DRAFT

South of Downtown

REDEVELOPMENT & STRATEGIC PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CITY OF LINCOLN NEBRASKA

There is no logic that can be superimposed on the city; people make it, and it is to them, not buildings, that we must fit our plans.

Jane Jacobs

PREPARED BY:

City of Lincoln, Nebraska
Leirion Gaylor Baird, Mayor

Urban Development Department
Dan Marvin, Director

CITY OF LINCOLN NEBRASKA

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

South of Downtown Community Development Organization

Lincoln Community Foundation

SOUTH OF DOWNTOWN

LINCOLN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

APPROVED BY:

Planning Commission: Date TBD

City Council: Date TBD

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The South of Downtown Redevelopment Plan is the product of nearly two years of planning, engagement, and coordination amongst city departments, our community partners, and of course, the people of South of Downtown. Thank you to all who took the time to participate in the creation of this plan.

FARM
CROPS

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION 6

Background 6

Two Plans, One Document Guided by One Vision 6

Neighborhood Engagement 6

Coalition Steering Committee 6

Using Data to Identify Opportunities and Coordination with Other Plans 8

Prosper Lincoln 8

Gentrification and Displacement 8

Equity and Inclusion 9

CHAPTER 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS 10

Summary of Identified Assets and Challenges 10

CHAPTER 3 REDEVELOPMENT PLAN 14

LPlan 2040: Guiding Principles 14

Redevelopment Activities and Opportunities 14

Future Land Use 16

Financing 18

CHAPTER 4 STRATEGIC PLAN 19

Imperative Strategies 19

Implementation and Evaluation 25

This Executive Summary highlights key elements of the South of Downtown Redevelopment & Strategic Plan. The full plan can be viewed on the City of Lincoln's Urban Development website.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 provides a brief overview of the Plan including background on why and how it came to be as well as insights into how it is to be used moving forward. The Plan Area is identified in Figure 1.1 and is bounded by 10th Street, "A" Street, 17th Street and "L" Street. Highlights of Chapter 1 are as follows:

BACKGROUND

South of Downtown is a downtown adjacent area with a rich and unique history that makes it a true asset to the Lincoln community. It is home to National Historic Districts, Local Landmark Districts, and a number of National and Local Landmark Sites. Visually, the Neighborhood can be characterized by its wide, tree-lined streets and charming architecture. Yet, it is the diversity of the people and businesses that call South of Downtown home that ultimately defines it. They are the ones that bring life and energy and hope to the neighborhood at large.

Despite these assets, the neighborhood and its people face many challenges and difficulties. It is the intent of this plan to address both the positive assets and difficulties in order to allow South of Downtown to continue to grow and thrive in a way that better serves its residents and businesses.

TWO PLANS, ONE DOCUMENT GUIDED BY ONE VISION

This document represents one vision: neighborhoods built on existing community assets with equitable opportunities for jobs, housing, health, and services for all residents and businesses, with two plans—a Redevelopment Plan and a Strategic Plan. The Redevelopment Plan is a guide for redevelopment and is governed by state statute. Although projects are public/private partnerships, the City's Urban Development Department, as the designated Redevelopment Authority, is responsible for the process. The Redevelopment Plan generally identifies physical redevelopment projects and government regulatory processes that lay the groundwork for private reinvestment.

On the other hand, the Strategic Plan is guided by the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) process, building on the area's strengths in a shorter term action plan with a broader scope to also include social and economic issues and strategies. The process and strategy implementation is led by the community, principally through the South of Downtown Community Development Organization, with the City as a partner.

NEIGHBORHOOD ENGAGEMENT

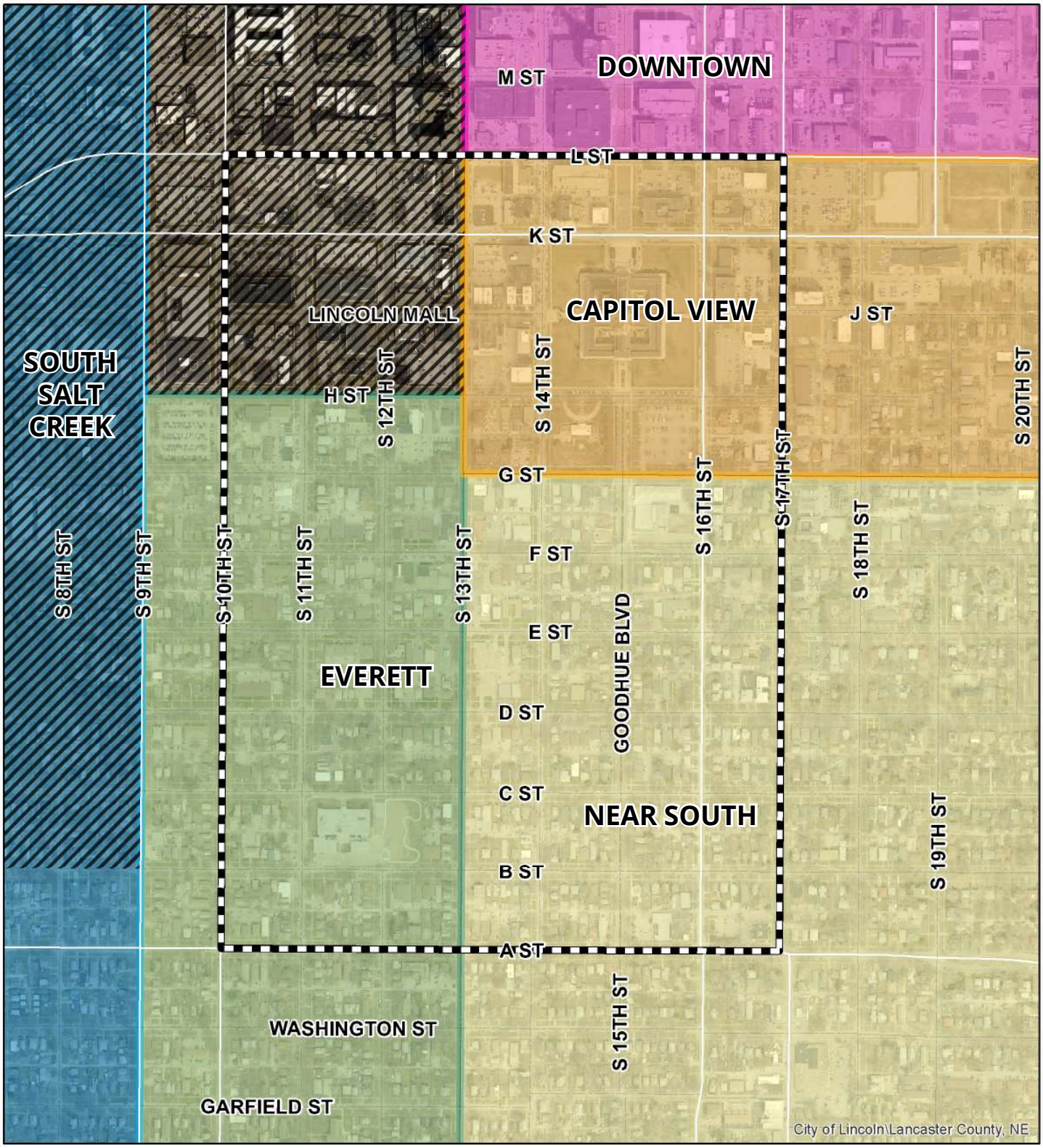
The South of Downtown Community Development Organization (SDCDO) is the lead partner in developing the Redevelopment Plan and Strategic Plan.

To engage and involve neighborhood residents and form a broad coalition, SDCDO has been the lead entity reaching out and listening to neighborhood concerns, issues, strengths and dreams. Beside knocking on numerous residents' doors, and interviewing Neighborhood businesses and nonprofits, SDCDO has teamed with the city to co-sponsor three community conversations. Further, SDCDO has used block parties and special events to gather additional neighborhood input on the important opportunities and issues that need to be addressed.

COALITION STEERING COMMITTEE

In addition to a variety of public outreach efforts, public involvement for the Redevelopment Plan and Strategic Plan also included the South of Downtown Coalition Steering Committee ("Coalition Steering Committee") — a coalition of neighborhood residents, non-profits, philanthropic organizations, and business and governmental partners. In total, the Coalition Steering Committee met sixteen times. Coalition Steering Committee members are listed in Appendix A of the full plan.

The planning process sought the input and advice from existing area organizations, such as Near South Neighborhood Association, Everett Neighborhood Association, and Renters Together. With the assistance of SDCDO, the Coalition Steering Committee reached out to



Capitol View
Downtown
Everett
Near South
South Salt Creek
Salt Creek Area
Plan Area

Figure 1.1 - Plan Area Map

NORTH

additional residents, experts, leaders, non-profit, governmental entities, new faces and formed five subcommittees: Affordable Housing, Economic Engagement, Finance Investment, Human and Cultural Services, and Property Owners. Appendix A from the full plan includes the Subcommittee members and the final reports to the Coalition Steering Committee regarding issues and strategies.

USING DATA TO IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES AND COORDINATION WITH OTHER PLANS

The Coalition Steering Committee reviewed key data and statistics to more accurately define neighborhood opportunities and issues. Data sources used in this process included:

- 2016 Revitalization Plan
- Lincoln Vital Signs Report
- Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan
- US Census data
- Downtown Lincoln Master Plan
- State of Nebraska Comprehensive Capital Facilities Plan
- Lincoln's Affordable Housing Coordinated Action Plan
- Community Health Endowment-Place Matters Community Mapping Project

Data was also provided by South of Downtown Community Development Organization, Collective Impact Lincoln, and City of Lincoln departments and agencies.

To understand other planning efforts that might impact South of Downtown, the following plans were reviewed:

- Downtown Master Plan
- State of Nebraska Comprehensive Capital Facilities Plan
- Lincoln's Affordable Housing Coordinated Action Plan

PROSPER LINCOLN

The Lincoln Community Foundation and other key sponsors started a community process that generated over 2,100 ideas to address the 2014 Lincoln Vital Signs findings. The ideas were then bundled and transformed into a community agenda called Prosper Lincoln. Prosper Lincoln is a city-wide vision. Yet, several of its focus areas have concentrated in the South of Downtown Area or have targeted South of Downtown as the "first" inter-city core neighborhood to test new programs and enterprises. Among other significant impacts to the city, these early efforts helped launch SDCDO. More recently, Prosper Lincoln has honed in on the following five initiatives:

1. Early Childhood
2. Innovative Workforce
3. Affordable Housing
4. Strong Neighborhoods
5. Civic Investments

These five initiatives have also been identified as important to the South of Downtown Area. Early success in implementing the South of Downtown Redevelopment Plan and Strategic Plan will be enhanced with continued coordination between Prosper Lincoln and South of Downtown.

GENTRIFICATION AND DISPLACEMENT

Neighborhoods evolve over time. In the past, South of Downtown was home to some of Lincoln's wealthier families and individuals. As Lincoln grew, many higher income families moved to the newer growth areas, causing the neighborhood's median income level to drop. Today, South of Downtown's median household income stands at $20,826 per year, less than half the median income of Lincoln as a whole. Over 30 percent of households earn less than $15,000 per year (double the percent of households in all of Lincoln). Over time, the neighborhood has seen a "flight" of higher income residents replaced by lower income residents. Today, the neighborhood is comprised of two extreme poverty census tracts.

Many health experts, urban planners, sociologists and economists report that the more vibrant, healthy and sustainable urban neighborhoods

have a mix of income levels. As revitalization of the South of Downtown area continues, strategies must be implemented to prevent the negative impacts of gentrification on existing residents. While gentrification can have positive impacts including increased investment in housing, commercial businesses and the social and physical infrastructure of a neighborhood, it can negatively impact existing residents by increasing rents and property values and changes in the district's character and culture and can lead to displacement of existing residents. For this reason, a goal of the Plan should be to add quality affordable units if any are removed to make way for higher value dwellings.

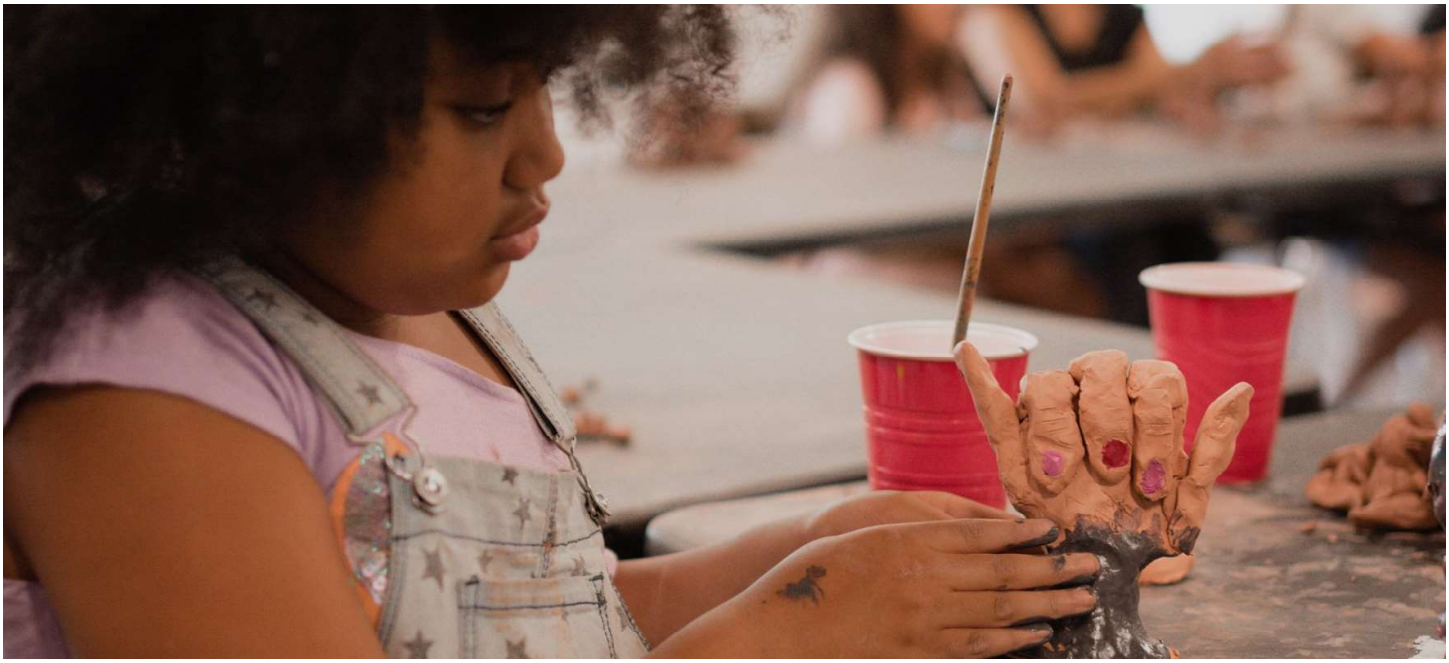
EQUITY AND INCLUSION

The South of Downtown community has always been diverse, with successive generations of immigrants and migrants from other parts of the world. The vision for this plan is for all South of Downtown area residents to live and work in a safe, dignified, stable and healthy neighborhood. The City of Lincoln believes that every person should have a safe, accessible, affordable place to live, and affirms, in partnership with grassroots leadership, advocacy groups and other community partners, its active commitment to the examination of how different groups will likely be affected by a proposed action or decisions outlined in this plan now and in the future and what steps can be taken to ensure equity is achieved and maintained throughout these processes.

Mayor Gaylor Baird's One Lincoln initiative is focused on creating a more equitable and inclusive Lincoln, where every resident has an equal opportunity to reach their full human potential. The goal of One Lincoln is to promote equity in city operations, policies, and services, and foster a culture of inclusion and belonging in our city.

In addition, the Lincoln-Lancaster County Board of Health has declared that racism is a public health crisis affecting our entire community. Its September 2020 declaration also resolved that the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department will:

- Assert that racism is a public health crisis affecting our entire community.
- Include in any decision making the people most affected by health and economic challenges.
- Partner with the community to co-create solutions.
- Advocate for relevant policies that improve health in communities of color, and support local, state, regional, and federal initiatives that advance efforts to dismantle systemic racism.
- Ensure the consistent collection, analysis and reporting of disaggregated data for all public health efforts with data visualization and descriptions.
- Promote policy and system level changes within Lincoln and Lancaster County to move beyond equity only and to undo racist structures.



CHAPTER 2: EXISTING CONDITIONS

This chapter reviews the current state of conditions in the south of Downtown area, identifying assets and challenges, which sets the baseline for tracking progress in the neighborhood. While primary emphasis is on reviewing conditions prescribed in State Statutes for the Redevelopment Plan (i.e., land use, zoning, transportation, public utilities, etc.) this chapter goes beyond those requirements to also include demographic characteristics including population, housing, employment and health. The Chapter concludes with a list of identified Assets and Challenges and a summary, included below.

SUMMARY OF IDENTIFIED ASSETS AND CHALLENGES

Based on the review of existing conditions, the following assets and challenges were identified and should be considered in conjunction with the Guiding Principles of this document (included in Chapter 3) to provide a framework for determining projects in the Redevelopment Area and implementing strategies in Chapter 4, the Strategic Plan.

Assets

South of Downtown assets are organized using the six categories of the ABCD Asset-based Community Development model. This is not an exhaustive list, but a short list of assets to provide examples. Continuing to identify, strengthen, and build on the area's assets will be key to implementing the plan.

Individuals

- The South of Downtown is the most diverse neighborhood in Lincoln with a population of approximately 5200 people. Each individual brings their gifts, skills, knowledge and capacity.

Institutions

- Everett and McPhee Elementary Schools are great community anchors, providing close proximity for residents and offering a variety of after school activities.
- Churches in the area have been valuable resources for promoting community pride and engagement.

Associations

- Near South Neighborhood Association
- Everett Neighborhood Association
- Capitol View Neighborhood Association
- Everett and McPhee Family Literacy groups provide developmental experiences for children and parents are offered instruction in parenting skills and parental support.
- Renters Together provide tenant protection grassroots advocacy.

Physical

- Commercial and retail uses north of Lincoln Mall and along 11th and 13th Streets serve the surrounding area.
- F Street Community Center represents a valuable community resource that has the potential to even better serve the community.
- Wide right-of-way offer ample room for comfortable sidewalks and wide greenways lined by mature shade trees.
- The State Capitol and its magnificent art deco architecture sits within South of Downtown.
- The recent streetscape improvements to 11th Street have solidified it as a vibrant mixed use corridor within South of Downtown.
- Roadway enhancements to 13th Street have reduced conflicts and made the arterial a safer route for all modes of transportation.
- The prominence of alleys and rear yard parking reduces the need for front yard driveways and frees up more room for on-street parking.
- Sidewalks conditions and connectivity in the area are both well above average.
- Three BikeLNK facilities in the area offer an alternative to those who do not have access to a personal bike.

- On-street bike facilities, including dedicated lanes on 11th and 14th Streets, make bicycling a viable mode of transportation.
- Public transit is readily accessible.
- Large surface parking lots located in the north provide redevelopment opportunities.
- Unlike a number of older neighborhoods in Lincoln, the South of Downtown area is completely removed from the flood plain.
- The bioswales on 11th Street offer a sustainable, attractive stormwater management solution.
- All streetlights have recently been converted to LED fixtures.

Culture

- South of Downtown has diversity within its population that exceeds the diversity of the city and historically has been the first home for immigrant and refugee families new to Lincoln.
- Has a rich history, much of which has been preserved and landmarked through a mix of National Historic Districts, Local Landmark Districts, National Register Sites, Local Landmark Sites and national Landmark Sites.

Exchange

- The South of Downtown Community Art Hub offers an inclusive community art space offering art education, art space, maker's markets to help build community.
- Repair Café repairs used items for free and on the spot and offers a space for neighbors to share conversation.
- Community Learning Center mini-grant program provides residents with small grants to support neighborhood-based projects.

Challenges

- Need to mitigate displacement of existing residents as gentrification occurs.
- Parking
  - » High residential density standards can lead to parking issues.
  - » State of Nebraska and downtown business employees compete with neighborhood residents for parking.
- Lack of adequate lighting in alleys and also along streets where the extra wide right-of-way results in sidewalks further set back from the street, causing the street tree canopy to block lighting for pedestrians.
- Zoning
  - » Complex zoning requirements lead to excessive time to research, review, understand requirements when trying to redevelop.
  - » Small lots: postage stamps - small in both width and length; toothpicks – small in width but long in length. Neither meet minimum lot area requirements for residential construction. These lots comprise 36% of residentially zoned properties. Zoning code requires extra effort.
  - » Some zoning requirements appear out of date; aging housing stock could be too difficult to update and lead to further disinvestment and increased blight.
  - » Current residential zoning does not allow neighborhood services and commercial land uses identified by residents: neighborhood services (retail, food, health and services); more employment opportunities; ability to start business ventures with the neighborhood.
- Lack of parks available to all residents within the City standard of ½ mile.
- Public spaces in the F Street Community Center, including the kitchen and art room, have obstacles – generally underutilized, and under-resourced, and have regulatory barriers that need to be addressed.
- Pedestrian flow interrupted by high traffic volumes and speeds on 9th & 10th, 16th & 17th, and K and L.
- Alleys in need of repair.
- Asphalt streets continue to deteriorate with resurfacing to be needed in the coming years.
- Underground utilities range from 70-90 years of age — older mainlines are prone to deterioration and breakage.
- Housing quality
  - » Building conditions: 43% dilapidated.
  - » Deteriorating and dilapidated buildings comprised of wood structural components and masonry buildings containing combustible elements and fixtures.
  - » Approximately 30% of structures/parcels have fair to poor site conditions.
- 93% rental, 7% homeownership.
- No homeownership by people of color.
- 44% of renters are cost burdened and 21% are extremely cost burdened. People living in census tract 20.01, east of 13th Street are 57% cost burdened and 32% extremely cost burdened.
- Life expectancy is 20 years less than people living in the southeast part of Lincoln and is indicative of health disparities.

Summary

South of Downtown is one of Lincoln's most diverse neighborhoods, with residents coming from many different backgrounds, nationalities and cultural traditions. The area's population can also be characterized as younger and considerably less affluent than the larger community. Rentals overwhelmingly outnumber owner-occupied housing units at a ratio of 13:1 (93% rentals versus 7% homeownership), and yet the area's residents are slightly more educated than the citywide population. This theme of young, urban renters with less household income but more education than the city as a whole suggests that college students make up a significant segment of the population. Employment for residents of South of Downtown primarily falls within the service industries.

South of Downtown is also defined by a unique, rich history best illustrated by the design of its built environment. The area has a distinct urban feel to it, when compared to other Lincoln neighborhoods. Part of that feel is a result of its proximity to downtown, but the remainder can be attributed to a combination of architecture, density, an organic mixing of uses, and the features of its public right-of-way. Wide, tree-lined streets accentuate historic homes and provide ample space for sidewalks and wide greenways that are rarely replicated in newer developments. Its density is buoyed by a combination of high-density zoning and smaller-than-average lots. In recent years, streetscape improvements solidified 11th Street as a vibrant, mixed-use corridor. Access to bike facilities and transit are good in the area, providing bikability and increasing walkability and less dependency on automobiles.

Institutions that support or impact South of Downtown include two elementary schools and a number of churches that serve as community anchors, the State Capitol and its magnificent art deco architecture, and the F Street Community Center, which represents a valuable community resource with even more potential to be tapped.

Housing is a principle concern in the area, particularly as it relates to quality and affordability. Building conditions indicate that 43% are in a dilapidated state and site conditions are often poor as well. Relatedly, cost burden and extreme cost burden is of concern for about half of the area's renters. Other issues of concern to the area's residents include insufficient exterior lighting – due, in many cases, to a mature tree canopy interfering with existing street lighting – and a lack of nearby parks that effectively serve the community.

Proximity to downtown and State Government generates special neighborhood opportunities in the way of employment, transportation, education, and entertainment. Regardless, these assets have been offset in recent decades by the lack of reinvestment in the area's buildings and infrastructure. Fortunately, both the public and private sectors appear poised to do more to prioritize improvements to the area. This renewed focus, along with the current residents' attributes and skill sets, mean that South of Downtown is well-positioned to continue growing into a neighborhood that truly supports and serves its residents.

CHAPTER 3: REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

This Chapter is designed to meet requirements of State Statutes and identifies Guiding Principles, primarily from LPlan 2040 - the City-County Comprehensive Plan, along with specific Goals unique to South of Downtown, and Fair Housing Goals. Also included are redevelopment activities and projects, statutory elements (i.e., population density, land coverage traffic flow, street layouts, parking cost benefit analysis), future land use, and financing. Highlights of Chapter 3 are included below.

LPLAN 2040: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

LPlan 2040 is the Lincoln-Lancaster County 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The Plan embodies Lincoln and Lancaster County's shared vision for the future, to the year 2040. It outlines where, how and when the community intends to grow, how to preserve and enhance the things that make Lincoln special, and strategies for implementing the vision for how we will live, work, play and get around in the future.

Specific principles from LPlan 2040 are included in this Chapter for Neighborhoods; Mixed use; Parks, Recreation and Open Space. Additional goals specific to South of Downtown include:

1. Minimizing displacement.
2. Facilitating a better balance of land uses.
3. Encouraging pedestrian-oriented, community-centric spaces.
4. Promoting increased private reinvestment while minimizing increases in housing costs.
5. Building on the area's unique assets.
6. Encouraging affordable one- and two-family residential infill by simplifying and easing zoning regulations for nonstandard residential lots.

Lastly, the Redevelopment and Strategic Plan incorporates the 7 Fair Housing Goals in the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing, City of Lincoln & Lincoln Housing Authority dated December 5, 2017:

1. Increase affordable housing options across the city.
2. Maintain existing affordable housing.
3. Support fair housing education, enforcement and marketing.
4. Increase access to, and information about, affordable homeownership and rental opportunities throughout the city.
5. Improve access to, education, and information about policies affecting public transportation.
6. Improve public perception of affordable housing and areas with affordable housing.
7. Improve access to community and Neighborhood assets.

REDEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Public Improvements

1. Future public improvements may include replacing aging public utilities, resurfacing and paving of substandard public streets, improvements to alleys, and lighting improvements.
2. Public sidewalk improvements may include resurfacing and paving the substandard public sidewalks.
3. Develop a Planned Unit Development (PUD) overlay zone to allow the north portion of the area to become more mixed use while incentivizing the preservation of the existing building that contribute to the neighborhood's character. Include land use and design standards and review to allow additional and walkable neighborhood support services and new start-up business that would create new employment opportunities while preserving the key historical residential building design patterns. Address the issue of building on small, currently non-conforming lots.

Private Improvements

1. Development of a rental rehab housing improvement program. This project addresses the quality of rental units in the South of Downtown Redevelopment

Area. Improvements and enhancements that support private rehabilitation of existing housing will be identified by Urban Development staff and program guidelines will be established.

The source of funds for public improvements made in this area will be Community Improvement Financing (commonly referred to as Tax Increment Financing or TIF) generated from growth in valuations and the private developments within the project area. The South of Downtown area will be designated a TIF District and short-term debt is expected to be issued to obligate future funds in phases. The City may issue Community Improvement Financing bonds or notes to fund the public improvements related to the project. The City will divide the taxes for the Project Area and will estimate the availability of funds over a three- to four-year period.

Future redevelopment projects may be removed from the district as necessary to establish a new project and will be reviewed on an individual basis, as developers request assistance.

2. Encourage new housing construction. This project will support small scale infill development through the use of "micro-tax increment financing". Vacant lots or dilapidated structures that require demolition will be identified. The additional value that will be created with a new duplex, tri-plex or four-plex, will be calculated and the City will issue a grant or loan that is given or sold to a developer that can be used to secure financing from a bank. Urban Development Department staff will develop program guidelines. Properties to be acquired will be identified and amended to the Plan via Executive Order or Director's Order in Appendix B of the full plan.

FUTURE LAND USE

The South of Downtown area, given its proximity to downtown, already has an organic mix of uses that are nearly impossible to replicate in newer neighborhoods. Even so, the planning process revealed a desire to establish even more land use diversity in the neighborhood. Engagement results showed that the community would like to see more restaurants, small-scale retail, office, neighborhood support services, and parks/open space in South of Downtown.

There are a number of ways to facilitate land use diversity, beginning with zoning. To achieve a mixed use atmosphere, the zoning regulations for the area must be accommodating. Because Lincoln's zoning ordinance does not include a mixed use district classification, the Planned Unit Development (PUD) provides the best zoning tool for achieving a mixed use environment.

Because South of Downtown is an existing neighborhood with limited vacancy, the approach to this PUD must differ from those typically attached to new development. With a future land use goal of creating and supporting a mixed use neighborhood, it is proposed that the PUD be divided into distinct subdistricts. The subdistrict approach, as shown in Figure 3.1, allows the PUD to respond to and better complement the underlying land uses that currently exist within South of Downtown.

Mall District

The Mall District, highlighted in green in Figure 3.1, includes the O-1 District centered along Lincoln Mall. Today, this district is overwhelmingly occupied by office uses. Proposed modifications should include:

Restaurants and Other Food and Drink Establishments – While O-1 allows restaurant and other food establishment uses, it places some limitations on them that the PUD should aim to ease, including floor area regulations and limited on-sale alcohol sales.

Mixed Use District

The Mixed Use District, shown in blue in Figure 3.1, is meant to be the heart of the proposed PUD and the one that might truly allow for a more mixed use environment. Proposed modifications could include:

Allowance of Restaurants and Other Food and Drink Establishments, Small-Scale Retail, Office and Neighborhood Support Services - Small scale forms and as reuse of existing structures.

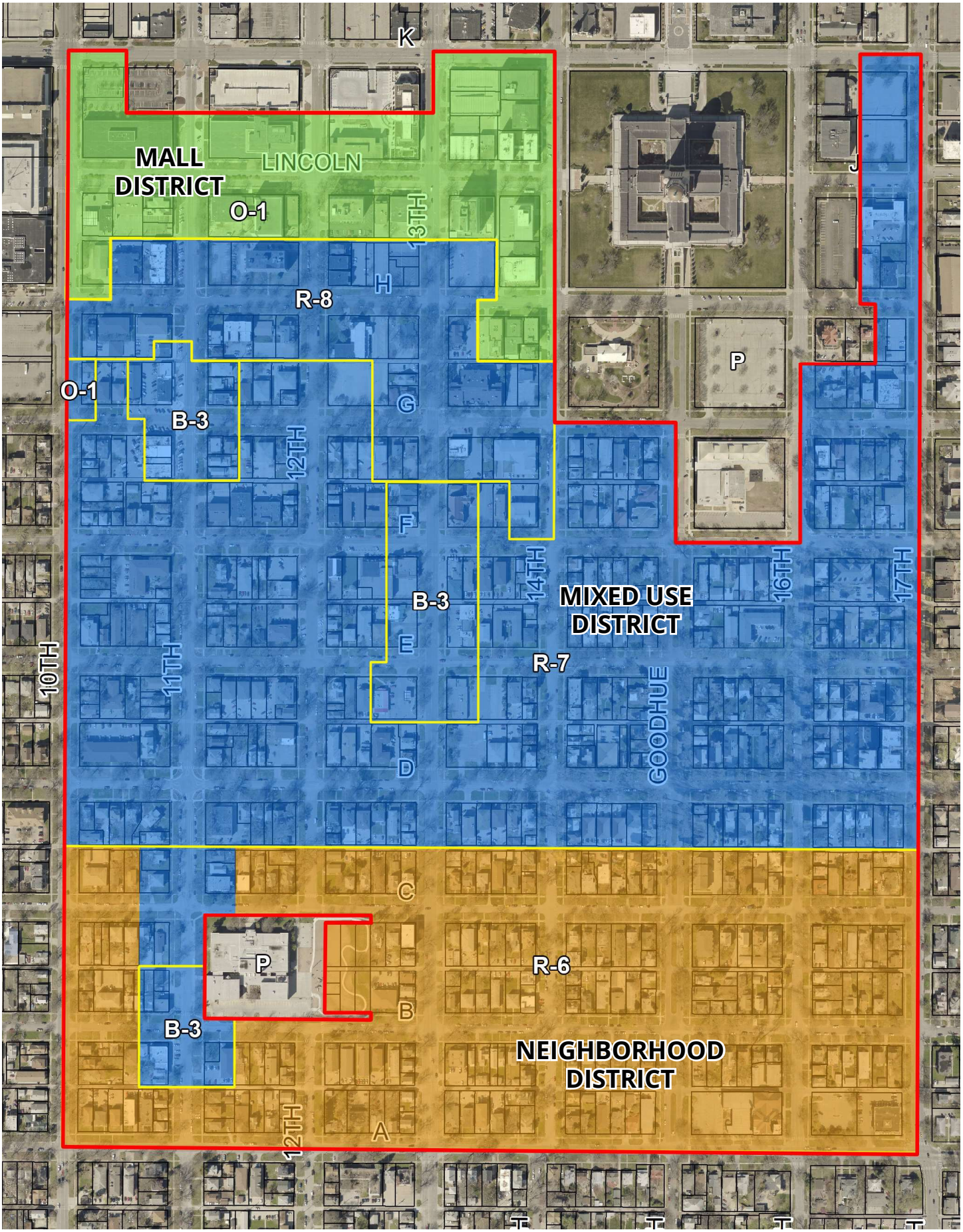
Community Use Spaces – Community- or neighborhood-oriented spaces capable of accommodating a variety of uses, including performance areas, farmers' or arts and crafts markets, food trucks and pop-ups, urban gardens, and other neighborhood amenities and greenspaces. Unlike most parks, community use spaces would typically be privately owned.

Urban Gardens – Urban gardens are currently allowed within the PUD area, but they have restrictions on them that should be removed to further their potential as neighborhood assets. Proposed changes could include:

- Allowing small greenhouses as an accessory use (including innovative greenhouse technologies).
- Allowing produce to be sold on-site in urban gardens.

Home Occupations – Home occupations are defined as "any occupation or activity carried on within a dwelling unit or accessory building by a person or persons residing on the premises, which occupation or activity is incidental and secondary to the residential occupancy and does not change the residential character thereof." Expanded home occupation allowances could change the percentage of occupation use of the floor area, and revise employee requirements.

Small Lot Residential Development – The South of Downtown area contains a significant percentage of small lots that do not meet the zoning code's standard lot requirements. While structures on small lots can continue to exist, these lots often have limited infill or redevelopment potential. There are some exemptions built into the zoning code to accommodate small lots in older neighborhoods, but they can be difficult to interpret and time-consuming to navigate. Even when exemptions are effectively applied, eased regulations often do not go far enough to make infill or redevelopment feasible on small lots. These lots are ideal candidates for affordable single- and two-family housing units, and establishing new regulations and standards for them could lead to an increase in new, affordable housing in the neighborhood.



Future Land Use and Proposed South of Downtown PUD

NORTH

Neighborhood District

The Neighborhood District, shown in orange in Figure 3.1, is intended to remain largely residential in nature. Proposed modifications could include:

Home Occupations – Modify regulations to allow for a higher floor area ratio and an increased number of employees.

Small Lot Residential Development – Ease restriction on infill and redevelopment of nonstandard, residentially-zoned lots.

FINANCING

The primary burden for revitalization of the Redevelopment Area must be on the private sector. The City must provide public services and public improvements and participate where necessary in the redevelopment process, but the needs of the area are beyond the City's capacity to do alone. Financing of proposed improvements will require participation by both the private and public sectors. Where appropriate, the City may participate by providing financial assistance for the rehabilitation of structures.

Sources of funding may include:

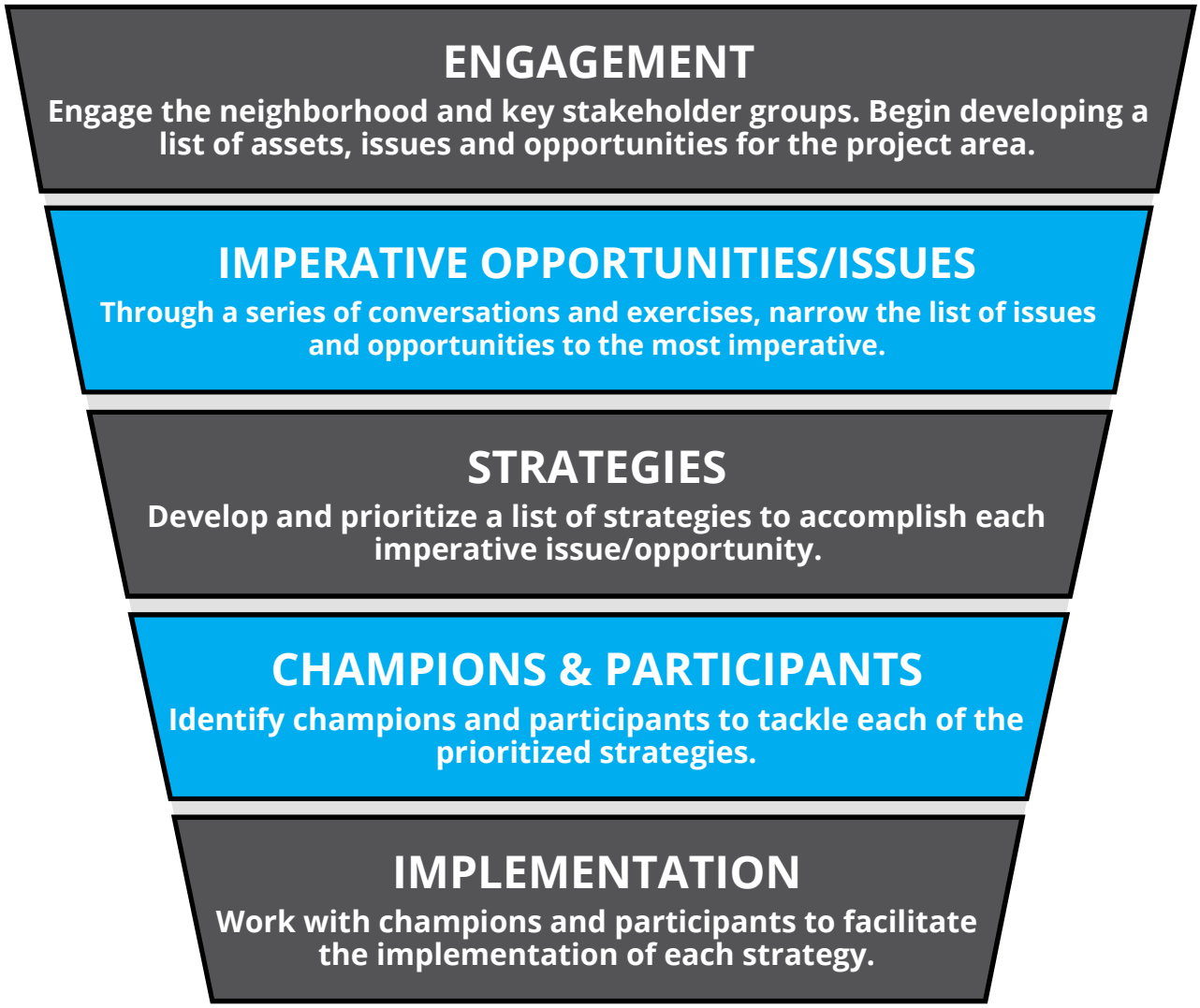
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Special Assessments – Business Improvement Districts
- Private Contributions
- Sale of Land (Proceeds from the sale of land acquired for redevelopment, as identified in the Redevelopment Plan, shall be reinvested in the Redevelopment Area)
- Municipal Infrastructure Redevelopment Fund (MIRF)
- Community Development Block Grant Funds (CDBG)
- Home Investment Partnership Act (HOME)
- HUD Section 108 Loan Program
- Community Improvement (Tax Increment) Financing (Ad Valorem Tax)
- Capital Improvements Program Budget
- Federal and State Grants
- Interest Income
- Advance Land Acquisition Fund – property rights/easements, public facility site acquisition
- Impact Fees

Both of the South of Downtown area's census tracts are designated Opportunity Zones. The Federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 authorized the governor of each U.S. state and territory to nominate a certain number of qualifying census tracts as "Opportunity Zones." Investments made through certified investment vehicles created as "Opportunity Funds" are used to drive needed capital into low-income communities in an effort to spur economic growth within designated Zones — for example, by supporting new businesses or real estate development. Parties who invest in Opportunity Funds can benefit from tax incentives, such as deferrals on capital gains tax. Use of this tool could also assist in financing projects in South of Downtown.

Project activities will be undertaken subject to the limit and source of funding authorized and approved by the Mayor and City Council.

CHAPTER 4: STRATEGIC PLAN

This Chapter identifies the top opportunities/ issues and strategies to be addressed in the South of Downtown area in the short term (1-5 years), as well as potential project champions and participants for each prioritized strategy. Unlike the Redevelopment Plan, the Strategic Plan is a local plan and is not guided by state statutory requirements. The Chapter describes the planning process including how the many opportunities and issues identified during the 2016 Revitalization Plan, door to door interviews, neighborhood gatherings and block parties were funneled down by the Coalition Steering Committee and by the Neighborhoods at a Neighborhood Gathering. The process is illustrated in the following diagram.



IMPERATIVE STRATEGIES

Over a hundred strategies were identified through the planning process. The Coalition Steering Committee spent many months identifying, discussing and prioritizing the "best" strategies that could be present for the neighborhood and community review. Strategies were further identified as "Imperative" or "Merely Important." Recognizing that not all strategies could be implemented due to available resources, the Plan addresses those issues and strategies identified as "Imperative." As part of the process, the Coalition Steering Committee also spent time identifying initial Product Champions and Potential Participants that could help with the future implementation of each imperative strategy. What follows are the Coalition Steering Committee's recommended 10 Opportunities/Issues and combined sixty imperative strategies.

Opportunity/Issue 1 — Focus on Problem Property & Increase Code and Parking Enforcement.

1.1 More focused code enforcement on unsafe, unhealthy and improperly maintained properties within a specific geographic area.

1.2 Expand code enforcement services.

1.3 Develop a registry of vacant properties combined with a registry of problem properties. Focus on specific problem properties.

a. Define criteria for registration.

b. Create a system to measure/keep inventory.

c. Define timelines & strategies for review of vacant properties.

d. Develop a plan of action for addressing vacant properties.

e. Expanded rental registration/interior inspection programs.

1.4 Increase parking enforcement.

Opportunity/Issue 2 — Expand Recreation and Gathering Spaces.

2.1 Establish community partnerships to maximize community learning centers, playground and open space opportunities at McPhee and Everett Schools and F Street Community Center.

2.2 Increase community gathering areas and green spaces to enhance neighborhood rehabilitation.

2.3 Organize more frequent block parties, picnics, parades, cultural festivals, and events with community partners and residents.

2.4 Intentional collaboration and networking between service providers and neighborhood entities.

2.5 Develop a plan to preserve as many of the current healthy older trees and a detailed plan for replacing them.

Opportunity/Issue 3 — Expand Economic Opportunities.

3.1	Continue convening the Human Services Subcommittee for collaboration and partnership among anchor institutions in community and economic development (e.g., F Street Church and other churches, community learning centers, School Neighborhood Advisory Council (SNAC), PTO.
3.2	Collaboratively promote menu of pathways for economic opportunities (i.e. Learn to Dream Scholarship, TMCO Tech Certification Program, Nebraska Dev Lab Pipeline Program) to residents.
3.3	Identify and eliminate barriers to employment (e.g., language, childcare literacy, health).
3.4	Expanded childcare. Research solutions to make childcare businesses available to those living in apartment units.
3.5	Repurpose/expand portions of the F Street Community Center (ResCare, computer labs, job fairs, educational kitchen, etc.); F Street Community Center should be a one-stop shop for information and services and a gateway for the neighborhood, including the immigrant community.
3.6	Expand and promote existing programming in the neighborhood and at F Street Community Center.
3.7	Create a neighborhood education, health, jobs, child care and employment training center and more "hands on skill training" in cooperation with TMCO, Lincoln Industries and others.
3.8	Expand the effort to work with existing businesses to recruit neighborhood residents as employees. Promote outreach specific to South of Downtown residents.
3.9	Expanded public transportation hours and routes.
3.10	Create health worker training center with Lincoln's healthcare funders and providers (e.g., Tabitha, Bryan Health, and Community Health Endowment).
3.11	Ensure there is digital inclusion for all neighborhood residents and commercial users to have access to, and skills to use, information and communication technologies (ICT) and are therefore able to participate in and benefit from today's growing knowledge and information society.
3.12	City should encourage higher density mixed use redevelopment (including affordable housing) and garage parking for the blocks between "K", "L", 10th & 14th Streets. This will create more eyes on the street in south portion of the Central District and encourage more north/south pedestrian circulation between South of Downtown area and Downtown.
3.13	Expand microlending that provides smaller loans (generally less than $50,000) for small businesses to support operations and capital costs in cooperation with banks, credit unions and foundations.
3.14	Pursue private investors to use Opportunity Zone tax credits.
3.15	State of Nebraska should build additional parking garage(s) for State employees and guests which will help reduce the parking shortage around the Capitol and other State buildings and open up on-street parking in the neighborhood.
3.16	Develop business incubator spaces in cooperation with other existing entities (e.g., UNL, banks, foundations, Parks & Recreation Department, Nelnet, Firespring and others).

Opportunity/Issue 4 — Increase Funding for Housing, especially Affordable Housing and Workforce Housing.

4.1 Identify city sources of funding for acquisition, demolition, and rehabilitation programs for rentals and homeownership.

4.2 Increase the city's Affordable Housing Fund, funded by TIF administration fees, Turnback Tax, and other sources; 30-80% of AMI incomes are the highest priority to address. Develop strategies on how to use the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund (NAHTF).

4.3 Create a tax increment district to "remove blight and stimulate investment" in deteriorating areas for the following purposes:

- Affordable housing to reduce potential rental increases.
- Repair/replace infrastructure.

4.4 Leverage and layer existing affordable housing development programs, renters and homeownership (LIHTC, HOME, NAHTF, and CDBG) to develop and/or rehabilitate quality affordable housing in the neighborhood, with focus on 30% - 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) as the highest need.

4.5 Modify the Lincoln Electric System sustainable energy fund to benefit more rental properties.

4.6 Seek nonprofit organizations and philanthropic funds for project, program, gap funding and technical assistances (e.g., grants and mission investment loans).

4.7 Leverage Opportunity Zone tax incentive investments.

Opportunity/Issue 5 — Increase Safety, Crime Prevention and Sense of Community.

5.1 Community policing for crime prevention and building relationships with police officers in a framework of a comprehensive and holistic approach to neighborhood safety and services.

5.2 Increase street, alley and pedestrian lighting; add alley murals and other placemaking activities; and remove overgrown vegetation in public spaces. Need to map lighting and crime correlation.

5.3 Increase School Neighborhood Advisory Councils (SNAC) of the community learning centers and other school-based programming to assist students, families and the neighborhood.

5.4 Determine if the 2015 International Existing Building Code should be adopted.

5.5 Improve key governmental, health and emergency managements systems working with South of Downtown Community Development Organization, neighborhood businesses, area nonprofits and residents to disseminate and share key information and to prevent, mitigate, protect, respond and provide recovery assistance in the event disaster is eminent or strikes the South of Downtown area or its residents.

Opportunity/Issue 6 — Enhance the Public Right-of-Way.

6.1 Increase area lighting - Work with Lincoln Electric System and Lincoln Police Department to map neighborhood dark spots to determine addition of lighting for safety.

6.2 Improve alley appearance including lighting, trash collection and removal of voluntary trees.

6.3 Increase pedestrian scale lighting.

6.4 Identify closer to home improvements: maintenance and signage, including, but not limited to, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, road and bike lane surfaces, markings, leaf removal and potholes (e.g., repave 11th Street and other right-of-ways).

6.5 Where appropriate in the proposed north PUD area, increase angled and parallel on-street parking on both sides of the street in order to maximize available parking (e.g., 11th Street).

6.6 Reduce digital divide. Utilize ROW to install infrastructure to provide affordable hardware and wireless communication in the neighborhood.

Opportunity/Issue 7 — Improve the Community Development Organization Funding and Outreach.

7.1 Seek diverse relationships from foundations, corporations and government to increase awareness and secure funding opportunities.

7.2 Recruit and retain high capacity board members, staff and volunteers to bring in new ideas and energy.

7.3 Implement a never-ending strategic planning process continuing to build on community assets and identifying opportunities.

7.4 Work with partners to enhance outreach efforts and problem solving.

7.5 Sponsor additional community gatherings to help build a sense of community (e.g., community art spaces, meeting spaces, etc.)

7.6 Establish a work plan to ensure that outcome measurements and results are being achieved.

7.7 Increase SDCDO outreach with governmental, health and emergency management systems, neighborhood businesses, area nonprofits to help prevent, mitigate, protect, respond and provide recovery assistance in the event disaster is eminent or strikes the South of Downtown area or its residents.

Opportunity/Issue 8 — Establish and Fund a Community Land Trust.

8.1 Establish a Community Land Trust to purchase existing property, parking lots, and vacant properties.

- Acquire parking lots and other available properties to provide mixed-use redevelopment with affordable and market rate housing and commercial community needs such as groceries, daycare, social services, etc.

Opportunity/Issue 9 — Increase Landlord and Tenant Education Programs.

9.1 Increase Tenant Education including both literature and trainings available in multiple languages within cultural and community centers.

9.2 For landlords with repeated violations, require a "STOP" education class for repeated complaints or to renew City apartment permits.

9.3 Develop a Supplemental Property Management Training program led by Building and Safety Dept., Lincoln Police Deptartment, and the Commission on Human Rights.

- Training should include content on landlord responsibilities including fair housing, information that should be relayed to new tenants, and further explanation of landlord and tenant responsibilities. Coordinate with the Board of Realtors and Real Estate Owners and Manager Association (REOMA).

9.4 Language interpreters should be provided to Building and Safety when needed.

9.5 Establish legal aid services to provide tenant right education.

Opportunity/Issue 10 — Amend the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning.

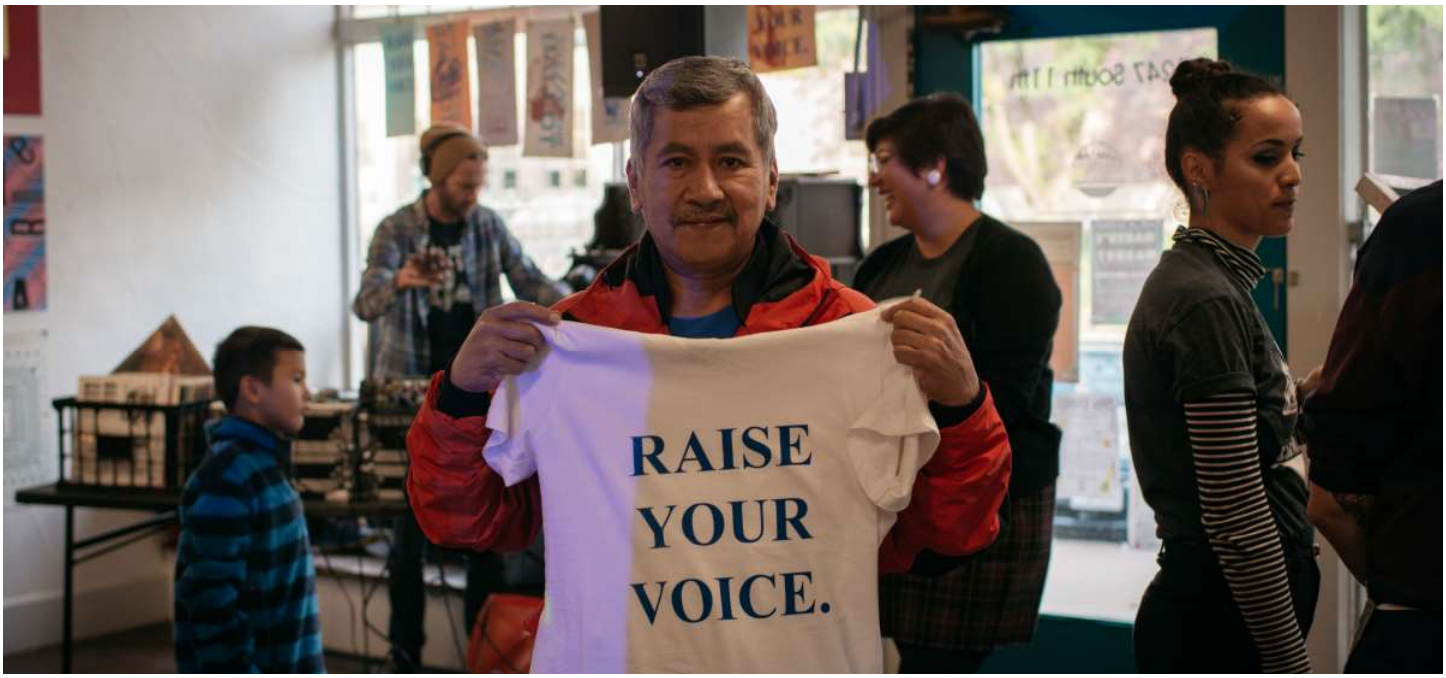
10.1 Adopt mixed-use (residential, office, retail, restaurants, technology) Planned Unit Development (PUD) in the north portion of the neighborhood (e.g., technology in the morning, restaurant at night).

- Define/allow cooperative housing in the PUD.

10.2 Allow flexibility of zoning/setbacks and easements to allow construction of affordable housing on non-conforming lots.

10.3 Amend zoning to allow redevelopment and infill for legal nonstandard lots in order to encourage affordable housing.

10.4 Expand allowable home occupation square footage; more square footage in the PUD, less in the balance of the area.



IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

After Plan adoption, an Implementation Committee should be established comprised of South of Downtown Community Development Organization staff and Board members, area residents, stakeholders, and City staff. Its purpose should be to:

1. Establish a timeline for Strategic Plan strategy implementation. Although all strategies are imperative, their implementation cannot occur simultaneously due to staff resource limitations.
2. Meet bi-monthly to review progress and identify steps needed to stay on schedule for implementation.
3. Prepare an annual progress report for the SDCDO Board, City Administration, and area residents that identifies progress by strategy and includes an evaluation of the progress to-date.

Redevelopment Plan evaluation is mandated by state statute in an annual TIF report to the State of Nebraska.

Collectively, the Redevelopment Plan and Strategic Plan will result in achieving the vision of:

"Neighborhoods built on existing community assets with equitable opportunities for jobs, housing, health, and services for all residents and businesses.

CITY OF
LINCOLN™
NEBRASKA