

FACT SHEET: South Coddington Avenue Trees

What is the history of the flowering pear trees along South Coddington from West Garfield to West Peach streets? When and why were they planted in this location?

These trees were planted in the early 1990s using a combination of funding sources, including the Natural Resource District, the neighborhood association and the City of Lincoln. The existing flowering pears are about 14 years old. When construction does occur, they may be more than halfway through their expected life span of 35 to 40 years. Prior to these trees being planted, the City of Lincoln was consulted to determine where the trees could be planted to avoid future roadway construction. The 1985 and 1994 Lincoln/Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan indicated this roadway was to be a two-lane roadway. When the Comprehensive Plan was updated in 2002, it indicated that this section of roadway would need to be a four-lane roadway in the future because of increased growth in the area.

When future construction begins, what will happen to the trees?

Today there is about 35 feet between the edge of the current roadway and neighborhood property lines. This distance varies somewhat from West Garfield to West Peach Street. Currently there is ample space for the trees, enough clearance from private property lines, and a safe distance between the sidewalk and the road.

Because of anticipated growth in southwest Lincoln, South Coddington Avenue will need to be widened to a four-lane, divided urban roadway. Unfortunately, this will result in the loss of trees along Coddington Avenue, once future construction begins.

To widen Coddington Avenue to current City design standards, the new sidewalk would need to be located almost directly over the path of the existing pear trees that line Coddington between Garfield and Peach. The project team has met with the West "A" Neighborhood Association and the City Forester to investigate options to save or replace



About 45 flowering pear trees line South Coddington Avenue between West Garfield and West Peach streets. (Looking south)

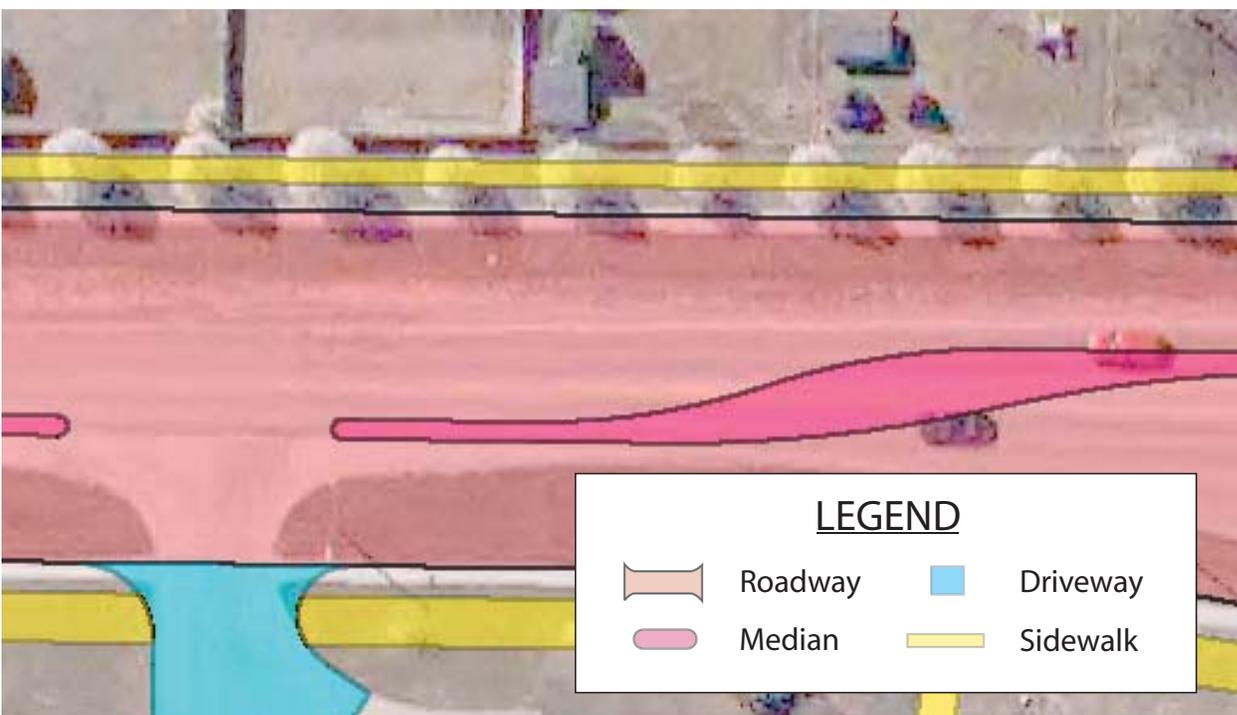
the trees along the right of way. After investigating many alternatives, a resolution could not be found that can both save the trees and provide a roadway that meets the City's current standards to adequately handle future demands.

How much space will be between the new roadway and private properties?

There will be 14 feet remaining between the new roadway curb and private property lines. This distance will allow for a 6-foot buffer between the street and the new 5-foot sidewalk, and 3 feet for underground utilities to be located between the sidewalk and private property lines.

In their current location, the trees are planted below the elevation, or grade, of the existing road. Although the proposed roadway would be built at its current grade, the grade between the roadway and the property lines will need to be elevated slightly. That means the soil line would be raised around the base of the trees. Adding soil around the base of a tree can smother the roots and kill a sensitive mature tree.

(Continued on back)



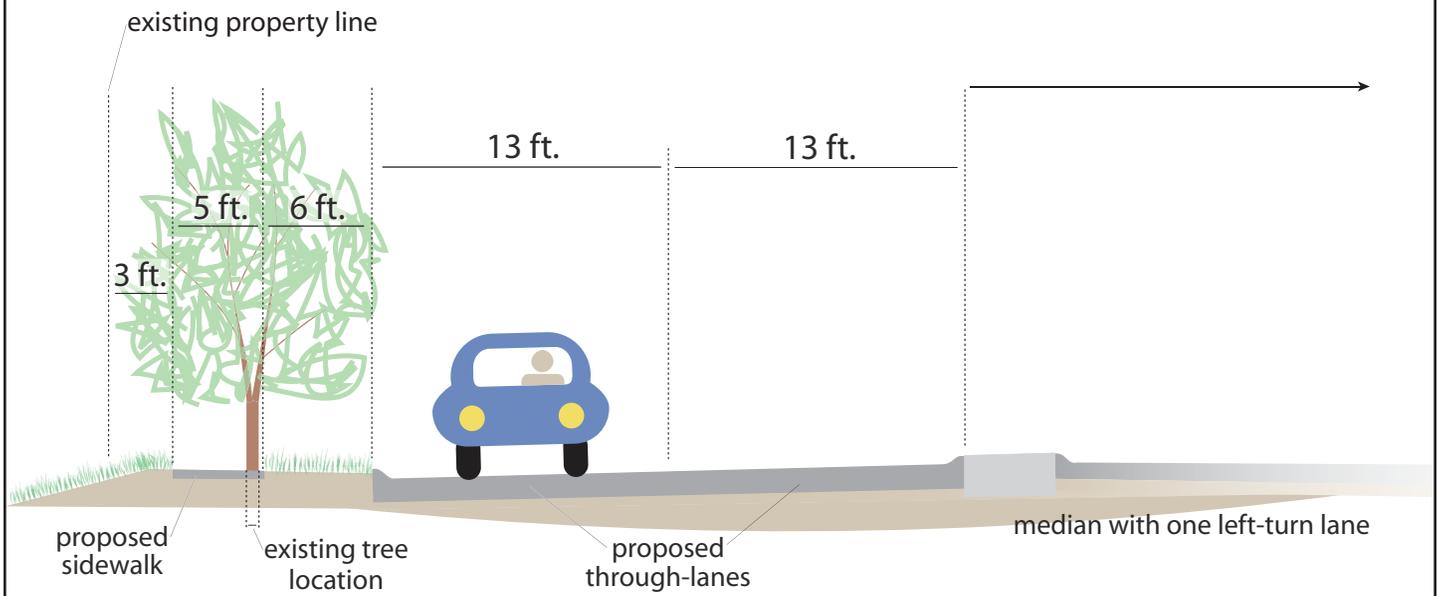
Design Plot Close-Up of Proposed Roadway

Aerial view of South Coddington Avenue near Fire Station #13.

LEGEND

- | | | | |
|---|---------|---|----------|
|  | Roadway |  | Driveway |
|  | Median |  | Sidewalk |

PROPOSED WEST SIDE CROSS SECTION
BETWEEN WEST GARFIELD AND WEST PEACH STREETS
LOOKING NORTH



Could the sidewalk be built right next to the street to avoid the trees?

City standards call for sidewalks along this type of roadway to be 6 feet from the road. Even if the sidewalk were placed right next to the curb, the trees would be too close to the sidewalk. The City requires that trees be no closer than 3 feet, and preferably 4 feet, from new sidewalks. There are several reasons for this space requirement. Damage to tree roots could occur during construction, which could result in decline or death of the trees. Overhead branches could interfere with pedestrians and require frequent trimming. Tree roots could cause the sidewalk to buckle over time.

The City is reluctant to compromise these sidewalk standards in this case because of its concern for the safety of pedestrians—especially children walking to school—and other long-term implications and maintenance issues, such as snow removal.

Could the sidewalk be placed on the west side of the existing trees next to the property lines?

The City prefers that sidewalks be located 4 feet from the private property to allow space for utilities. This space minimizes disruption to private property in the event that utilities need to be accessed for improvements or repairs.

Should roadway design standards be flexible enough to accommodate mature trees and other neighborhood amenities?

In some cases the City does consider relaxing certain design criteria if there is no significant impact to project quality and integrity. However, **all of these combined compromises** in roadway design standards would be necessary to avoid removing the trees between West Garfield and West Peach Street:

- Reduce roadway width from 13 feet to 12 feet
- Reduce median width from 20 feet to 16 feet
- Reduce sidewalk width from 5 feet to 4 feet
- Reduce pedestrian/bicycle trail width from 10 feet to 8 feet

The Public Works and Utilities Department believes these combined compromises would limit the quality and integrity of the roadway and sidewalk.

Even if the new sidewalk were placed right next to the property lines, it would still be too close to the existing trees. (See previous question.)

After construction, will the City replant trees anywhere along Coddington Avenue?

On arterial streets, the City tries to locate street trees the same distance back from the curb as streetlight poles and utility poles (6.5 feet). With the current design standards, there would not be adequate space for new trees to be planted within the City's limited right of way where the current flowering pear trees are located. When funding for this project becomes available and the design process resumes, the City will look for opportunities to plant new trees. New trees planted now in private yards would have several years to mature before construction begins in the future.

Would the City purchase trees to plant on private property now?

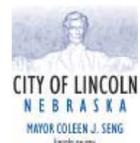
The expense of planting trees involved in street construction projects is generally charged to those projects and paid for through the Public Works Department street construction funds.

Even though there is no funding for street construction at the present time, the Public Works Department **would** fund the planting of new trees now if locations are identified away from future roadway construction. There is a City ordinance that allows the use of City funds to plant trees on private property. A one-year temporary easement would be acquired from the property owner to allow the City to plant and maintain the trees during the first year. For information about this opportunity contact the Forestry Section of the Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department at 441-7035.

If you have any specific questions or comments, please contact:



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