

# IMPLEMENTING PLANFORWARD 2050

**Plan Forward 2050, the current Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan, was adopted on November 12, 2021. This document includes highlights of implementation successes over the past four years.**

**February 1, 2026**

The Lincoln-Lancaster County 2050 Comprehensive Plan is a roadmap to "plan forward", not only in time, but in concept, to envision a community that is **Livable, Equitable, Thriving, Resilient, and Innovative**.

**CITY OF LINCOLN NEBRASKA** **LANCASTER COUNTY NEBRASKA** **Adopted November 12, 2021**

PlanForward 2050 - amended April 2025

1.11

3.20

PlanForward 2050

**Location**

- Greater Downtown which includes Downtown proper, Antelope Valley, the market, South Haymarket, Telegraph District and Innovation Campus
- Nodes & Corridors, undeveloped, redeveloping, repurposed commercial and industrial uses
- Access to arterials, Transition between Neighborhoods and Non-Residential Uses
- Established, built-out residential neighborhoods

**Downtown and Greater Downtown**

**Light Industrial**

**Future Service Line**

## Zoning and Development

**Plan Forward includes 80 policies, each with specific action steps. Priority action steps are identified in the Implementation section of PlanForward.**

## **PlanForward Policy 2.3: Existing Neighborhoods**

*Encourage well-designed and appropriately placed density, including within existing apartment and group living complexes and in redeveloping commercial or industrial centers, where there is land available for additional buildings or expansions. Provide flexibility to the marketplace in siting future residential development locations. This includes appropriately placed infill in prioritized Nodes and Corridors, neighborhood edges, and underutilized commercial or industrial sites.*

## **TX24001: Permitted Residential Uses in the B-1 Zoning District**

Zoning text amendment that allows for ground floor residential uses in the B-1 Local Business District. Previously, residential uses were only allowed above ground floor commercial uses in this district.

## **TX25011: Residential in the B-2 and O-2 Zoning Districts**

Zoning text amendment that reduces the minimum lot area for residential uses in the B-2 Planned Neighborhood Commercial District from 2,000 square feet to 1,000 square feet per unit. The text amendment also allows for ground floor residential uses in the O-2 Suburban Office District.

## **PlanForward Policy 2.10: Existing Neighborhoods**

*Develop and utilize a measurement tool to evaluate neighborhoods in terms of how well they achieve PlanForward's goals for design, sustainability, and Complete Neighborhoods goals.*

## Complete Neighborhoods Evaluation Tool

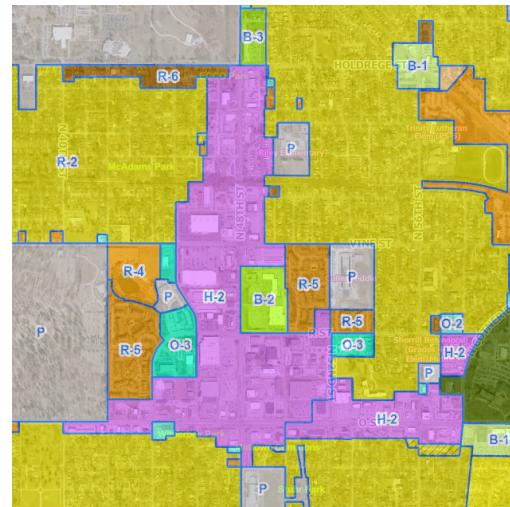
A “complete neighborhoods” GIS evaluation tool was developed in 2022 that centered on neighborhood walkability. The tool will help inform the housing and neighborhoods discussion as part of the Comprehensive Plan update. Evaluation factors included housing mix, distance from trails, parks and other recreation facilities, grocery stores, bus stops, fire stations, daycare centers, libraries, along with other physical factors important to livability and quality of life.

## **PlanForward Policy 8.1: Infill and Redevelopment**

*Encourage redevelopment of aging and underutilized commercial centers, along with other large sites in existing areas such as former schools and residential acreages, to add a variety of housing types that are affordable to diverse income levels.*

## **TX25002: “H” and “I” Updates**

The H-2 zoning district was updated to allow residential uses. New sidewalk design standards were also added to the H-2 district to enhance pedestrian access and safety. Lincoln's only H-2 zoning district is located at the 48th & O commercial area.



## **PlanForward Policy 7.1: Redevelopment Incentives**

*Evaluate expanding tax increment financing (TIF) eligibility to blighted areas beyond the 1950 city limits.*

## **TIF Policy Updated**

The use of TIF is now authorized to support redevelopment and the removal of blighted conditions within the 1970 city limits.

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## **PlanForward Policy 11: Parking Requirements**

*Evaluate the elimination or reduction of minimum parking requirements in additional zoning districts.*

## **TX23016 Modernizing Lincoln's Commercial Parking**

Text amendment that removed minimum parking requirements in most of Lincoln's commercial and industrial zoning districts.



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## **PlanForward Policy 13.5: Commercial and Industrial Centers**

*Develop a zoning implementation strategy for the Light Industrial land use category.*

## **TX25002 "H" and "I" Updates**

The H-3 zoning district was reconfigured to become the primary district for light industrial uses. This provides more flexibility when locating non-hazardous light industrial uses that don't need to be within traditional "I" heavy industrial zoning districts.



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## **PlanForward Policy 16.9: Rural Economy**

*Review the county zoning ordinance to create an inventory of non-agricultural uses currently allowed in rural areas of the county to evaluate possible changes.*

## **Completed Inventory**

An inventory of non-agricultural uses was completed and is a resource to help inform future zoning text amendments.

## **PlanForward Policy 22.5: Local Food**

Allow commercial agriculture, including points of sale for foods grown on-site, in all zoning districts at appropriate locations and with appropriate standards.

## **TX25005 Urban Gardens Policy Proposal**

Zoning text amendment that increased access to grow, buy, and sell local produce in residential districts.



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## **PlanForward Policy 34: Urban Design Standards**

Design standards should be developed, monitored, and revised as necessary to express and protect community values without imposing delays or restricting creativity.

## **TX24006 Historic Preservation Ordinance and Standards Text Amendment**

*Design standards update that replaced 115 sets of design guidelines that varied across districts with a streamlined unified code. This change makes the guidelines easier to understand for property owners, improves clarity, and saves time on staff review.*



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## **PlanForward Policy 45.2: Early Childhood Care and Education**

*Examine building and zoning code requirements for child care centers and family child care homes to determine if there are any obstacles that could be removed while maintaining the safety of the building occupants.*

## **TX23009 2023 Text Amendments**

Zoning text amendment that changed Early Childhood Care facilities from a “conditional” use to a “permitted” use in the “O” and R-T districts, and from “special permit” to “permitted” in the H-4 district. This change reduces potential zoning barriers for childhood care facilities in these districts.

## **TX25014 Early Childhood Care Facilities**

This text amendment, which is currently in process, would further increase opportunities for locating daycares throughout the community.

# Housing and Growth

Lincoln growth since 2021 has generally aligned with the expectations discussed in PlanForward.



Lincoln-Lancaster County  
2050 Comprehensive Plan

Approximately  
**48,000 dwelling units** will need to  
be constructed in  
Lincoln between  
2020 and 2050 to  
meet expected

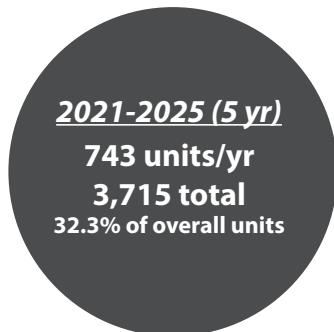
demand. That averages to nearly **1,600 dwelling units per year**, but this number will naturally start lower and increase over time as the city's population grows.

Of the 48,000 new dwelling units projected in Lincoln between 2020 and 2050, **12,000 units (25% of total or 400 per year) are expected to be located within the existing built environment**. The remaining 75% will primarily be in New Growth Areas on the city's edges.



## Citywide Residential Permits

Learn more by viewing the Residential Land Inventory Report and residential dashboard.



## Infill Residential Permits

Lincoln's housing construction has exceeded projected demand since adoption of PlanForward. This suggests that Lincoln had a housing deficit that is being reduced through increased housing construction, or Lincoln's population is growing faster than expected.

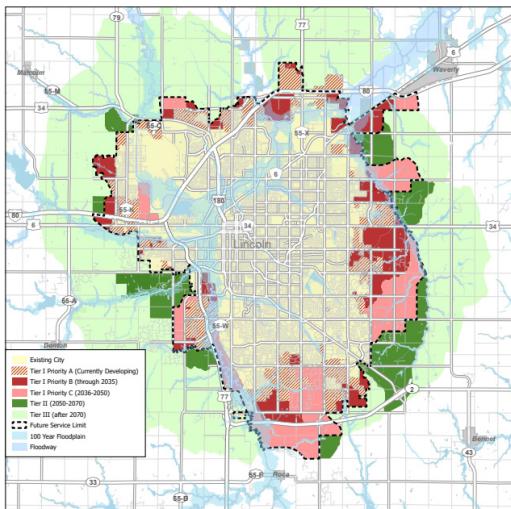
During this same period there were 1,262 affordable housing units constructed with assistance from Tax Increment Financing (TIF).

Infill development has been more than double the Comprehensive Plan assumption. Much of Lincoln's infill development has been supported by TIF that supports public improvements related to redevelopment projects.

### Affordable Housing

In October 2020 the Mayor announced a goal to achieve **5,000 new, rehabilitated, or subsidized affordable housing units by 2030**. This aligns with PlanForward's Goal 1 for Safe, Affordable, and Accessible Housing, along with numerous associated policies. Through August 2025, the City has added **3,201 affordable units**, which is **64% complete to achieving the 2030 goal**.

Learn more by viewing the Affordable Housing Progress Report information page and dashboard.

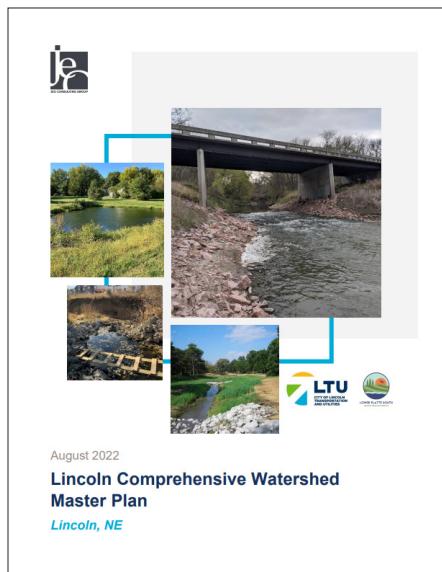


Since 2021 Lincoln has added **3.7 square miles** in accordance with the Future Land Use and Priority Growth Area maps.

**Two Capital Improvement Programs (CIP's)** have been approved with conformance to the Comprehensive Plan. The CIP provides the budget for major infrastructure investments like streets, sewer, and water, along with community facilities and major equipment related to public safety, parks, transit, and more.

# Comprehensive Plan Additions

Four new planning documents have been adopted as part of PlanForward since 2021. Each of these plans is the result of a robust public engagement process and they include detailed strategies to be implemented in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

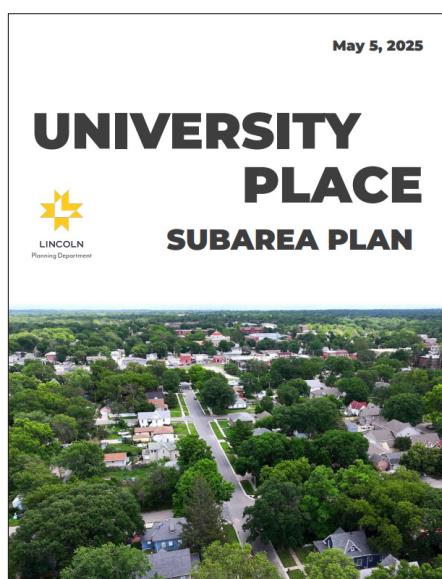


## Comprehensive Watershed Master Plan

In late 2020, the City of Lincoln, in partnership with the Lower Platte South NRD, initiated the development of a Comprehensive Watershed Master Plan (Master Plan). The Master Plan is a compilation of all previously completed watershed master plans. It was adopted in October 2022 (CPA22005).

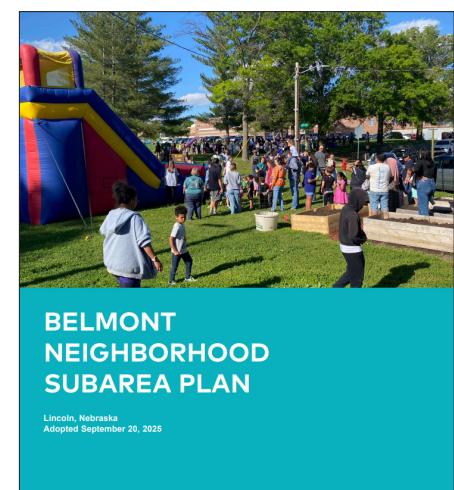
## Local Food System Plan

The Local Food System Plan includes goals and action steps for supporting a thriving local food system in Lincoln and the surrounding area. The Plan was adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan in October 2023 (CPA23009).



## University Place Subarea Plan

The University Place Subarea Plan presents a strategic vision for the neighborhood and provides a framework for achieving that vision. Highlights include a revitalized N 48th Street commercial corridor - including an upgraded streetscape, pedestrian amenities, and façade rehabilitation program – along with evaluation of redevelopment opportunities and infrastructure enhancements throughout the neighborhood. The Subarea Plan was adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan in May 2025 (CPA25001).



## Belmont Neighborhood Subarea Plan

Much like the University Place Subarea Plan, the Belmont Neighborhood Subarea Plan presents a strategic vision for the neighborhood and provides a framework for achieving that vision. Highlights include upgrades to Belmont Park and the Belmont Community Center, creating safe pedestrian access along bridges and major connection points, and establishing a program to help fund minor home repairs. The Subarea Plan was adopted at part of the Comprehensive Plan in October 2025 (CPA25004).

# Climate Action Plan

**The City of Lincoln Climate Action Plan was adopted in 2021 and incorporated throughout the Comprehensive Plan. Highlighted achievements of the Climate Action Plan are included below.**

## Heat Pump Incentive Program

The City of Lincoln's Heat Pump Incentive Program, in partnership with Lincoln Electric System (LES), offers up to \$3,800 in combined incentives to help residents install energy-efficient air source heat pumps. The program is open to all eligible residents and aims to increase energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

## Rental Rehabilitation Program

The South of Downtown Residential Rental Rehabilitation Program in Lincoln provides \$15,000 per unit to help property owners make energy-efficient upgrades—like heat pumps, insulation, and smart thermostats—in affordable rental housing. These improvements lower tenants' electric bills by an average of \$250 annually without raising rent, while preserving long-term housing affordability and supporting the City's 2030 housing goals.

## Water 2.0

The City of Lincoln's Water 2.0 project is a long-term initiative to secure a second water source that will diversify and safeguard the city's water supply for future generations. The project aims to build resilience against extreme weather events and ensure sustainable water access for decades to come.



## Future-Ready Workforce Initiative

The City of Lincoln's Future-Ready Workforce Initiative helps residents train for high-demand careers such as electricians, HVAC technicians, and automotive service technicians. The program also provides supportive services like transportation, child care, and tools to reduce barriers to employment and strengthen the local talent pipeline.

## Local Food System

In 2023, the City of Lincoln adopted a Local Food System Plan to improve access to healthy food, support local farms, promote sustainable agriculture, and reduce food waste. Recent efforts include a new Urban Garden Policy allowing residents to sell homegrown produce, a proclamation of Lincoln's Gardening and Sharing Season, and the launch of the Mayor's Local Food Challenge, all of which expand food access and strengthen community resilience.

## Landfill Biogas Facility

The City has partnered with Sparq Renewables to build a renewable natural gas facility at the Bluff Road Landfill that will convert landfill methane into renewable natural gas, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and generate more than \$96 million in revenue for Lincoln under a 25-year contract.