:** Replace “1,000 dwelling units” with “Additional dwelling units” where infill units are called for in existing residential neighborhoods. **CHANGE:** Replace the number of new infill dwelling units identified for “Greater Downtown” from 3,000 to 4,000. **REASON:** Calling for 1,000 dwelling units creates an unnecessary pressure on existing neighborhoods. Those units can be better-planned for within the Greater Downtown, while still allowing for infill opportunities within existing neighborhoods. This change accounts for the number of units projected as infill within the planning period, but says market interest will determine the exact number of units placed within existing neighborhoods through ADU’s and other well-designed and appropriately-placed projects. **NOTE:** NSNA supports the Planning department changes dated 8-12-11 to page 7.9 that create more details specific to the additional living units projected as infill to existing neighborhoods, but requests that the text “1,000” be changed to “Additional” for this and other sections.
- 8) **CHANGE:** On page 7.2 under (Neighborhood) Guiding Principles, add three additional bullets:
  - i. Encourage public investment in neighborhood infrastructure and services like parks, pools, libraries, and neighborhood business districts.
  - ii. Policies should continue that support the preservation and enhancement of single family homes and historic properties like landmark districts and down-zonings that have occurred in existing neighborhoods.
  - iii. Promote sustainability and resource preservation by preserving and improving housing in existing neighborhoods.**REASON:** Preserving and improving our

existing housing stock and neighborhood services is one of the best ways to continue to provide housing in our community. In terms of environmental sustainability and resource preservation, the Plan should also recognize that the “greenest” building is very often the one that is already built.

- 9) **CHANGE:** On page 9.8 remove the language that recommends replacing five neighborhood pools with spraygrounds. Change “Evaluate five Neighborhood Pools (air Park, Ballard, Belmont, Eden, and Irvingdale) for major renovation or replacement with a sprayground” to “Evaluate five Neighborhood Pools (air Park, Ballard, Belmont, Eden, and Irvingdale) for major renovation”. Remove “Air Park, Ballard, and Belmont may be considered for replacement with sprayground facilities due to cost recovery.”

**REASON:** Neighborhood pools are a significant asset to neighborhood quality of life and should be maintained and enhanced. Pools offer programming that a sprayground alone cannot: swim safety training, recreation for older kids and adults, and team practice.

NSNA sincerely appreciates the opportunity to continue to participate in the creation of our community vision for the next thirty years. We ask for your consideration and adoption of our recommended changes. With these few amendments, we believe the LPlan 2040 draft plan contains a wealth of exciting goals and strategies that will carry our community forward into the future as a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

William Carver, Near South Neighborhood Association  
President