



Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission

2020 Annual Report



NEBRASKA'S CENTEN



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Office of the Nebraska Capitol Commission's Capitol Administrator or their designee

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Collin Christopher

Stacey Groshong Hageman

Teresa McKinstry

APPROVED

The Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission approved this Annual Report on February 26, 2021.

Project Reviews

The Commission reviewed a number of interesting projects in Environs District in 2020.

In February, the Commission approved a plan to demolish the existing house at 1515 F Street and build a new four-story structure with one dwelling unit per floor. Each unit will have a recessed balcony/porch that faces the Capitol. Demolition has already occurred, with construction anticipated to get underway in 2021.

In June, the Commission reviewed a residential street rehab project being proposed by the City's LTU Department for Lincoln Mall, 14th Street and Goodhue Boulevard. Though the Commission was supportive of many of the elements of the project, they raised concerns about the City's plans for replacing decorative paving with standard grey concrete at several intersections along Lincoln Mall and asked the City to explore alternative solutions that would preserve the existing rhythm and organization of the Mall.



The rendering above illustrates the north elevation of the proposed four-plex at 1515 F Street.



In July, the Commission recommended the rezoning of a number of city-owned J Street properties, as proposed in the South Haymarket Neighborhood Plan and the South Haymarket Design Standards. Combined with the planned streetscape improvements for J Street, the

rezoning lays the groundwork for future redevelopment in the area, which is likely to include additional residential and office uses. The Design Standards specifically mention rowhouses as a possible redevelopment solution.



In December of 2019, the Commission reviewed a draft of the Haymarket South Streetscapes and Parking Improvements Plan. To coordinate with the vision for J Street that the Haymarket South Plan imagines in the renderings above, the Planning Department initiated a rezoning of city-owned properties along J Street to better accommodate future redevelopment of residential and office uses. This zoning change was previously highlighted in the South Haymarket Neighborhood Plan. In July of 2020, the Environs Commission made a recommendation to the Planning Commission to approve the zoning proposal. The Planning Commission acted on that recommendation and approved the rezoning of J Street.

In August, the Commission approved a law enforcement memorial in front of the Hall of Justice at 575 S 10th Street. The memorial will honor officers from the Lincoln Police Department and Lancaster County Sheriff's Office who have

died in the line of duty. While multiple locations and design alternatives were considered on the site, the one presented to the Environs Commission is positioned far enough north to not impact views along Lincoln Mall.



Above is the approved concept for the Law Enforcement Memorial in front of the Hall of Justice at 575 S 10th Street.

In November, the Commission approved the Sky Park Manor remodel project. Designed by prominent local architect Selmer A. Solheim, this mid-century high-rise apartment buildings was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2016. Exterior work to the building is expected to include, among other things, restoration of

the railing system, renovation of the Sun and Fun deck, and repainting of the building to match its historic colors - neutral white body, blue-grey soffit trim and a multi-colored penthouse. The project directly aligns with Guideline 14.1 of the Design Standards, which states the Sky Park Manor "should be preserved and maintained."



The Commission also got their first look at the Pershing block redevelopment project in November. As far back as 2014 when Pershing Center hosted its last concert, the block has been targeted as a key redevelopment opportunity for downtown. In 2018, it was identified as a catalyst project in the Downtown Master Plan. After receiving five redevelopment proposals in the spring of 2020, city officials awarded the project to White Lotus Group out of Omaha. The White Lotus team's vision for the block includes a library, a wellness center, affordable housing, and

a community greenspace. While there is still much work and coordination to be done to make this project a reality, it has the potential to dramatically impact Centennial Mall, the Environs District, and the larger downtown area for the better. The Commission looks forward to playing a key part in its implementation.



The concept for the redevelopment of the Pershing block includes a library, a wellness center, affordable housing units, and an active greenspace that should combine to bring added energy to Centennial Mall.

Text Amendments

In February, the Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Department received a request from the Governor on behalf of the Capitol Commission to add the Capitol Commission's Capitol Administrator as the fourth ex officio member of the Capitol Environs Commission. In July, the Environs Commission discussed the topic and unanimously recommended that Planning staff move forward with a text amendment to the Municipal Code to add a fourth ex officio. In September, the

Lincoln City Council approved the amendment. In approving this addition, both the Environs Commission and the City Council acknowledged the expertise and historical knowledge that Mr. Ripley brings to the Commission.

As the year wraps up, Planning Department staff is also exploring a text amendment to the Capitol Environs Design Standards to include more specific standards and guidelines for memorials and monuments. The Commission will have a chance to weigh in on this topic in early 2021.



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