

Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Commission



2016 Annual Report

On the Cover:
Front row from left: Sändra Washington, Chris Hove, Dennis Scheer
Back row from left: Tom Beckius, Ken Weber, Tracy Corr, Maja V. Harris,
Deane Finnegan, Tracy Edgerton

APPLICATIONS

The summary below provides an indication of the volume and trends in recent applications submitted to the Planning Department over the past six fiscal years. The Planning Commission directly reviewed about half of the applications. The volumes of the past several fiscal years reflect a plateau of increased activity after the rebound of development activity to pre-recession levels.

PLANNING DEPT APPLICATIONS	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Annexations	3	7	6	6	11	14
Preliminary plats	1	1	2	4	1	4
Final plats	100	102	139	112	129	131
Community Unit Plan amendments (CUP)	12	11	12	15	14	10
Use permits	6	5	4	13	12	12
Special permits and amendments	31	40	46	40	60	54
Change of zone-Map	25	24	16	23	22	26
Change of zone-Historic Preservation (HP)**	0	0	5	2	2	5
Change of zone-Sign district**	0	0	2	1	1	0
Change of zone-Planned Unit Developments (PUDs)	5	11	8	8	13	8
Board of Zoning Appeals	0	4	3	4	3	4
Street name changes	3	2	2	1	0	0
Street and alley vacations	13	9	9	10	11	4
Administrative amendments	62	65	106	83	103	90
Comp Plan conformity	11	15	18	35	19	11
Comp Plan amendments	0	9	2	7	7	6
Waiver of design standards	34	23	7	11	9	7
Text amendments	21	13	13	15	20	11
Miscellaneous/other	5	9	2	2	3	4
Urban design review*	0	42	57	42	42	72
TOTAL PER FISCAL YEAR	332	392	459	434	482	473

*Urban design review added in 2012

**Change of Zone HP and Sign District not tracked separately in previous years

APPLICATIONS OF NOTE

Some of the more notable development applications reviewed by the Planning Commission included the following:

- Mixed use redevelopment at 48th and Holdrege
- Mixed use redevelopment at 48th and Leighton
- Cooper Commons residential redevelopment at 9th and D
- Continued work on Phase II of the Telegraph District
- Lincoln Children's Zoo expansion project
- Antelope Square residential redevelopment at 23rd and Q
- Hotel redevelopment at 9th and O
- Costco development at 14th and Pine Lake
- Several new residential subdivisions
- Several Downtown redevelopment projects
- Expansion plans at South Pointe Pavilions
- Bicycling ordinance changes
- Capital Improvement Program conformity review
- 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update approval
- Long Range Transportation Plan update approval

This report summarizes the major activities of the Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Commission during the past calendar year. The nine Commissioners are appointed for staggered six-year terms by Lincoln's Mayor, with the concurrence of the City Council and the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners. The Planning Commission is charged by state and local law with advising the two elected boards on a variety of planning and development matters. It operates under an interlocal agreement dating back to 1958.



48th & Holdrege



48th & Leighton



9th & O Hotel



Lincoln Children's Zoo Master Plan



Comprehensive Plan, 5-Year Update



Long Range Transportation Plan 2016 Update

The Planning Commission also reviewed applications for local historic landmark designations, National Register of Historic Places listings and redevelopment plans. There were also complex design reviews by the design review boards that informed the Planning Commission. Such applications involve efforts by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), Urban Design Committee (UDC), and the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission (NCEC). Applications under these headings receiving reviews by the Planning Commission included the following:

Local Historic Landmark Designations

- Chet Ager Building
- First Street Bible Church
- Cordner House
- Removal of Sophy Teeters' Nurses Home

Redevelopment Plans

- 48th & Holdrege
- 48th & Leighton
- HUDL Plaza
- Lumberworks Liner Building
- Block 36 (Kindler Hotel/Lincoln Commercial Club)
- 1222 P
- Telegraph District Phase 2
- 9th & O Hotel

Complex Reviews by Design Boards

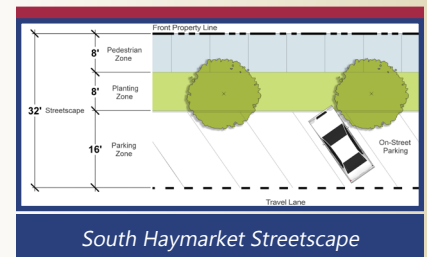
- Lincoln Children's Zoo
- Well family compound

2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATES

The 2040 Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan and related Metropolitan Planning Organization Long Range Transportation Plan were updated in 2016. The Comprehensive Plan embodies Lincoln and Lancaster County's shared vision for the future, out to the year 2040. It outlines where, how and when the community intends to grow, how to preserve and enhance the things that make it special, and strategies for implementing the vision for how we will live, work, play and get around in the future. The development of 2016 Update was coordinated with the formulation of the Long Range Transportation Plan - 2016 Update, a separate document that is required for the City and County to receive federal transportation funds. The development of the Long Range Transportation Plan and other related activities is undertaken through a separate entity established by the City, the County and the State called the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (LMPO).

SOUTH HAYMARKET DESIGN STANDARDS

New Design Standards for the South Haymarket District were developed and approved to address streetscapes, site development, and building design in this emerging neighborhood. The standards are based largely on the Lincoln Downtown Design Standards but adapted to best serve South Haymarket. Because this area is envisioned as a residential neighborhood and not the urban core, standards for buildings and sites are designed to be more flexible than Downtown Design Standards allowing for larger setbacks, less transparency, and greater variety of building materials. The South Haymarket Design Standards also address streetscapes which are a new component of the design standards. Many of the existing streetscapes in South Haymarket are highly unorganized, lack comfortable spaces for pedestrians, and do not define parking spaces. As redevelopment in this area focuses on residential infill, amenities along the street, such as street trees, continuous sidewalks, and on-street parking, will make the neighborhood a more walkable and attractive place to live and work.



THEATER POLICY REVIEW

The Planning Department received and processed a proposal to remove the reference to the Theater Policy in the Comprehensive Plan, remove the restriction on the number of screens allowed outside of Downtown and to allow small movie theaters (250 seats or less) as a special permitted use in the B-2 and B-3 zoning districts. The Planning Department conducted a thorough process to engage stakeholders, the applicant and the expertise of Economic Planning Consultants in response to this proposal to ensure an informed decision. The City Council voted on January 23rd, 2017 to retain the current Theater Policy but to allow smaller movie theaters as a special permitted use in the B-2 and B-3 zoning districts.

CODE AMENDMENTS

A significant package of code amendments was processed by the Planning Commission in 2016. Revisions were compiled by Planning staff over the past several years and include correction of minor errors, clarification of unclear terms and concepts, and more substantive changes that streamline approval processes for City staff and the public, and eliminate burdensome requirements.

A separate code amendment was also processed that revised regulations dealing with accessory buildings not part of a main building which extend into the required side yard in the listed zoning districts. This change also establish a maximum allowable area for accessory buildings on single- family or two-family lots or tracts in AG, AGR and R-1 to R-8 zoning districts.



Planning Commission Hearing



Planning Commission Hearing

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPROVEMENTS

The Planning Commission moved to go fully digital with its agenda material in 2016 by providing all needed information through online sources and links to the Planning Application Tracking System. This has resulted in savings in staff time, photocopy expenses, postage, and paper use to prepare previously needed paper copies and mailings.

Looking forward to 2017, work on an update to the Project Dux plan review system will begin. There also will be a move to provide a laptop at all Planning Commission hearings for access to digital files and images related to agenda items.

WORKSHOPS

The past year included many briefings and work sessions for the Planning Commission with the completion of the update process for the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Below is a complete listing of briefings and workshops the Planning Commission held in 2016:

- LRTP/Comp Plan Update Review - 01/06/2016
- LRTP/Comp Plan Update - 01/20/2016
- Airport Zoning Text Amendments - 02/03/2016
- LRTP/Comp Plan Update - 02/03/2016
- LRTP/Comp Plan Update - 02/17/2016
- LRTP/Comp Plan Update - 03/02/2016
- LRTP/Comp Plan Update - 03/16/2016
- LRTP/Comp Plan Update - 03/30/2016
- LRTP/Comp Plan Update - 04/13/2016
- LRTP/Comp Plan Update - 04/27/2016
- Review CIP/TIP/Community Indicators - 05/11/2016
- LRTP/Comp Plan Update - 05/25/2016
- LRTP/Comp Plan Update - 06/08/2016
- LRTP/Comp Plan Update - 06/22/2016
- Zoning Text Amendments - Clean-up Items - 06/22/2016
- Comp Plan Review - 07/20/2016
- Going Digital w/Planning Commission Agenda/packets - 07/20/2016
- LRTP/Comp Plan Update Review - 09/14/2016

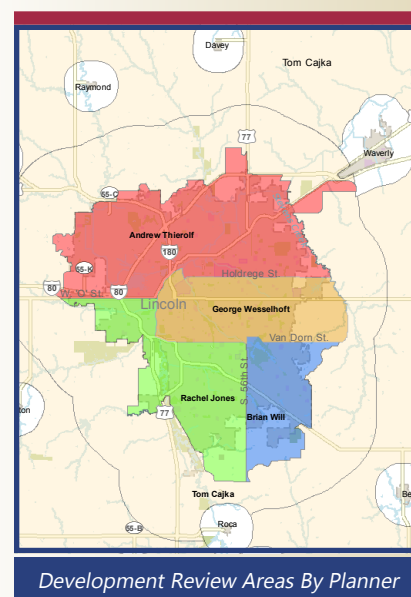
NEW PLANNING STAFF

George Wesselhoft joined the Development Review section of the Planning Department in July 2016. George was previously the Planning Director in Pella, Iowa. He joins UNL graduates Rachel Jones and Andrew Theirolf, who started in Development Review in the summer and fall of 2015 respectively. The Development Review planner areas can be found online at:

<http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/dev/index.htm>

FAREWELLS AND HELLOS TO PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

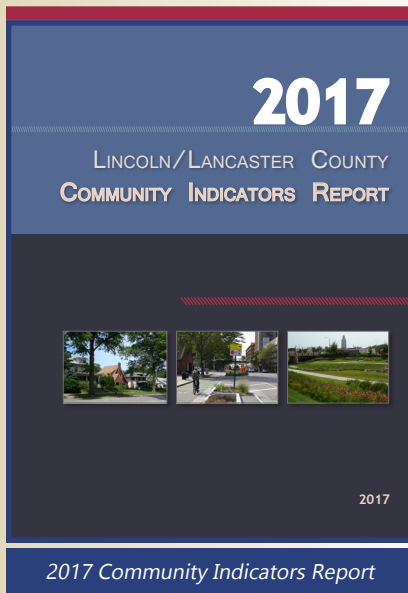
In 2016 we said goodbye to four of our longstanding members of the Planning Commission: Cathy Beecham, Jeanelle Lust, Michael Cornelius, and Lynn Sunderman. We wish them all well and thank them for their service. At the same time, we welcomed our new members Sandra Washington, Deane Finnegan, Tracy Edgerton, and Tom Beckius. We look forward to working together.



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2017

- Implementation of the planned bike share program in Downtown Lincoln. A vendor has been selected and funding is secured for purchase and installation of the racks, bikes and technology infrastructure as well as the first year of operational and maintenance costs.
- Begin process to develop and install a digital municipal code.
- Complete an annexation study and determine next steps for reviewing an annexation package.
- Discussion of alcohol zoning and spacing policies.
- Consideration and action on the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Transportation Improvement Program.
- Discuss and adopt a 2017 package of Zoning Code amendments.
- Review of the 2017 Community Indicators Report.
- Implementation of a more digital application process.
- A continued steady flow of development applications for review and action.





- Regular updates related to Complete Streets projects and their implementation.
- Implementation of priority items identified during the update of the Comprehensive Plan and the Long Range Transportation Plan.
- Discussion on the role of Accessory Dwelling Units in providing housing options.
- Review and action on a County Zoning Code set of amendments.
- Begin the process of developing the 2018/19-2023/24 Capital Improvement Program for project prioritization and Comprehensive Plan conformity review.

CONCLUSION

The Planning Commission continued to play an important role in the development of Lincoln and Lancaster County over the past year. Commissioners deliberated numerous and sometimes contentious development applications and worked on various improvements to local codes and administrative procedures. We appreciate the opportunity to serve our community in this role and hope that our local elected officials have found our efforts to be helpful.

Chris Hove, Chair