



Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission

2021 Annual Report





NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Kile Johnson, Chair
Mary Campbell, Vice-Chair
Karen Nalow
Heidi Cuca
Delonte Johnson
Ann Post
David Quade

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

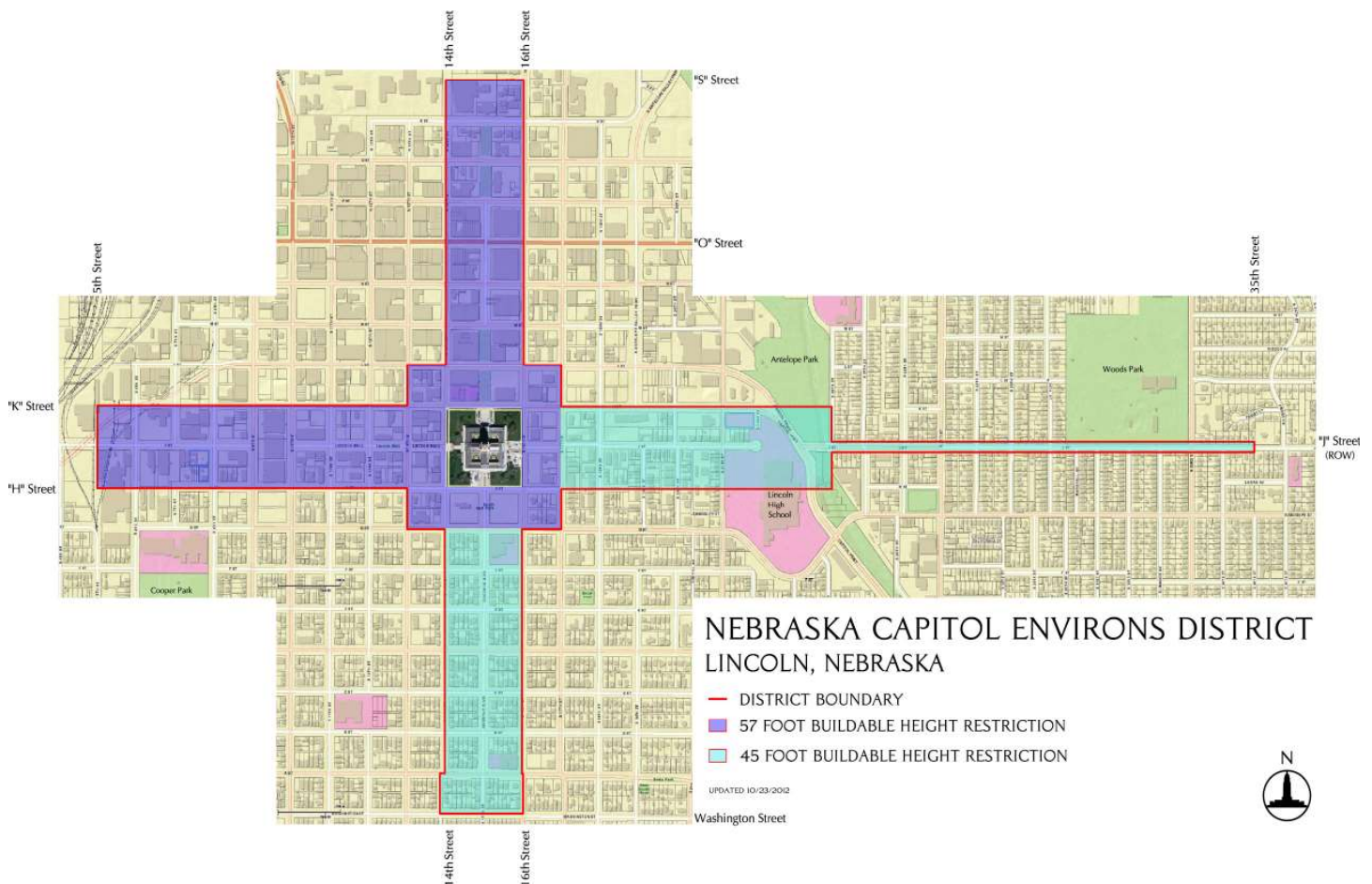
David Cary, Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Department
Lynn Johnson, Lincoln Parks and Recreation
Michelle Potts, State Building Division, Nebraska Department of Administrative Services
Bob Ripley, Office of the Nebraska Capitol Commission

PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFF

Collin Christopher
Teresa McKinstry

APPROVED

The Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission approved this Annual Report on February 25, 2022.



The Nebraska State Capitol, designed by architect Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue in 1920 and built for the people of Nebraska between 1922 and 1932, is a National Historic Landmark and an aesthetic and historic treasure of our state. The purposes of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission ("the Commission") are to maintain and enhance a dignified setting for the State Capitol, to encourage appropriate public and private improvements within the Capitol Environs District ("the District"), and to protect vistas to the Capitol which extend the impact and inspiration of the building throughout the city and the surrounding countryside.

Background

The Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission was established in 1988 to strengthen existing protections for the setting of Nebraska's landmark State Capitol. The Commission's voting membership of seven citizen volunteers includes five members appointed by the City of Lincoln and two appointed by the State of Nebraska.

In 2021, the Commission remained unchanged from the previous year, with Kile Johnson serving as chair, Mary Campbell as vice-chair, and Karen Nalow, Heidi Cuca, Delonte Johnson, Ann Post and David Quade continuing as members. The seven appointed citizen members are joined by four ex officio members – the Director of the Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Department or their designee (David Cary), the Director of Lincoln

Parks and Recreation or their designee (Lynn Johnson), the Director of Nebraska Department of Administrative Services or their designee (Michelle Potts - State Building Division Director), and the Office of the Nebraska Capitol Commission's Capitol Administrator or their designee (Bob Ripley). Staffing is provided by the Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Department, including planner Collin Christopher and administrative assistant Teresa McKinstry.

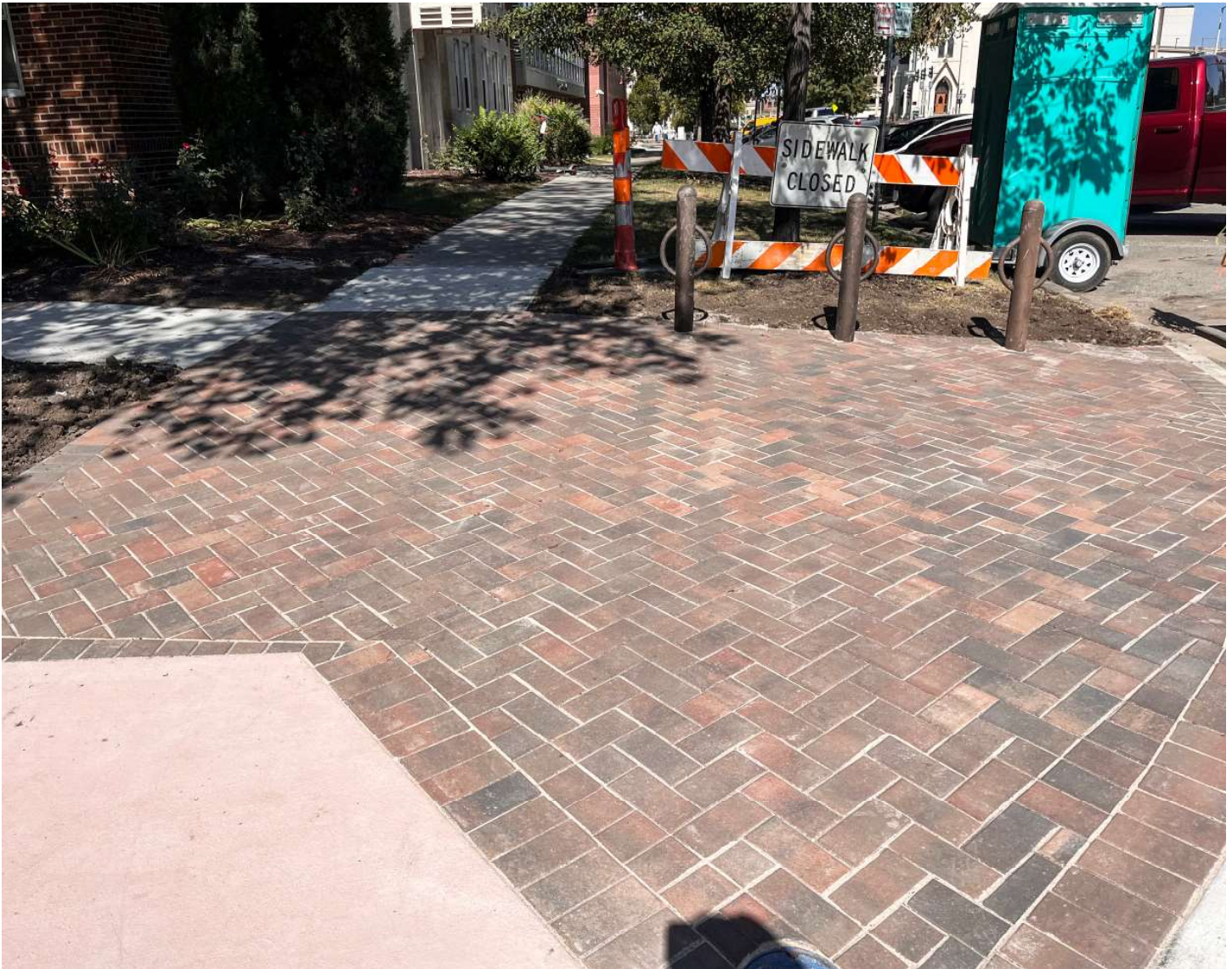
The Commission is required to meet at least quarterly by Section 27.56.060 of the Lincoln Municipal Code. The Commission met nine times in 2021.

Project Reviews

The Commission reviewed a number of interesting projects in the Capitol Environs District in 2021:

Residential Street Rehab Project - Kicking off the new year in January, the Commission reviewed and approved a residential street rehab project being proposed by the City's Transportation and Utilities Department for Lincoln Mall, 14th Street, and Goodhue Boulevard. The project had previously been reviewed by the Commission in June of 2020, at which time they directed LTU to revise their plans to preserve the decorative paving at the pedestrian nodes along Lincoln Mall. The revised plans presented in January did just that, and construction commenced in August and wrapped up in October.

Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte Sculpture - In February and March, the Commission approved a plaque and portrait sculpture of Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte to be located on the east side of the L to M block of Centennial Mall. Dr. La Flesche Picotte was a member of the Omaha Tribe, and the first Native American woman in America to become a doctor. She raised funds to build a hospital in Walt Hill, NE to provide medical services to Native Americans and other Nebraskans. The sculpture was funded through a private donation, and created by sculptor Benjamin Victor. Victor is also responsible for the "Standing Bear, Chief of the Ponca" sculpture on Centennial Mall. On October 11th, Lincoln celebrated Indigenous Peoples' Day with the unveiling of the sculpture.



As part of the residential street rehab project along Lincoln Mall, contractors restored the decorative paving nodes at each intersection back to their original design, per the direction of the Commission. The result is perfect example of how the Commission's oversight can positively impact the built environment within the Capitol Environs.



On October 11th, the Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte sculpture was unveiled as part of the celebration of Indigenous Peoples' Day. The sculpture was created by Ben Victor, who is also the artist responsible for the Chief Standing Bear piece on Centennial Mall. The natural limestone pedestal that the sculpture stands on is meant to mimic a stone outcrop.

1526 K Street Plaque - March also saw the approval of a new pedestal and plaque in front of the DAS building at 1526 K Street. The building, which the State of Nebraska purchased from Assurity in 2007, is the home of "The Protecting Hand" sculpture. Located on the building's south façade above its entrance, the sculpture by artist Lawrence Tenney Stevens was completed and dedicated in 1955. The new plaque honoring the sculpture reads as follows:

The Protecting Hand sculpture, created by artist Lawrence Tenney Stevens, was dedicated on October 6, 1955 on the façade of the late Woodmen Accident and Life Company building located at 1526 K Street. The sculpture weighs in at roughly 200 tons and was sculpted out of the same Indiana limestone used to construct the Nebraska State Capitol. The artwork was sculpted to represent support of the family circle by nestling six family members into one palm.

In 2007 the building was purchased by the State of Nebraska and was later dedicated as the First Nebraska Administrative Building, to honor the First

Nebraska Infantry Regiment that fought heroically in the Civil War. This plaque was dedicated in 2021 with the support from Assurity Life Insurance.

2 Landmark Centre - In March and April, the Commission approved NEBCO's plans to demolish and redevelop a portion of the block bounded by Lincoln Mall, H Street, 11th Street and 12th Street. The plan for redevelopment is to construct an office building similar to NEBCO's two Landmark buildings on the north side of Lincoln Mall.

South of Downtown PUD - The Commission also provided an advisory review in April and May of the South of Downtown PUD and the associated O-1 text amendment. The PUD and the text amendment aim to provide added land use flexibility in the South of Downtown area, and the Commission had a great discussion that helped propel both efforts toward approval by the City Council.

McPhee Elementary Sign - A new sign in front of McPhee Elementary was approved by the Commission in May.



1320 Lincoln Mall - In August, the Commission approved exterior improvements at 1320 Lincoln Mall being proposed as part of a larger renovation of the office building.

1843 K Street Outdoor Play Area - Also in August, the Commission approved an outdoor play area at 1843 K Street designed to include art easels, musical instruments, seating, sandbox, child building materials, and plantings conducive to children's learning in an outdoor environment.

Pershing Center Demolition - In September, the City's Urban Development Department requested and received a certificate of appropriateness for the demolition of the Pershing Center on Centennial Mall. Plans for redevelopment of the block include a private development component consisting of affordable housing, a wellness center, and retail. It is anticipated that the Commission will be reviewing schematic designs for this portion of the block in early 2022.

Redevelopment plans also anticipate the construction of a new central library on the block, which will likely come forward for review in the summer of 2022.

501 S 14th Street - Wrapping up the year, the Commission granted the State Building Division a Certificate of Exception on Grounds of Hardship in December to place a radio antenna on the rooftop of the State-owned building at 501 S 14th Street. The Commission expressed concerns about the

rooftop equipment that exists at this location and its impact on views to the Capitol, and thus chose to attach an expiration date of July 1, 2026 to the Certificate in order to hasten the equipment's eventual removal.

Text Amendments

2021 also included another update to the Capitol Environs Design Standards. This change dates back to August of 2020, when the Commission approved a Law Enforcement Memorial in front of the Hall of Justice. While the Commission fully supported the proposal, they expressed a desire to have more definitive standards for monuments and memorials along Lincoln and Centennial Malls. Over the course of several meetings in 2021, the Commission discussed and ultimately recommended approval of the added standards. Those standards were sent to and approved by the City Council in September.

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead, the redevelopment picture for the Pershing block should start to come into focus in 2022, and the Commission will be asked to play a major role in pushing this catalyst project forward. Beyond Pershing, there are a handful of other significant redevelopment projects in the Capitol Environs District that are in the early planning stages. Each could serve to bring additional reinvestment and activity to the District.



Lincoln Mall saw examples of both public and private reinvestment in 2021, including the proposed rehab of the office building at 1320 Lincoln Mall.



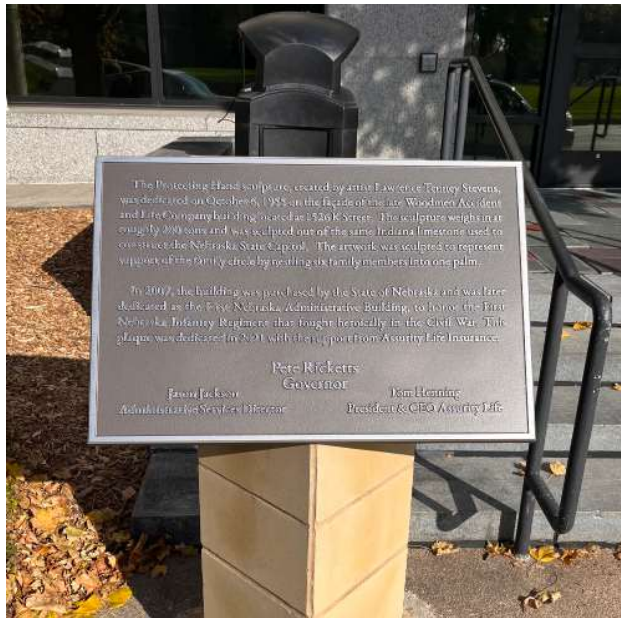
Construction Underway at 2 Landmark Centre on Lincoln Mall



Law Enforcement Memorial in Front of Hall of Justice (Approved in August 2020)



1526 K Street Plaque for "The Protecting Hand" Sculpture





NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

2021 ANNUAL REPORT