Business & Commerce

The Comprehensive Plan envisions a healthy expansion in the region's economic foundation during the planning period. Employment growth rates presented earlier in "The Economy" chapter show a sustained increase in jobs across a broad range of economic sectors. Moderate employment shifts away from the community's traditional stalwart public sector will increase the demand for viable commercial and industrial sites. This chapter lays out the Plan's strategy for securing the development of additional commercial and industrial activities.

Commercial Growth Component

Based on the projected sector-by-sector employment growth rates, the Plan identifies the demand for approximately 21.5 million square feet of new space for retail, office, and service uses over the next twenty five years. In general this is split between three major activity categories: retail uses near 7.37 million square feet; office uses at about 6.35 million square feet; and service uses approaching 7.75 million square feet.

A substantial portion of this future commercial capacity will be accommodated on sites identified in past Comprehensive Plans that are not yet developed. The identification of new sites is also necessary for the urban fringe growth areas not included in previous Plans. A strategy for ensuring this additional commercial development – both private and public – is discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

Industrial Growth Component

Industrial employment is also judged as an employment sector with clear growth potential for the city and county. Using the employment projections discussed earlier, the Plan foresees the demand for nearly 2,400 acres of additional industrial property over the planning period. The expressed desire has been to seek locations for future industries on land outside of the 100 year floodplain – areas that have traditionally been sites for such uses.

Commercial and Industrial Development Strategy

The commercial and industrial development strategy presented below seeks to fulfill two notable objectives: (1) the approach is designed to provide **flexibility** to the marketplace in siting future commercial and industrial locations; while at the same time (2) offering neighborhoods, present and future home owners, other businesses, and infrastruc-

ture providers a level of **predictability** as to where such employment concentrations might be located. Balancing these two objectives in a meaningful way will require diligence, mutual understanding, and an ongoing planning dialogue.

The Plan identifies eleven new major industrial and commercial centers in Tier I. However, in the long term new centers should be identified in Tier II in order to facilitate planning in the Tier II area. The general principles for locating new commercial/industrial centers within the city limits, in Tier II, should be identified within the next five years based on the guiding principles of the Plan, such as the impact on the transportation network, financial tax base and utilities. Study the areas in the vicinity of locations such as Highway 77 and South Beltway, Highway 2 and South Beltway, 98th and Highway 6, and Highway 77 and I-80.

General Principles for All Commercial & Industrial Uses

Commercial and industrial districts in Lancaster County shall be located:

- within the City of Lincoln or incorporated villages
- outside of saline wetlands, signature habitat areas, native prairie and floodplain areas (except for areas of existing commercial and industrial zoning)
- where urban services and infrastructure are available or planned for in the near term
- in sites supported by adequate road capacity – commercial development should be linked to the implementation of the transportation plan
- in areas compatible with existing or planned residential uses
- in areas accessible by various modes of transportation (i.e. automobile, transit and pedestrian)
- so that they enhance entryways or public way corridors, when developing adjacent to these corridors
- in a manner that supports the creation and maintenance of green space as indicated in the environmental resources section of this Plan.

Industrial Centers

Industrial areas are divided into two types (1) Moderate to Heavy Industrial Areas and (2) Light Industrial Areas. Each is further described below:

Moderate to Heavy Industrial (HI)

Size

Moderate to Heavy Industrial areas should be over 80 acres in size, with planned industrial centers of over 200 acres preferred.

Description

Moderate to Heavy Industrial areas are primarily for manufacturing, processing and assembly uses such as Goodyear, ADM, and Kawasaki. In the past, large industrial users were often located in isolation from each other; preferably industries should locate together in planned industrial centers. Many industrial centers also include some warehouse, storage and contractor yard uses with a minor amount of supporting commercial use — but they should be and usually are over 75% industrial use.

Spacing

Moderate to Heavy Industrial uses are encouraged to locate near each other in planned industrial centers. Planned industrial centers should generally be distributed throughout the community.

Criteria

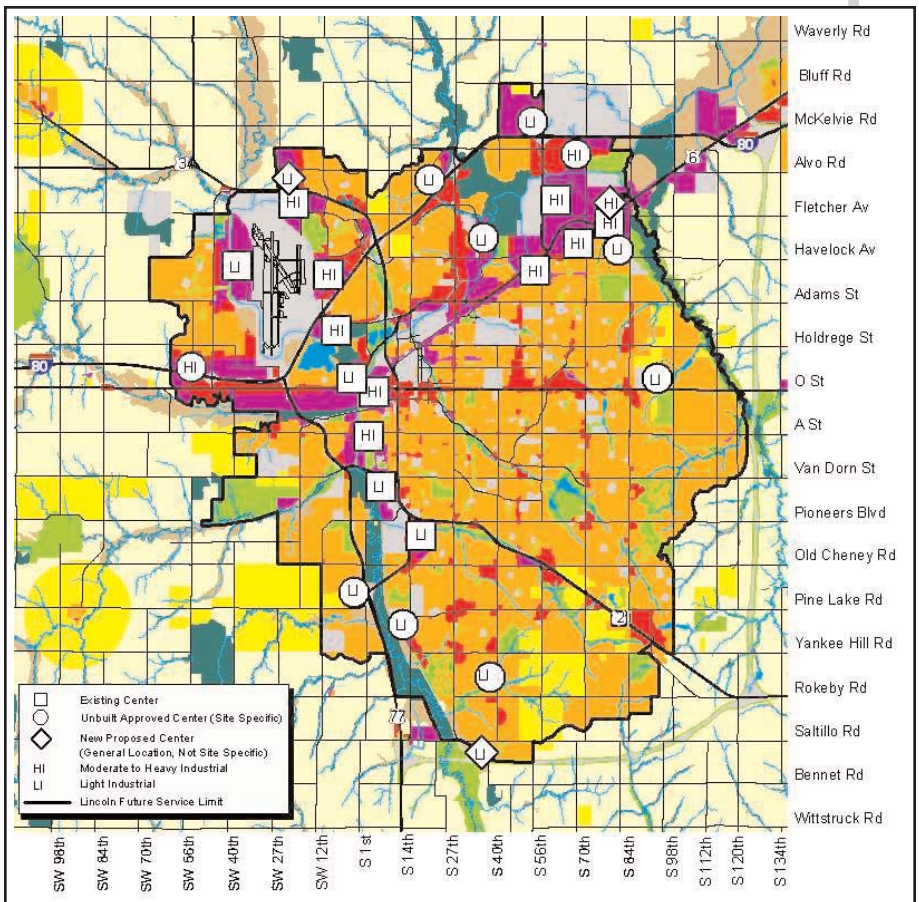
Centers shall be sited in advance in the land use plan in order to ensure the public safety and adequate infrastructure. The Lincoln/ Lancaster County Health Department should be involved in all siting of new industrial centers to ensure the public's health and safety.

New industrial centers should be distant from existing or planned residential areas. Industrial uses should be located in close proximity to each other.

Proposed Locations

In addition to existing Moderate to Heavy Industrial centers, the following areas are proposed for development:

- N. W. 56th & West O/ Interstate 80
- N. 70th & Cornhusker



Existing and Proposed Industrial Centers

Each planned industrial district should be established only after further consideration of site characteristics, buffering and appropriate zoning.

Light Industrial (LI)

Size

Light Industrial areas should be a minimum of 50 acres in size, with larger planned centers preferred.

Description

Light Industrial centers are primarily for lighter manufacturing uses with some additional office and retail uses located within the center, such as the Chamber Industrial Tract at S. 14th & Old Cheney Road.

Spacing

Light Industrial areas should generally be distributed throughout the community. Particularly, new light industrial centers should be located in new growth areas of the city.

Criteria

Centers shall be sited in advance in the land use plan in order to ensure the public safety and adequate infrastructure. The Lincoln/ Lancaster County Health Department should be involved in all siting of new industrial centers to ensure the public's health and safety.

Due to lesser potential impacts, the centers can be located closer to residential, though residential uses should be buffered through landscaping, large setbacks and transitional uses, such as office or open space.

Developing Centers

Centers are underway at Stonebridge Creek at N. 27th & I-80, Horizon Business Center at S. 14th & Pine Lake Road, and Landmark Employment Center at N. 33rd & Folkways Blvd.

Proposed Locations

New centers are proposed at:

- Homestead Expressway & West Denton Road
- S. 40th Street & Saltillo Road
- O Street, west of N. 98th Street
- N.W. 27th & Highway 34
- 1/2 mile south of Yankee Hill Road on the west side of 40th Street
- N. 56th Street (US Highway 77) and Interstate 80

COMMERCE CENTERS

"Commerce Centers" are defined as areas containing a mix of retail, office, services and residential uses, with some light manufacturing and warehousing in selected circumstances.

Commerce Centers can include shopping centers or districts (such as neighborhood centers, large scale retail malls, strip centers, and traditional store-front retail settings), office parks, business parks, stand-alone corporate office campuses, research and technology parks, and Downtown Lincoln. The term "commerce center" is meant to be inclusive, not prescriptive. Commerce Centers are distinguished from Industrial Centers in their dominance of commercial uses over industrial uses, and in the types of light industrial uses located in them — that is, the uses are less intrusive in terms of lighting, noise, odors, truck and vehicular traffic, and pollutants.

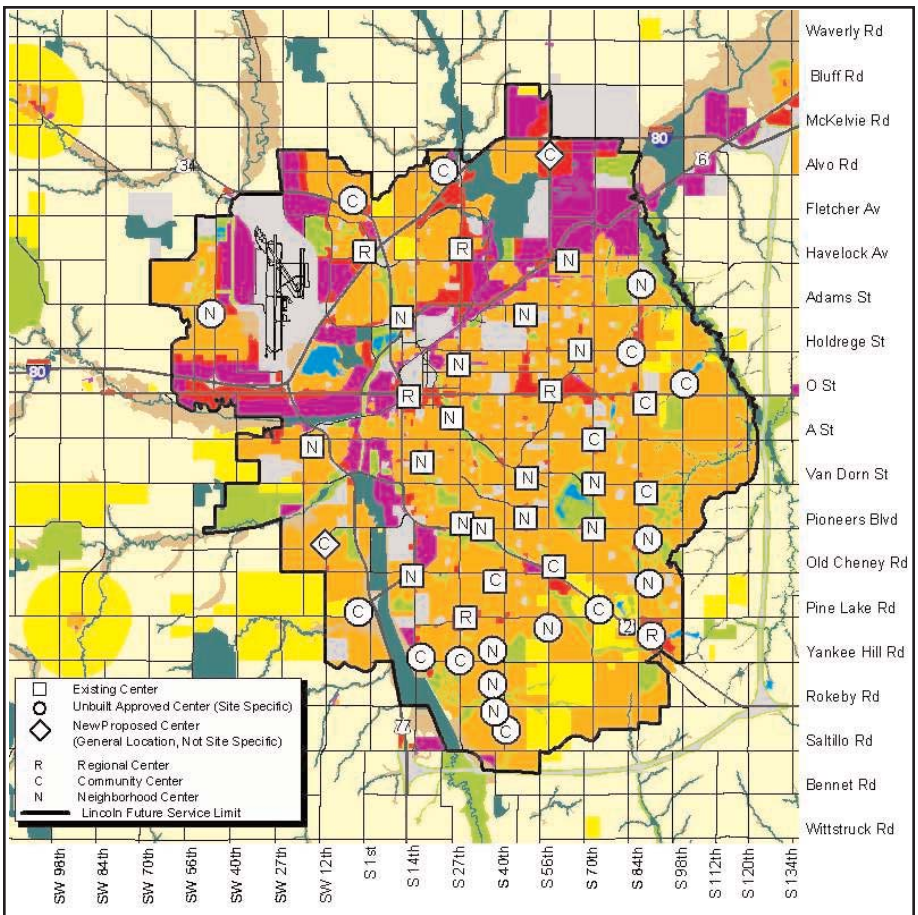
The Commerce Centers concept gives recognition to the evolving role of commercial and industrial uses in the life of cities. Commerce Centers encompass a broad range of land uses and are intended to encourage the mixing and integration of compatible land use types.

While the Commerce Center concept as applied within this Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide both land use guidance and predictability, it is also designed to allow private sector forces to locate and develop centers that are responsive to changing market demands.

For the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan, Commerce Centers have been divided into three separate size categories. The size differences reflect the differing impacts that the centers have on adjacent land uses and the public infrastructure. The three categories of Commerce Centers are:

1 - Regional Centers (R)
2 - Community Centers (C)
3 - Neighborhood Centers (N)

The following section describes the general characteristics of each center, the locational criteria to be used in siting such centers, potential future locations, and compatibility guidelines for determining their applicability to a given location.



Existing and Proposed Commerce Centers

Guiding Principles applying to all forms of Commerce Centers are:

Commerce Centers should develop as compact clusters or hubs with appropriate site design features to accommodate shared parking, ease of pedestrian movement, minimize impacts on adjacent areas, and possess a unique character.

Commerce Centers should generally contain a mix of land uses, including residential uses. Higher density residential uses should be included in and/or adjacent to all commercial centers. Single use centers are discouraged – for example, office parks should include a supporting retail component, while shopping centers should include an applicable amount of office uses.

Commerce Centers shall be designed and constructed to meet the intent of the environmental resources section of this plan. These centers shall in themselves include green space and enhance green space separation, where possible, among communities and mixed-use areas.

Commerce Centers should be developed as integrated centers – "four corner commercial development" should be discouraged. Centers should be appropriately dispersed throughout the community to support convenience of access and to lessen impacts on infrastructure.

Strip commercial development is discouraged. Commerce Centers should not develop in a linear strip along a roadway nor be completely auto oriented.

New or established commercial uses should not encroach upon, or expand into, existing neighborhoods.

Streets and public spaces should be designed within each center to enhance pedestrian activity and support multiple modes of transportation. Commerce Centers should have convenient access to the major roadway system and be supported by roads with adequate capacity.

Physical linkages (i.e., sidewalks, trails, roads) should be utilized to directly connect Commerce Centers with adjacent development, although undesirable traffic impacts on adjacent residential areas should be avoided or minimized.

Commercial locations should be easily accessible by all modes of transportation including pedestrian, bicycle, transit and automobiles. Centers should be especially accessible to pedestrians and bicycles with multiple safe and convenient access points.

Buildings and land uses at the edge of the center should be compatible with adjacent residential uses. Examples of compatible land uses include offices or child care centers. Buildings should be compatible in terms of height, building materials and setback. Small compatible commercial buildings at the edge could include retail or service uses. Buildings with more intrusive uses should have greater setbacks, screening requirements and be built of more compatible materials.

The most intensive commercial uses, such as restaurants, car washes, grocery stores, gasoline/ convenience stores and drive thru facilities should be located nearer to the major street or roadway and furthest from the residential area. Citizens of the community have become increasingly concerned about "light pollution" and its affects upon neighborhoods and the environment. Lighting, dumpsters, loading docks and other service areas should be shielded from the residential area.

Adjacent residential neighborhoods should have two or more vehicle access points to the center. In general, the major access points to the commercial center should not bring outside traffic through the residential area.

Centers should contain a mix of residential, office, service and retail uses. In addition, other "residential" uses such as multi-family, single family attached, child care centers, and recreational facilities should be integrated within the development. Single use projects, such as office parks, are to be discouraged. Where properly sited, light manufacturing uses may be a part of larger commerce centers, except for neighborhood centers. Centers should create a pedestrian oriented environment in the physical arrangement of their buildings and parking.

The adjacent image of the "Future Commerce Center" displays how these principles might work together in future commercial centers:

1 Mix of office, retail and service uses

2 Pedestrian orientation, parking at rear, multiple pedestrian routes, buildings and uses close to each

3 More intense commercial uses (gas stations, grocery store, car wash, fast food, etc.) nearer to arterial street

4 No four corner commercial corners at intersections of major arterial streets

5 Transition of uses; less intense office uses near residential areas

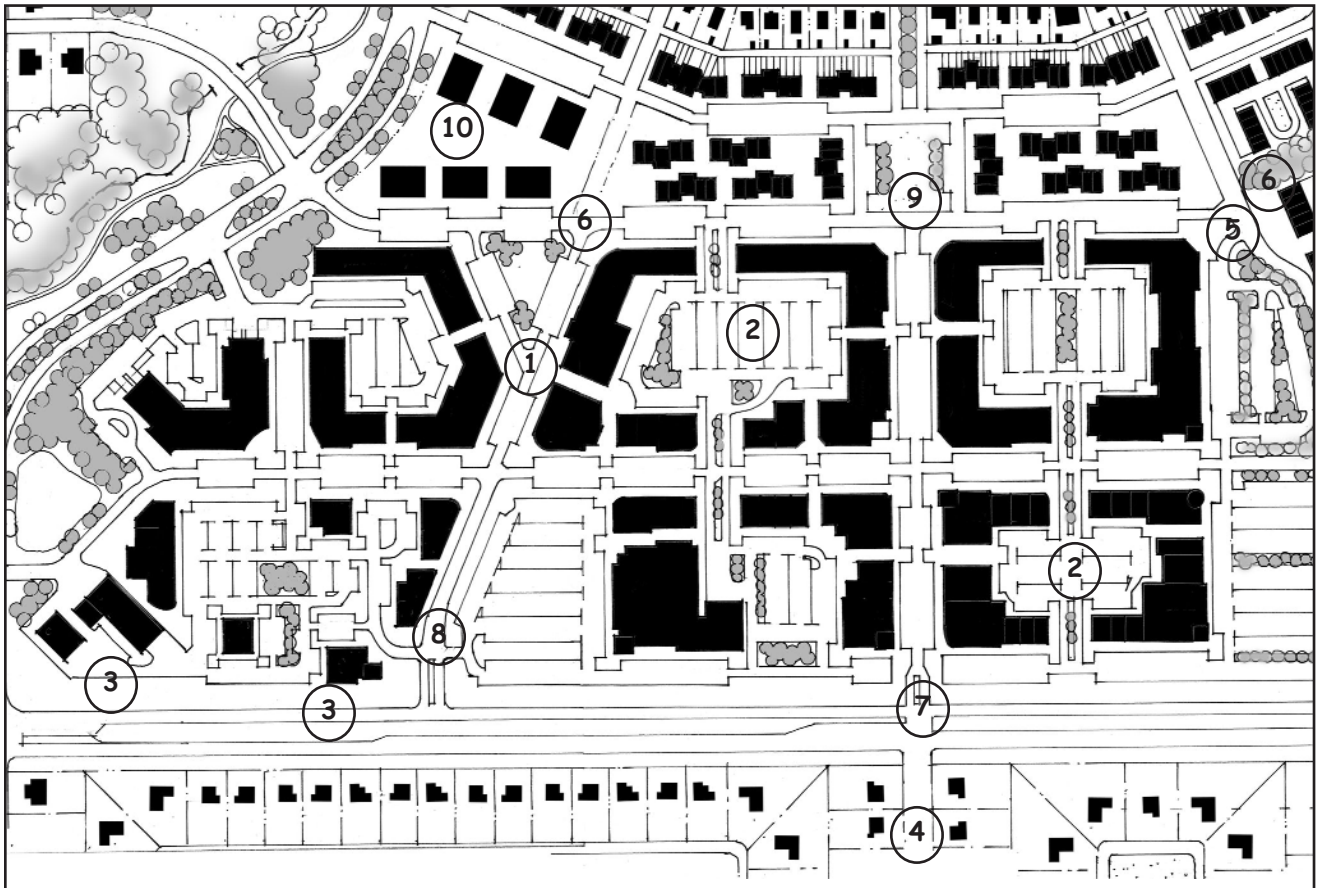
6 Multiple vehicular connections between residential neighborhood and commercial center

7 Encourage commercial development at ½ mile between major intersections

8 Provide for transit opportunities in the center design

9 Provide public amenities such as recreational facilities, plazas, squares and other types of facilities or meeting areas open to public

10 Provide for housing opportunities



Future Commerce Center

Regional Centers (R)

Center Size

Regional Centers typically contain one million or more square feet of developed building space.

Description

Regional Centers typically include a unique blend of commercial and other compatible land uses. Within this type of center, one may find retail shopping, restaurants, entertainment complexes, cultural and artistic institutions, offices, personal and business service facilities, and public institutions and governmental functions. The scale of such centers can offer a sense of place with a unique character or cohesive theme.

Many Regional Centers are large scale retailing centers that include a mall with several department store anchors and numerous small shops, as well as adjacent commercial development with stand-alone restaurants and stores, such as Westfield Shoppingtown Gateway or SouthPointe Pavilions.

Among existing Regional Centers, Downtown Lincoln stands as a unique community resource. Downtown is the county's most intensive center of activity, offering a broad mix of retail, office, industrial, residential, and govern-

mental uses. It is home to numerous public facilities — including the Nebraska State Capitol, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's main campus, and County-City Building — as well as private endeavors— including financing, insurance, and other business services. Downtown Lincoln has historically served as the community's dominant center of entertainment. A key element to this role has been the long standing and successful "theater policy." This policy has allowed Downtown to retain an appreciable share of the area's movie theaters. It is intended that this policy would continue as part of the present Plan.

Other examples of existing or developing Regional Centers include the UNL Technology Park, N. 27th and Superior Street Subarea, and S. 84th Street and Highway 2.

Market Area

The market area of Regional Centers may cover the entire planning area and even counties within several hours drive of the center.

Center Spacing

Regional Centers should be located approximately four to six miles apart, depending upon their size, scale, function and area population.

Location Criteria

The location of existing Regional Centers are shown in the Comprehensive Plan. Several of these centers are still under development. There are sufficient Regional Centers at this time for the community. Additional new Regional Center(s) are not designated at this time in the Plan.

Regional Centers should be geographically well dispersed throughout the Lincoln urban area based on the Center Spacing guidelines noted above. The community will not require market studies to determine the economic impact of new centers on existing development. However, new Regional and Community Centers will be sited in the Comprehensive Plan, so that the potential impact on existing centers may be considered as part of the siting process. (Market impact studies will still be required for movie theaters).

Developing Centers

Centers are planned or underway at:

- S. 84th and Highway 2 -- Comprehensive Plan Amendment No. 03018 redesignated the future land use on a 44 acre tract of land located on the northeast corner of 91st Street and Highway 2. The Amendment changes the intended uses on this tract from "urban residential" to "commercial," and extends the "parks and open space" buffer along Highway 2. This Plan amendment is meant to provide greater market and design flexibility in the development of the previously approved planned mixed use regional center on this site. This redesignation of land uses on the 44 acre tract is made under the following conditions: (1) the "P.M. peak hour trip cap" contained in the approved Annexation and Zoning Agreement for the Regional Center site remains unchanged (which recognizes the severe capacity limitation along the Highway 2 travel corridor and the community's desire to promote this corridor as a "desirable entryway" in the city); (2) the commitment to the pedestrian/biker trail along this site remains in place; (3) development of this area will respect the site's natural and environmental features; (4) elimination of the "Special Residential Use" condition on this site and the elimination of the "Transitional Use" designation on the northwest corner of the intersection of 91st and Highway 2; (5) the development remains committed to a mix of commercial and residential uses as part of a cohesive activity center; and (6) retention of all other goals and conditions of the "Southeast Lincoln/Highway 2 Subarea Plan."
- N. 27th Street Corridor
- UNL Technology Park in the Highlands

Proposed Locations

Since several Regional Centers are still under development and will take years to develop due to their size and scope, it is anticipated that they will serve the community's demand for Regional Centers well into the planning period.

Community Centers (C)

Center Size

Community Centers may vary in size from 300,000 to nearly a million square feet of commercial space. Typically, new Community Centers will range from 300,000 to 500,000 square feet.

Description

Community Centers are intended to be smaller in scale and intensity of uses than Regional Centers and serve a more targeted market and geographic area. Community Centers tend to be dominated by retail and service activities, although they can also serve as campuses for corporate office facilities and other mixed-use activities. When properly located, some light manufacturing or assembly when accessory to an office function may be allowed.

One or two department stores or "big box" retail operations may serve as anchors to the Community Center with smaller general merchandise stores located between any anchors or on surrounding site pads, such as Edgewood Shopping Center at S. 56th Street and Highway 2.

Examples of existing single use centers are the office parks for Firethorn/ Lincoln Benefit Life Office Park at S. 84th & Van Dorn, and the State Farm Office Campus at S. 84th & O Street. Other centers may have more of a mix of retail, office and residential uses such as Williamsburg Village at S. 40th and Old Cheney Road.

Market Area

Community Centers can have a community wide appeal but primarily serve a geographic subarea within Lincoln and surrounding areas within the County. Depending on the mix of stores and other shopping opportunities in the area, existing Community Centers can have a market area that is quite extensive, even rivaling some Regional Centers.

Center Spacing

Community Centers should be located approximately two to three miles apart, depending upon their size, scale, function and area population.

Location Criteria

The general location of future Community Centers should be indicated in advance in the Comprehensive Plan. These locations are not intended to be site specific but rather to suggest a general area within which a Community Center might be developed. The Plan recognizes the strong need to further and support an evolving marketplace. Thus, the exact location of a Community Center should be designated in the Comprehensive Plan as part of the development review process.

The community will not require market studies to determine the economic impact on existing development. However, new Regional and Community Centers will be generally sited in the Comprehensive Plan so that the potential impact on existing centers may be considered as part of the siting process.

Community Centers should be geographically well dispersed throughout the Lincoln urban area based upon the center spacing guidelines noted above.

Developing Centers

Centers are planned or underway at:

- Stonebridge Creek at N. 27th and Interstate 80
- Fallbrook at Highway 34 and N. 1st Street
- Vavrina Meadows at S. 14th and Yankee Hill Road
- S. 27th and Yankee Hill Road
- Lincoln Benefit Life/Firethorn at S. 84th and Van Dorn
- S. 70th and Highway 2

Proposed Locations

As urbanization occurs over the planning period, the demand for new, additional Community Centers will increase. Proposed generalized locations for the new Community Centers are as follows:

- Homestead Expressway (a.k.a., West Beltway) and West Denton Road
- S. W. 12th near West Pioneers Boulevard
- N. 56th Street and Arbor Road
- N. 98th and O Street
- S. 40th 1/2 mile south of Rokeby Road

Siting Process

The locations of the Community Centers shown in the plan are generalized. It is anticipated that the center will develop somewhere within a ½ mile of the location shown in the Plan. As part of major development proposals that include proposed Community Centers, the exact location of the Community Center for that area should be determined and a Comprehensive Plan Amendment forwarded for consideration.

Floor Area Incentive

New Community Centers will typically range from 300,000 to 500,000 square feet. However, centers that follow most, if not all, of the incentive criteria listed at the end of this section, may be appropriate to develop with some additional space over 500,000 square feet:

Neighborhood Centers (N)

Center Size

Neighborhood Centers typically range in size from 150,000 to 250,000 square feet of commercial space. Existing centers may vary in size from 50,000 to 300,000 square feet.

Description

Neighborhood centers provide services and retail goods oriented to the neighborhood level, such as Lenox Village at S. 70th and Pioneers Boulevard, and Coddington Park Center at West A and Coddington. These smaller centers will not include manufacturing uses.

Market Area

These centers typically serve the neighborhood level. It is anticipated that there will be one neighborhood center per one square mile of urban use. For areas of less than one square mile, the maximum size of the center will be reduced proportionally.

Center Spacing

Neighborhood Centers should be located approximately 3/4 to one mile apart, depending upon their size, scale, function and the population of the surrounding area.

Criteria

Neighborhood Centers are not sited in advance on the land use plan. However, in neighborhoods oriented to greater pedestrian activity and residential density, two neighborhood centers may be located within a square mile of urban residential use.

Neighborhood Centers should generally not develop at corners of intersections of two arterial streets due to limited pedestrian accessibility and impact on the intersection – locations 1/4 to ½ mile from major intersections are encouraged, particularly if there is to be more than one commercial center within a square mile of urban residential use. There may be circumstances due to topography or other factors where centers at the intersection may be the only alternative.

When a square mile of urban use contains a Community or Regional Center, and that center includes many of the uses found in a neighborhood center, then a neighborhood center would not be approved within that square mile. This provision would not apply if the incentives listed below, including greater residential population, have been met.

Proposed Locations

During the planning period many additional neighborhood centers will be needed. These centers are not identified on the land use plan and will instead be located as part of plans for future neighborhoods based on the commercial guidelines.

Siting Process

As part of development proposals that include a proposed Neighborhood Center, the exact location and land use composition of the Center should be determined. If the neighborhood center is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan and is approved, the Planning Director may administratively update the Comprehensive Plan to reflect the specific location.

Floor Area Incentive

New Neighborhood Centers will typically range from 50,000 to 250,000 square feet of floor area per square mile of urban use. However, when neighborhood centers follow most, if not all, of the criteria listed below it would be appropriate to develop **two neighborhood centers** within a square mile of urban use, each center having a floor area up to approximately 200,000 square feet.

Incentive Criteria

These criteria will serve as a guide to future actions until they are formalized and included in the zoning ordinance:

The center shall be located in a neighborhood with greater residential density, than is typical for a suburban area, and the center itself contains higher density residential uses (density above fifteen dwelling units per acre) integrated within the development. This criteria is mandatory for any center proposing to utilize the incentive.

Provide a significant mix of uses, including office, service, retail, residential and open space — far more than typical single use centers. Multi-story buildings are encouraged.

Integrate some light industrial or manufacturing uses within the center (does not apply to neighborhood centers).

Provide public amenities such as recreational facilities, significant open space, plazas, public squares and other types of public facilities or meeting areas.

Are supported by a street network with significant traffic capacity in the future, rather than on streets that already have significant commercial development.

Provide for even greater pedestrian orientation in their layout, physical arrangement of buildings and parking — buildings shall be oriented to pedestrians.

Provide for transit opportunities in the center design.

In addition to the principles for development of new commercial and industrial centers, there are other areas which merit particular attention:

Principles for Downtown

The City should preserve and enhance Downtown's role as:

- the major office and service employment center of the City
- the focus of all levels of government
- the City's principal cultural and entertainment center
- the hotel and convention center for the City
- the City's financial center
- a hub of higher education
- specialty retail geared toward employees, area residents, convention visitors and University population

Lincoln's successful Theater Policy must be maintained and reinforced. New entertainment attractions should be encouraged to locate in the Downtown.

The City's government center must remain Downtown. All efforts should be made to locate local, state, and federal offices Downtown when expansions and relocations are considered.

Support development and implementation of the Antelope Valley project which is to provide neighborhood revitalization, transportation and transit opportunities and stormwater improvements on the east side of Downtown, the

UNL campus and surrounding neighborhoods. As the Antelope Valley project progresses, ensure that new development is compatible with the existing Downtown and is pedestrian oriented. Development in the existing and expanded Downtown will maintain the urban environment, including a mix of land uses and residential types. Higher density development with parking areas at the rear of buildings or on upper floors of multi-use parking structures is encouraged.

Guiding Principles for Existing Commercial Centers

Encourage renovation and reuse of existing commercial centers. Infill commercial development should be compatible with the character of the area and pedestrian oriented.

Maintain and encourage retail establishments and businesses that are convenient to, and serve, neighborhood residents, yet are compatible with, but not intrusive upon residential neighborhoods.

Expansion of existing commercial and industrial uses should not encroach on existing neighborhoods and must be screened from residential areas.

The priority in older areas should be on retaining areas for residential development. Prior to approving the removal of housing in order to provide for additional parking to support existing centers, alternatives such as shared parking, additional on-street parking or the removal of older commercial stores should be explored.

Encourage mixed-use commercial centers, including residential uses on upper floors and at the rear of commercial buildings.

Encourage efforts to find new uses for abandoned, under utilized or "brownfield" sites that are contaminated. Brownfield sites should be redeveloped and the environmental hazards associated with them mitigated.

Develop and maintain an ongoing citywide floor area and land-use space survey and analysis for office, service and retail commercial uses. The survey and analysis should be used to monitor growth and measure vacancy rates and to provide baseline information for decision making.

Maintain and encourage ethnic commercial establishments that are convenient to existing neighborhoods.

Development in Lancaster County, Outside of Lincoln

The majority of new development takes place within the City of Lincoln. However, it is important to strengthen existing commercial and support new development within the incorporated communities of Lancaster County. Commercial development in towns also provides space for businesses that support farm operators within the county.

Farm operations are an important part of the history and economy of the region. While agriculture is no longer the primary occupation nor major source of income in the County, agricultural production is still important to the community. It provides opportunities for produce to be sold at the local level and for large scale operations with sales world wide. Farm operators, while operating year round, often support their families with accessory home occupations.

Development within the incorporated towns and their one mile zoning jurisdiction will be determined by the communities themselves. However, the Lincoln/ Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan supports these communities and their efforts at maintaining and improving their commercial and industrial base.

All new commercial and industrial development should be within Lincoln or the incorporated communities.

Continue County's support for road improvements that accommodate commercial and other development within the towns.

Continue to encourage and permit accessory home businesses and explore options to assist in the expansion of legal and compatible home occupations. As home occupations may desire to grow further, they should locate within the commercial areas of incorporated towns.