

THE COMMUNITY PLANNER

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CITY OF LINCOLN
NEBRASKA
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CHANGING OF THE GUARD



Ray Hill is retiring from the Planning Department next month after 37 years of faithful service effective October 15, 2008. Ray can take much of the credit for the national recognition as a well-planned and attractive community that this community has received.

Happy Retirement Ray!!!

Stephen Henrichsen, another veteran of the department with 19 years of experience, is transferring into Ray's position as Manager of the Development Review Division. The division is responsible for maintaining the City and County development regulations and reviewing more than 500 applications each year to annex, rezone, subdivide and develop land.

Downtown and Antelope Valley

On September 8, the City Council approved changes to the City's Zoning Ordinance and Design Standards that will affect development in the downtown and Antelope Valley areas:

- The changes to the Zoning Ordinance involve the extension of B4 (Lincoln Center Business District) zoning to the east into Antelope Valley. The Council also approved modifications to the area's uses, the signs permitted, the maximum height of buildings and the minimum parking required.
- A new section being added to the Design Standards establishes special standards for the arrangement and appearance of buildings and parking areas, both in the traditional downtown and Antelope Valley. Buildings already are subject to special design review in much of these two areas. That includes those in the historic Haymarket district or the State Capitol environs or those requesting financial assistance from the City. These new standards "fill in the blanks" where projects are not already subject to review.



The amendments come at the end of a year-long effort to involve and inform property owners and business interests in these areas. The approved changes were developed jointly by the Planning and Urban Development Departments. For more information, see lincoln.ne.gov (keyword: urban) and click on the "Antelope Valley/Downtown" link.

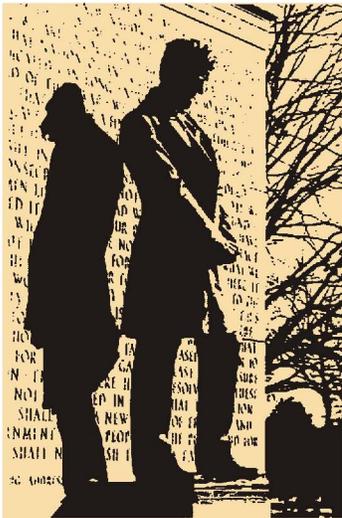
FIXING THE FIXTURES

After a public hearing September 8, the City Council on September 15 approved revised Design Standards for outdoor lighting. The Planning Commission had recommended Council approval August 13. The Commission received support for these proposed changes from representatives of the Neighborhood Alliance, the Lincoln Independence Business Association and local astronomy organizations.

The proposed changes would require those installing new lighting that exceeds a certain brightness to use fixtures that direct the light downward and reduce glare. Special standards would be established for the brightest kinds of night-time environments: vehicle display lots and canopied areas for gas pumps and drive-through banking. Some standards were eliminated because they were not necessary or added to development costs, and some exceptions to the standards have been added. Other changes include the addition of definitions, the clarification of language and the consolidation of all lighting standards in one section.

For more information, click on "Outdoor Lighting Study" on the Planning Web page.





Welcome to **LINCOLN**

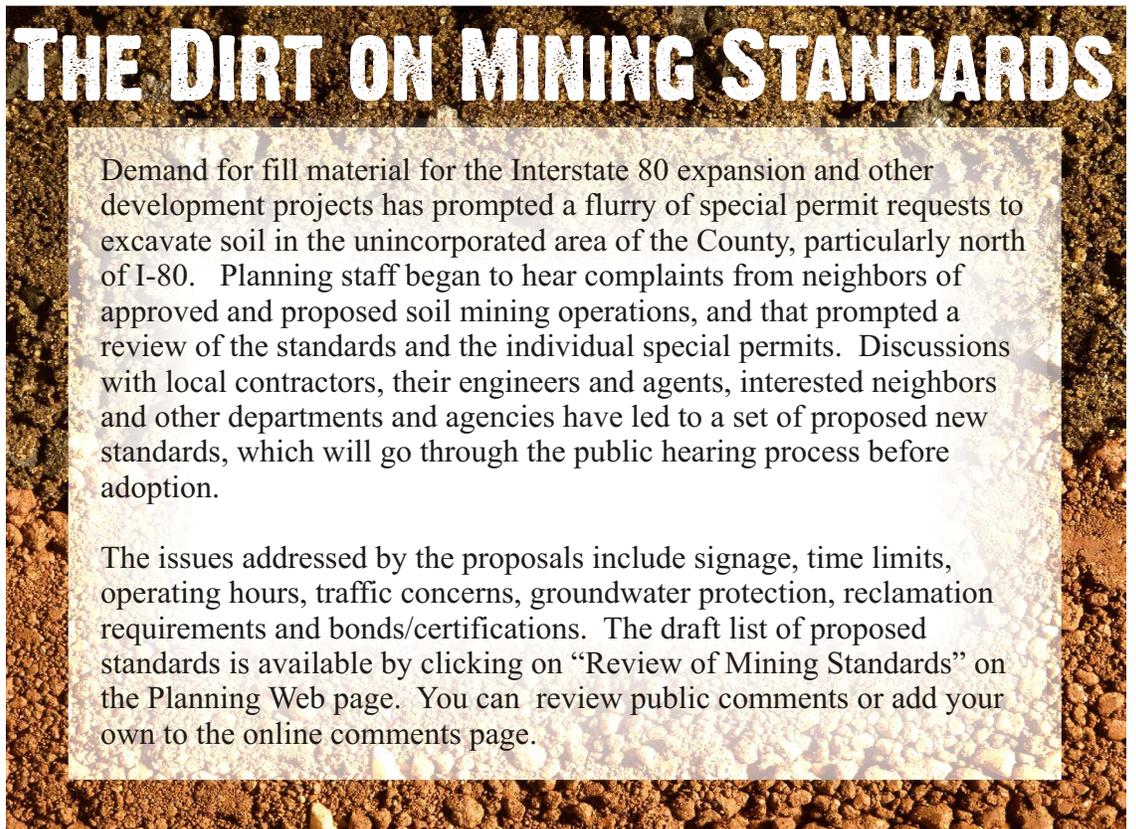
In the 1990s, staff conducted periodic studies to determine what land outside Lincoln's municipal limits had become eligible and appropriate for annexation. The annexation of those property owners was then initiated. Since that time, the City has grown primarily as a result of annexation requested by developers and individual property owners wanting water and sewer lines to be extended to their proposed new subdivisions. City staff determined in a recent study that more than four square miles of land bordering the City limits are now eligible and appropriate for annexation.

The City Council received the study and was briefed on its implications September 8. Planning will send notices to the owners of eligible properties and hold meetings with them September 25 and October 2 to discuss the process of annexation. Public hearings would not be scheduled until early next year. To review the report and the frequently asked questions about annexation, you can click on "Annexation" on Planning's Web page.

BACKYARD WIND FARMING



The City and County zoning codes require that installation of a wind energy conversion system in any zoning district must be approved by special permit. That requires advertisement in the newspaper, written notice to neighbors, sign posting and public hearing(s). Energy costs and environmental concerns are driving the private sector to develop a new generation of smaller, shorter and quieter wind machines that generate energy for individual residences and businesses. To encourage the use of these small machines, the Planning Commission will consider a proposed set of zoning amendments at its September 24 meeting that would allow the installation without the need to obtain special permits in some cases. The special permit would be waived if the wind machines are no taller than the maximum building height allowed in the various zoning districts. Additional information is available by clicking on "Wind Machines" on the Planning Web page.



THE DIRT ON MINING STANDARDS

Demand for fill material for the Interstate 80 expansion and other development projects has prompted a flurry of special permit requests to excavate soil in the unincorporated area of the County, particularly north of I-80. Planning staff began to hear complaints from neighbors of approved and proposed soil mining operations, and that prompted a review of the standards and the individual special permits. Discussions with local contractors, their engineers and agents, interested neighbors and other departments and agencies have led to a set of proposed new standards, which will go through the public hearing process before adoption.

The issues addressed by the proposals include signage, time limits, operating hours, traffic concerns, groundwater protection, reclamation requirements and bonds/certifications. The draft list of proposed standards is available by clicking on "Review of Mining Standards" on the Planning Web page. You can review public comments or add your own to the online comments page.