

# URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

The Urban Design Committee will hold a meeting on **Tuesday, March 4, 2024**, at **3:00 p.m.** in the County-City Building, 555 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska in **City Council Chambers** on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. For more information, contact the Planning Department at 402-441-7491.

## AGENDA

1. Approval of UDC meeting record of [February 04, 2024](#).

## ADVISE

2. [Bison Witches Sidewalk Café -UDR25011](#) – *Advisory Review*
3. [University Place Sub-Area Plan -UDR25012](#) – *Advisory Review*
4. [UDC 2024 Annual Report](#) – *Final Action*

*Urban Design Committee's agendas may be accessed on the Internet at*  
<https://www.lincoln.ne.gov/City/Departments/Planning-Department/Boards-and-Commissions/Urban-Design-Committee>

## ACCOMMODATION NOTICE

The City of Lincoln complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 guidelines. Ensuring the public's access to and participating in public meetings is a priority for the City of Lincoln. In the event you are in need of a reasonable accommodation in order to attend or participate in a public meeting conducted by the City of Lincoln, please contact the Director of Equity and Diversity, Lincoln Commission on Human Rights, at 402 441-7624 as soon as possible before the scheduled meeting date in order to make your request.

## MEETING RECORD

*Advanced public notice of the Urban Design Committee meeting was posted on the County-City bulletin board and the Planning Department's website.*

<b>NAME OF GROUP:</b>	URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE
<b>DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:</b>	Tuesday, February 4, 2025, 3:00 p.m., County-City Building, City Council Chambers, 555 S. 10 <sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, NE.
<b>MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Mark Canney, Jill Grasso, Tom Huston, and Emily Deeker; Michael Harpster, Gill Peace and Michael Penn absent.
<b>OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Arvind Gopalakrishnan, Adrew Thierolf Paul Barnes and Clara McCully of the Planning Department.

Chair Penn called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room.

No action was taken on approving the minutes of the regular meeting held on November 5, 2024, due to lack of quorum.

### **UPDATES TO H2 DISTRICT:**

**February 4, 2025**

Members present: Canney, Grasso, Huston and Deeker; Harpster, Peace and Penn absent.

Barnes came forward and stated this is a new streetscape design standard. Andrew will speak on the project as a whole.

Andrew Thierolf came forward and stated there are proposed zoning updates for the H2 (Highway Commercial) district. The aim is to transform it from a suburban, automobile-oriented area into a mixed-use, walkable environment. Changes include allowing residential housing in the H district, previously not permitted. Other updates involve changing the district's name to "Mixed Use Corridor District" and adding new uses while removing some heavy industrial uses that are incompatible with residential areas. There will be no required parking in this district, as parking requirements were

eliminated in most commercial districts last year. Density regulations will be modified to allow for greater development, with reduced setbacks planned to encourage higher density living. There's also a revision of alcohol sales regulations to accommodate the introduction of residential uses, aiming to ease restrictions that previously required a significant buffer zone around residential properties. The intended outcome is to enhance the area's desirability and functionality for varied uses, including residential living.

Huston asked if housing is currently allowed by Special Permit.

Thierolf stated not with a Special Permit but maybe a PUD.

Huston asked about the elimination of certain previous uses.

Thierolf stated this would not be part of design standards, but part of text amendment. They include truck wash facilities, and sexually- oriented live entertainment. Those uses are not in this area today.

Thierolf stated proposed design standards include looking at areas closer to the intersection. Sidewalks are close to the street. It's unpleasant and unsafe. The proposed standards would require sidewalks to be ten feet from the back of the street curb. Many properties have that space, but if they don't, they would ask for a public access for sidewalks. This is similar to the streetscape requirements in the South Haymarket design standards. Deviations can be approved by the Planning Director, Design Standards, or City Council. They have been working on these standards for some time and held a community open house in September. The Planning Commission meeting is set for February 19, with a city council review to follow.

Deeker asked if there were other H-2 locations.

Thierolf stated Yes, there is a sports complex in northeast and then a parcel changing to different zoning districts.

Canney asked how the ten-foot buffer for tree planting is determined. LTU and Parks used to have different recommendations regarding where trees should be planted from the back of the curb. At one point, the recommended distance was inconsistent; sometimes it was a specific number of feet. if you plant a tree a certain number of feet back, it's still too close to the sidewalk. So, is there clear guidance on where a street tree should be placed within that ten-foot buffer? LTU has different tree spacing

guidelines depending on the speed of the street. Has there been any conversation between parks and LTU about the placement of street trees in that zone and how it might be influenced by the speed limit on the street?

Thierolf stated the focus has been 10 feet.

Barnes stated the 10 feet came from working with Collin Christopher, who works regularly with those departments. These design standards do not specify species and placement.

Huston stated the default placement would be centered.

Canney stated utilities might be an issue. LTU might want so far off of curb for speed, or so far off of sidewalk for canopy and roots.

Deeker asked whether to measure from face of curb or back of curb it would be consistent from whatever guidelines are already there

Huston asked if Deeker would recommend back of curb.

Deeker stated yes.

Barnes asked for conceptual language.

Deeker stated ten feet from back of curb.

Huston stated to think about density in this corridor for future public transportation if nothing else, but beyond the scope of the design standards.

Andrew stated this is a small first step for a zoning change.

Huston asked if there was anyone at the open house.

Thierolf stated one person, but they were not impacted.

Grasso asked if the H-2 zone on 48<sup>th</sup> was established a long time ago.

Barnes stated it has been that way for a number of years.



Thierolf stated in this area we have H2 but also random B1 and B2. All B3 zones are due to parking. B1 is legacy zoning from pre-1979.

Huston stated it is better to have larger area rather than little pockets for zoning.

Deeker stated there's a section not touching, would this design standard infiltrate to change more to residential? O street is consistent.

Huston stated the current East-West boundaries are Cotner/46<sup>th</sup> and then 48<sup>th</sup> Street.

Thierolf stated the ultimate goal is transit along O Street. H2 is part of it.

Barnes stated there was support for the parking amendment, and redevelopment along O street, with business owner support. Change will happen incrementally over time.

Barnes stated regarding an earlier question about uses removed, he has one addition: closed disassembly operations such as recycling or salvage.

Huston stated as long as no existing use is nonconforming.

#### **ACTION:**

Grasso moved to recommend approval with tree placement in the planting zone and more density primarily addressing design standards, seconded by Kenney.

Motion for approval failed 3-0 due to lack of quorum. Members present: Canney, Grasso, and Huston voting 'yes'; Deeker in non-voting member status; Harpster, Peace and Penn absent.

#### **MISCELLANEOUS:**

Gopalkrishnan stated staff is working on a subarea plan for University Place with a Feb. 27<sup>th</sup> open house near 40<sup>th</sup> & St Paul at Gathering Grove.

Barnes stated they will share the draft with the commission and get some feedback.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:32 p.m.

## URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

APPLICATION NUMBER    Urban Design Record #UDR25011

APPLICATION TYPE        Advisory Review

ADDRESS/LOCATION        Bison Witches Sidewalk Cafe

HEARING DATE            March 04, 2025

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS   -

APPLICANT                Brandon Kosek, [bisonwitcheslincoln@gmail.com](mailto:bisonwitcheslincoln@gmail.com)

STAFF CONTACT            Arvind Gopalakrishnan, 402-441-6361, [agopalakrishnan@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:agopalakrishnan@lincoln.ne.gov)

### RECOMMENDATION: CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

#### Summary of Request

Nearly ten years ago, Bison Witches was approved for a sidewalk café that borders the east side of Tower Square at N 13<sup>th</sup> and P Streets. The patio space includes an overhead canopy that provides shade and overhead protection from the elements. A couple of years ago, it was discovered that Bison Witches had installed an enclosure around the patio (see attached images) that was not approved by the City. Upon an internal staff review of the added enclosure, it was determined that the Bison Witches sidewalk café was no longer in conformance with the approved application. In discussions with the applicant, they have conveyed that the enclosure is an attempt to expand seating in the cool-weather months when an outdoor patio would not otherwise be appropriate. The enclosure appears to be made of a thick canvas material with a red color finish and transparent, vinyl window openings.

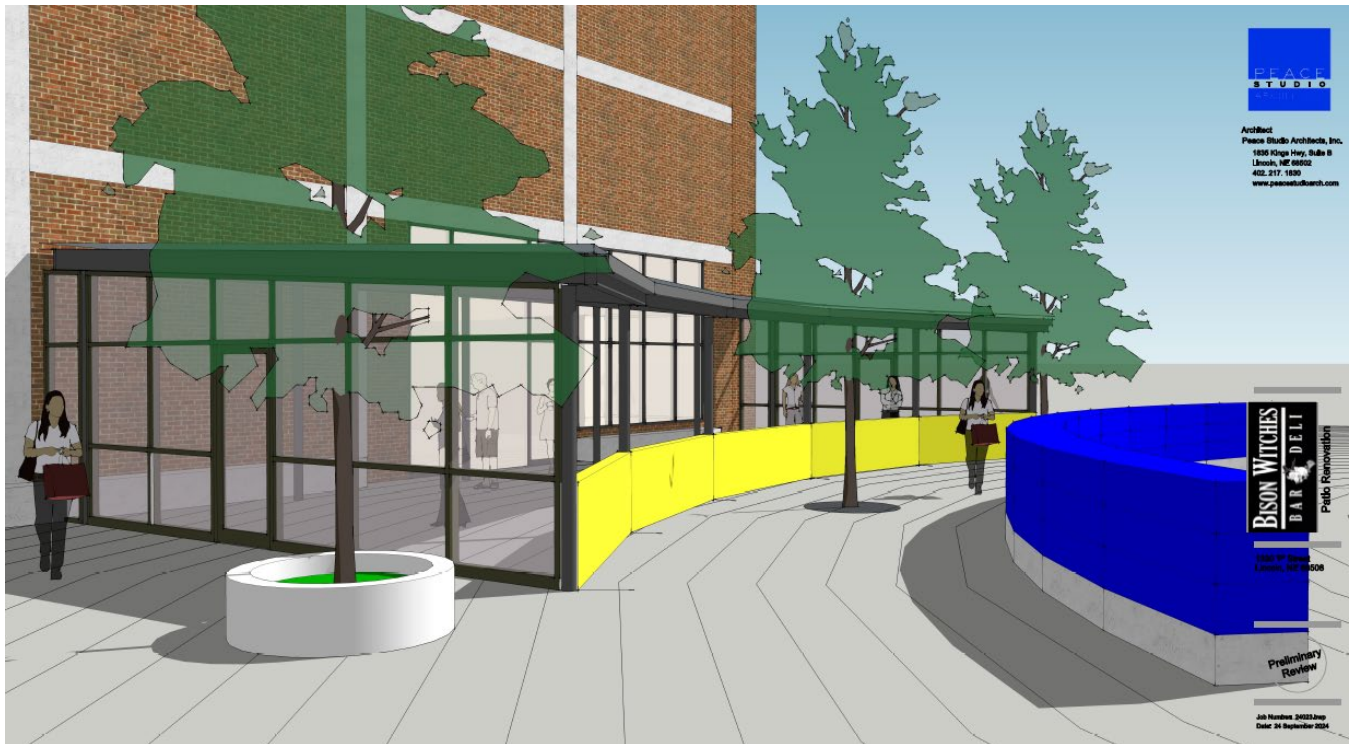
When the original application was approved, there was an understanding that the activation of Tower Square was important and that sidewalk cafes could play a major role in that activation. Though consistently activating the space has proven to be a challenge, Bison Witches and their sidewalk café have been an overwhelming positive to Tower Square, and there is a desire to find a solution that works for them, while still preserving the City's investment in this critical corner of downtown.

The design team has returned with a revised design for the sidewalk café. The Urban Design Committee is being asked to weigh in on the modifications to help the City identify a path toward conformance.

[https://linclanc.sharepoint.com/sites/PlanningDept-Boards/Shared Documents/Boards/UDC/REPORTS/2025/03 March/Bison Witches Sidewalk Cafe Staff Report\\_item2.docx](https://linclanc.sharepoint.com/sites/PlanningDept-Boards/Shared Documents/Boards/UDC/REPORTS/2025/03 March/Bison Witches Sidewalk Cafe Staff Report_item2.docx)







## Compatibility with the Lincoln Municipal Code

As previously mentioned, Bison Witches was originally approved for a sidewalk café in 2013. The basic structure and layout of the space have remained unchanged and continue to be in conformance with Chapter 14.50 of the Lincoln Municipal Code (LMC). The new enclosure, however, is not in complete conformance, as highlighted by the following sections of the Lincoln Municipal Code:

### 14.50.020 Purpose.

It is found and declared that sidewalk cafés promote the public interest by:

- Making B-zoned districts an active and attractive pedestrian environment;
- Providing the opportunity for creative, colorful, pedestrian-focused commercial activities on a day/night and seasonal basis;
- Encouraging commercial activities which add excitement, charm, vitality, diversity, and good design to B-zoned districts;
- Encouraging the up-grading of storefronts and the development of compatible and well-designed elements within such districts; and
- Promoting land conservation, redevelopment, energy savings, and indirect tax revenue.

**Compatibility per Staff Analysis:** *The existing enclosed space offers the ability to extend the use of the patio beyond the outdoor café season, but is fully enclosed with little transparency, substantially limiting its potential impact on the pedestrian*

*environment. Further, it obstructs views of the building façade that was improved as part of the Tower Square project.*

*After several meetings and discussions, the applicant has returned with an updated design for the sidewalk café enclosure. The revised proposal introduces key design improvements including opaque segmented walls (color and height TBD), transparent storefront doors and windows, and roll-down clear phantom screens. These changes enhance transparency, improve the aesthetic appeal, and strengthen the connection to Tower Square.*

*Staff acknowledges that the revised design is a notable improvement over the current layout. The changes improve transparency which will enhance this important space in Downtown Lincoln. However, there is some uncertainty regarding the impact of the colored low-height wall, particularly with the space between it and the existing blue wall. To ensure the best outcome, staff would like to explore alternatives that incorporate a railing and extend the screens down to the floor.*

## **Application History**

2014: Original agreement for the sidewalk café approved.

2023: Agreement renewed.

April 18, 2023: Red, vinyl enclosure denied by Sidewalk Café Committee.

June 6, 2023: Red, vinyl enclosure denied by the Urban Design Committee.

2025: Courtesy outreach to Jun Kaneko Studio - no response. Current proposal requires no impact to pavers.

## **Recommendation**

The new design is much improved and will enhance the transparency into the sidewalk café and will overall improve the environment between Tower Square and Bison Witches. Staff support this new design with a condition that the applicant review and propose a design that eliminates the opaque wall facing Tower Square.

## ATTACHMENT A - Location Map



2022 Aerial

**UDR23073 - Bison Witches Sidewalk Café (1300-1320 P Street)**

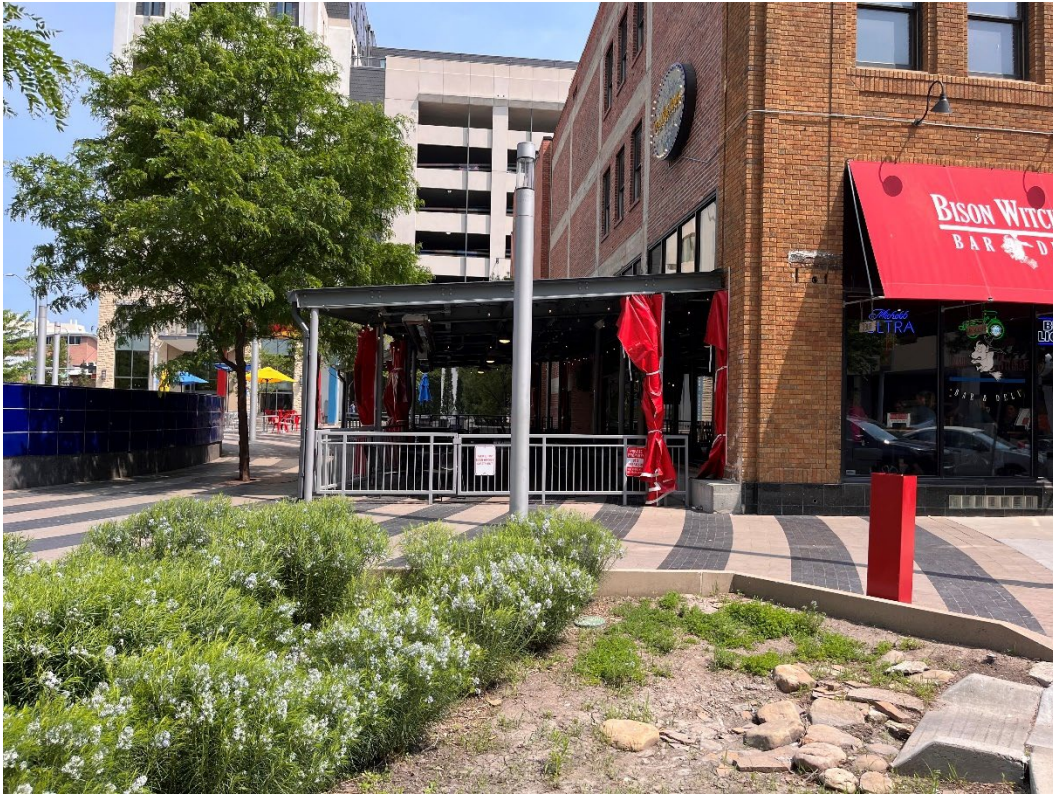
Project: C:\Users\jdoyle\OneDrive\DC\_LocationMaps.aprx  
PCP: 1300-1320 P Street Location Map



## ATTACHMENT B – Photos













matching storefront windows and doors

roll-down, clear phantom screens at each segment between columns

existing; structure, roof, etc.

matching storefront windows and doors

Opaque, colorful, segmented, 1/2 wall to 36" a.f.f.



Architect  
Peace Studio Architects, Inc.  
1835 Kings Hwy, Suite B  
Lincoln, NE 68502  
402. 217. 1830  
www.peacestudioarch.com



Patio Renovation

1320 'P' Street  
Lincoln, NE 68508

Preliminary Review

Job Number: 24023.bwp  
Date: 24 September 2024





Architect  
Peace Studio Architects, Inc.  
1835 Kings Hwy, Suite B  
Lincoln, NE 68502  
402.217.1830  
[www.peacestudioarch.com](http://www.peacestudioarch.com)



Patio Renovation

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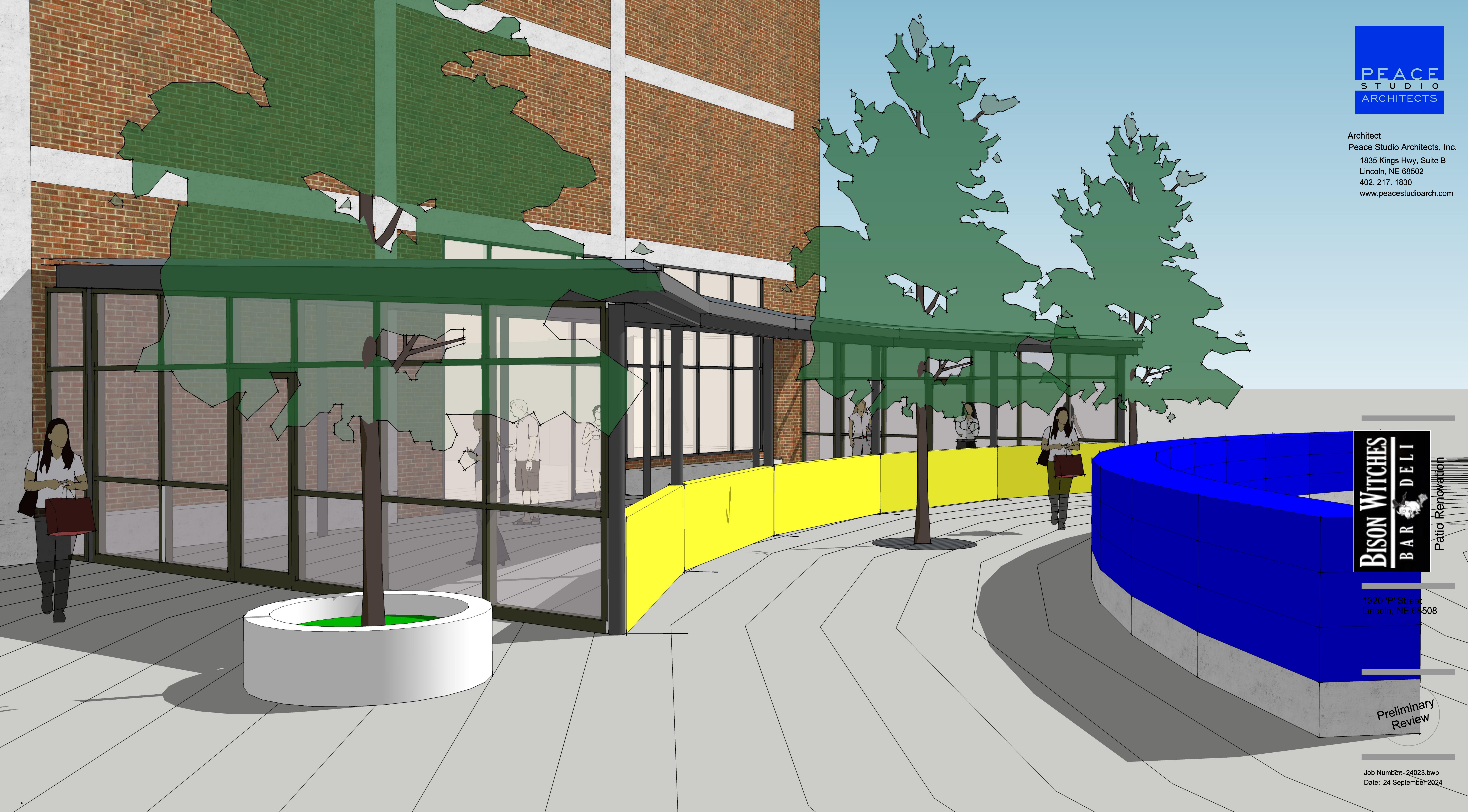
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Patio Renovation

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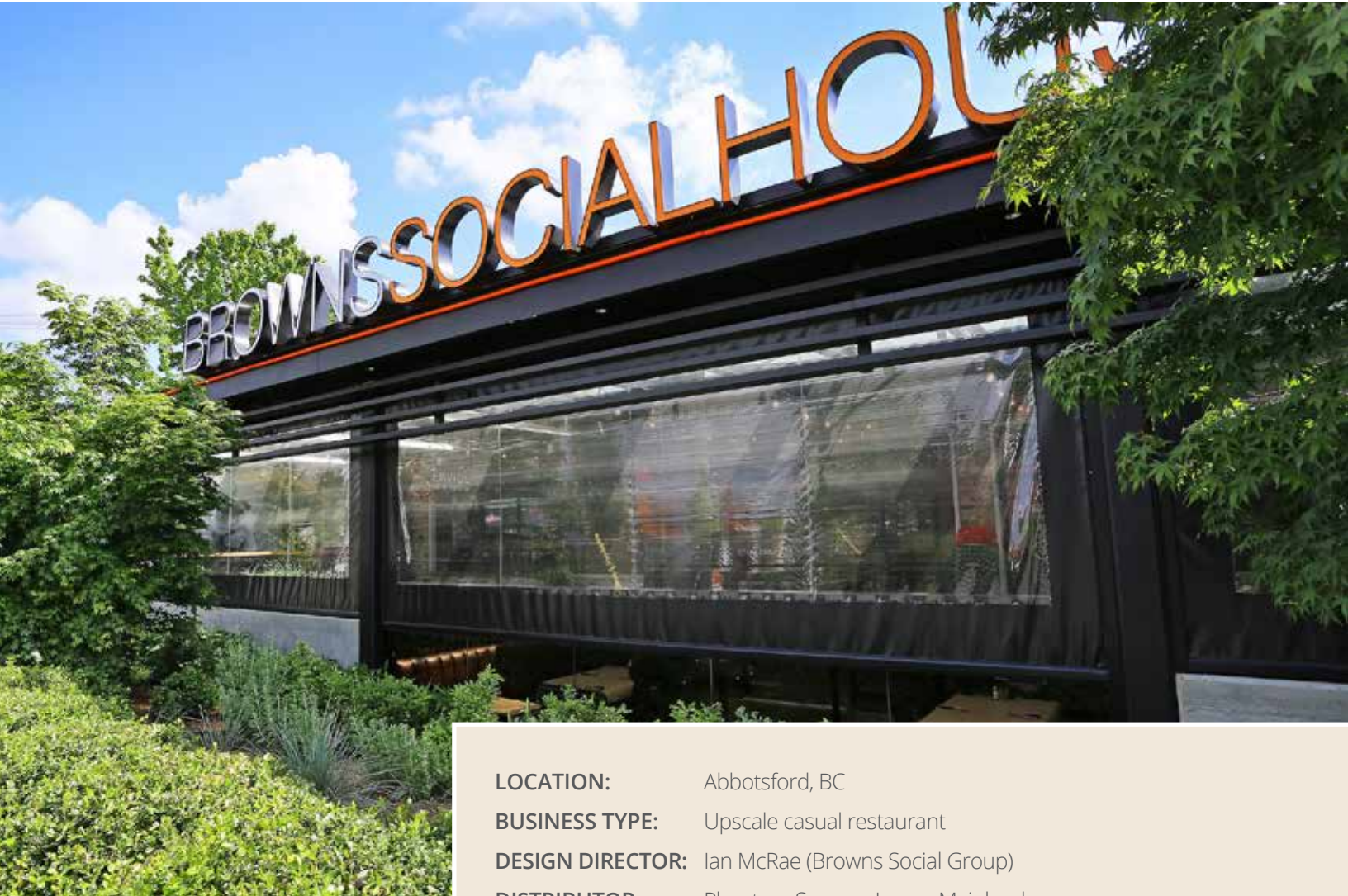
Preliminary  
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Job Number: 24023.bwp  
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# Browns Socialhouse

*Phantom Screens maximize the usage of the patio area, increasing profitability*



*"The Phantom team was really great to work with to execute this project. There was definitely good preliminary coordination in the design process."*

- Ian McRae,  
Browns Restaurant Group

<b>LOCATION:</b>	Abbotsford, BC
<b>BUSINESS TYPE:</b>	Upscale casual restaurant
<b>DESIGN DIRECTOR:</b>	Ian McRae (Browns Social Group)
<b>DISTRIBUTOR:</b>	Phantom Screens Lower Mainland
<b>PRODUCT:</b>	Phantom's motorized screens
<b>SCREEN TYPE:</b>	Clear vinyl with black vinyl perimeter
<b>NEED:</b>	The owner wanted a solution that could maximize their usage of the patio space year-round while adding customer comfort.
<b>SOLUTION:</b>	Phantom's motorized screens were installed to extend patio life and create guest comfort. The vinyl screens create a barrier from debris and help control temperature during the colder months.
<b>BENEFIT:</b>	The screens create a space that delivers an enjoyable dining experience year-round for consumers while increasing revenue for the business owner.



## OVERVIEW

Browns Socialhouse is an upscale casual restaurant located in Abbotsford, BC near a bustling university district. The 750 square foot patio area encompasses 12 tables, and the owner estimates that at capacity this dining space generates \$2,000 - \$3,000 per day of operation. An area that was once only available during the warmer months now provides over \$300,000 in extra revenue a year. Also, having the area enclosed with Phantom's screens help prevent theft and save time by not having to move everything back inside.

The motorized screens are located in the restaurant's patio where they create a protective barrier from inclement weather and help control temperature. The screens also blend in with the architectural design & décor of the restaurant. According to the business owner, the screens "complement the structure of my restaurant by adding to the patio 'feel' and guest comfort the screens create." Additionally, the screens are totally clear and provide 90% UV block - preserving the beautiful view while preventing furnishings from fading in the sun.

Browns Socialhouse originated in Western Canada, and the franchise is quickly expanding locations in Eastern Canada. With its rapid success, Brown's Socialhouse has won a multitude of awards including the *Franchise Award of the Year* and the *Pinnacle Award of the Year*.

## APPLICATION HIGHLIGHTS

### Increase revenue

A revenue-generating dining area that was once only available in the warmer months can now be used all year round. With Phantom's motorized screens the space can be used to its full potential, which increases profitability.

### Local service

Phantom Screens has the largest network of Authorized Distributors. Local installation and maintenance service is only a phone call away.

### Complements any space

Phantom's motorized screens blend with the architectural design and décor of the restaurant and easily retract out of sight into their housings when not needed.

## APPLICATIONS

Phantom provides motorized screens for insect protection, solar shading, privacy and temperate control on indoor and outdoor spaces that retract out of sight.

For a complete list of products for **doors**, **windows** and **multi-panel systems** visit our website at [phantomscreens.com](http://phantomscreens.com).

	MAX. WIDTH	MAX. HEIGHT
<b>SINGLE UNIT</b> with Track	Up to 300" 301" to 480"	192" 132"
<b>SINGLE UNIT</b> with Cable	Up to 300" Up to 108"	132" 240"
<b>SINGLE UNIT</b> with Vinyl	Up to 216"	168"



*"Our clients were very satisfied with our service, and saw it as adding value to their business."*

- Iain Twiddy,  
Authorized Phantom Distributor  
Phantom Screens Lower Mainland

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## URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

APPLICATION NUMBER	Urban Design Record #UDR25012
APPLICATION TYPE	Advisory Review
ADDRESS/LOCATION	University Place Neighborhood
HEARING DATE	March 04, 2025
ADDITIONAL MEETINGS	-
APPLICANT	Andrew Thierolf, <a href="mailto:Athierolf@lincoln.ne.gov">Athierolf@lincoln.ne.gov</a>
STAFF CONTACT	Arvind Gopalakrishnan, 402-441-6361, <a href="mailto:agopalakrishnan@lincoln.ne.gov">agopalakrishnan@lincoln.ne.gov</a>

### RECOMMENDATION: ADVICE ONLY

#### Summary of Request

The Planning Department will present an update on the University Place Subarea Plan. The planning process commenced in early 2024, and the draft plan was released online for public review on February 24, with an open house on February 27

#### Public Participation Process

The public participation process included the creation of a Stakeholder Committee, a public open house at First United Methodist, a virtual open house that was available on-demand throughout the summer and early fall, intercept surveys at Mo Java and other neighborhood events, a renters focus group, a tile decorating activity, and an open house to unveil the draft plan. Across all our outreach efforts we received 467 total comments.

The most common concerns/needs that we heard were:

- traffic calming along N. 48th Street;
- a more diverse mix of businesses in the neighborhood, and;
- Provide more quality housing options.

#### Stakeholder Committee

The Stakeholder Committee had a primary role in helping to develop and review content for the subarea plan. The Stakeholder Committee guided plan development by participating in visioning exercises, helping to identify public participation opportunities, and providing input on plan concepts.

Members of the Stakeholder Committee included:

- James Michael Bowers, City Council Member
- Lindsey Clausen, Archway Studios
- Kirstie Engel, First United Methodist
- Erin Hoffman, Nebraska Wesleyan University
- Christy Joy, Planning Commissioner, Ayars & Ayars / Archi - Etc
- Tut Kailech, Neighborworks Lincoln
- Paul Marshall, Mo Java
- Sam Meier-Bates, Collective Impact Lincoln
- Joe Shaw, Lux Center for the Arts
- Lauren Smith, Speedway
- Teresa Thompson, UPCO
- Andrea Watkins, Business / Property Owner

### *Public Open House #1*

The in-person public open house was held on June 11<sup>th</sup> at First United Methodist. A notification mailer was sent to every occupied address in University Place. The meeting had 62 attendees, plus city staff. The meeting was organized around thematic stations, where attendees could learn about various topics in the plan and leave comments. We received a total of 124 comments.

The same material from the in-person open house was made available as an on-demand virtual open house. Each station from the open house was re-created in the virtual open house, and visitors could leave comments and interact with the material in the same fashion as the in-person attendees. The virtual open house was collecting feedback from June – October, which significantly increased the accessibility and reach of the public open house. The virtual open house had 957 page views and collected 165 comments.

### *Intercept Surveys*

Planning staff conducted intercept surveys in the neighborhood throughout the summer and early fall. Locations included Mo Java coffeehouse, a Makers Market event in August, Easterday Rec Center, and the NWU Student Involvement Fair. In total these surveys collected 178 comments.

### *Renters Focus Group*

A renters focus group was conducted in November to collect specific feedback from renters in the neighborhood. There were six attendees.

### *Tile Decorating Activity*





Planning staff conducted a tile decorating activity at the Makers Market, NWU Student Involvement Fair, and Easterday Rec Center. Participants were asked to draw what they liked about the University Place neighborhood. The tile activity was a fun way to raise awareness of the plan and get people to think about their neighborhood. Planning staff collected 101 decorated tiles. The tiles are currently at Lux Center for the Arts and may be displayed as part of a future exhibit.

### *Public Open House #2*

A public open house was held February 27 to share recommendations from the draft plan and gather community feedback. The open house was held at The Gathering Grove, an event space located in the heart of the neighborhood at N. 48<sup>th</sup> & St Paul.

## **Recommendations**

Recommendations from the Plan are organized across three main projects. Much of the focus is on revitalizing the N. 48<sup>th</sup> Street corridor, but there are also recommendations that address the surrounding residential areas of the neighborhood.

### *N. 48<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Corridor*

Vision: Create a vibrant, walkable, mixed-use commercial district that encourages residents, students, and visitors to spend time in the heart of the University Place neighborhood.

Key elements of this project:

- Within the neighborhood's commercial core, from Leighton to Adams, a streetscape reconfiguration for N. 48<sup>th</sup> Street to go from 2+2 travel lanes down to 2 travel lanes and a middle turn lane, with parallel parking on one side of the street. Most of the recently installed pavement would remain, with the streetscape reconfiguration being accomplished by re-striping the travel lanes and adding curb extensions at the intersections. Per discussions with LTU, this road diet would occur sometime after completion of the N. 33<sup>rd</sup> & Cornhusker overpass project, with the expectation that some of the existing through traffic on N. 48<sup>th</sup> Street will instead use the N. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street overpass.

<https://linclanc.sharepoint.com/sites/PlanningDept-Boards/Shared Documents/Boards/UDC/REPORTS/2025/03 March/working/University Place Sub area plan item 3.docx>

- Roundabouts at the N. 48<sup>th</sup> Street intersections of Leighton and Adams. This is a long-term project that would help improve the safety and function of these two intersections, slow traffic through the neighborhood's commercial core, create a gateway into the neighborhood.
- Street art to add an additional “wow” factor to the neighborhood that complements the murals and other arts initiatives undertaken by the Creative District. Street art also has a traffic calming effect and can improve pedestrian safety. The focus for public right-of-way would be St Paul Ave. This could potentially be a near-term project if the city is awarded the Bloomberg Philanthropies grant.
- Identification of redevelopment sites along N. 48<sup>th</sup> Street and recommendations for potential uses.
- Enhancements to the city parking lot at 47<sup>th</sup> & St Paul to improve its function as a community events space, signature lighting features along St Paul that connect the business district to NWU campus, wayfinding signage, additional opportunities for public art in the right-of-way.

### *Historic Preservation*

Vision: Celebrate the historic character of University Place while integrating new and exciting improvements that reflect the neighborhood's role as an arts hub and Creative District.

Key elements of this project:

- Local landmark designation and/or National Register of Historic Places listing for the historic “main street” along N. 48<sup>th</sup> Street. This would allow for tax credits to help with rehabilitation of these historic buildings and support the continued revitalization of the corridor.
- Local landmark designation and/or National Register of Historic Places listing for additional properties beyond the N. 48<sup>th</sup> Street corridor that contribute to the historic character of the neighborhood.
- Assembling the Historic Register nomination and local landmark designation could be a near-term project. City staff would work with neighborhood stakeholders, including the Creative District, to ensure that historic preservation complements the current and future arts initiatives in the neighborhood.

### *Neighborhood Revitalization*

Vision: Utilize City resources, including financial tools, to support the continued revitalization of University Place, one of Lincoln's great neighborhoods.

Key elements of this project:

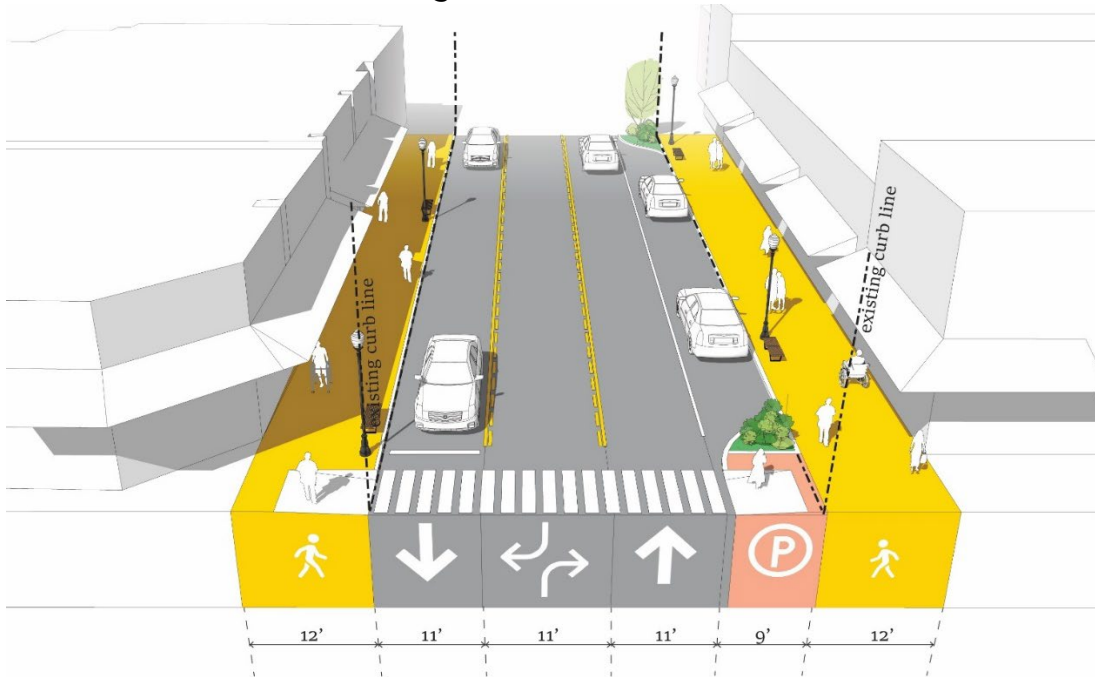
- Blight study and redevelopment plan for University Place. Currently a portion of the neighborhood is blighted and within a redevelopment plan. As part of this project, the blight study designation would be expanded to include the entire neighborhood, and a new redevelopment plan would be created. The blight study and redevelopment plan are currently in-process and will likely be completed in the first half of 2025.
- A TIF district would be established to support public improvements along the N. 48<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor and the surrounding residential areas of the neighborhood. Possible projects that could be funded include a housing rehab program, historic properties rehab, façade enhancement, and improvement of miscellaneous neighborhood amenities such as new sidewalks or upgrades to the city parking lots. Details of TIF uses are still under discussion – the Subarea Plan will not identify specific uses.
- Analysis of potential private redevelopment sites and recommended uses. With the expanded blight/redevelopment area, additional sites could be available for TIF to support redevelopment.

## **Next Steps**

The draft Subarea Plan was released on the project website ([lincoln.ne.gov/UniPlaceSubareaPlan](https://lincoln.ne.gov/UniPlaceSubareaPlan)) for public review on February 24. The project website also includes an interactive tour of the reimagined N. 48<sup>th</sup> Street along with a project video that includes stakeholder interviews and a summary of plan recommendations. The project website also includes an opportunity for the public to submit comments.

The Subarea Plan will be adopted into the Comprehensive Plan, and it is expected that Planning Commission and City Council hearings will occur in the April - May timeframe.

## N. 48th Street – Lane Reconfiguration Profile



## N. 47th & St Paul, looking east



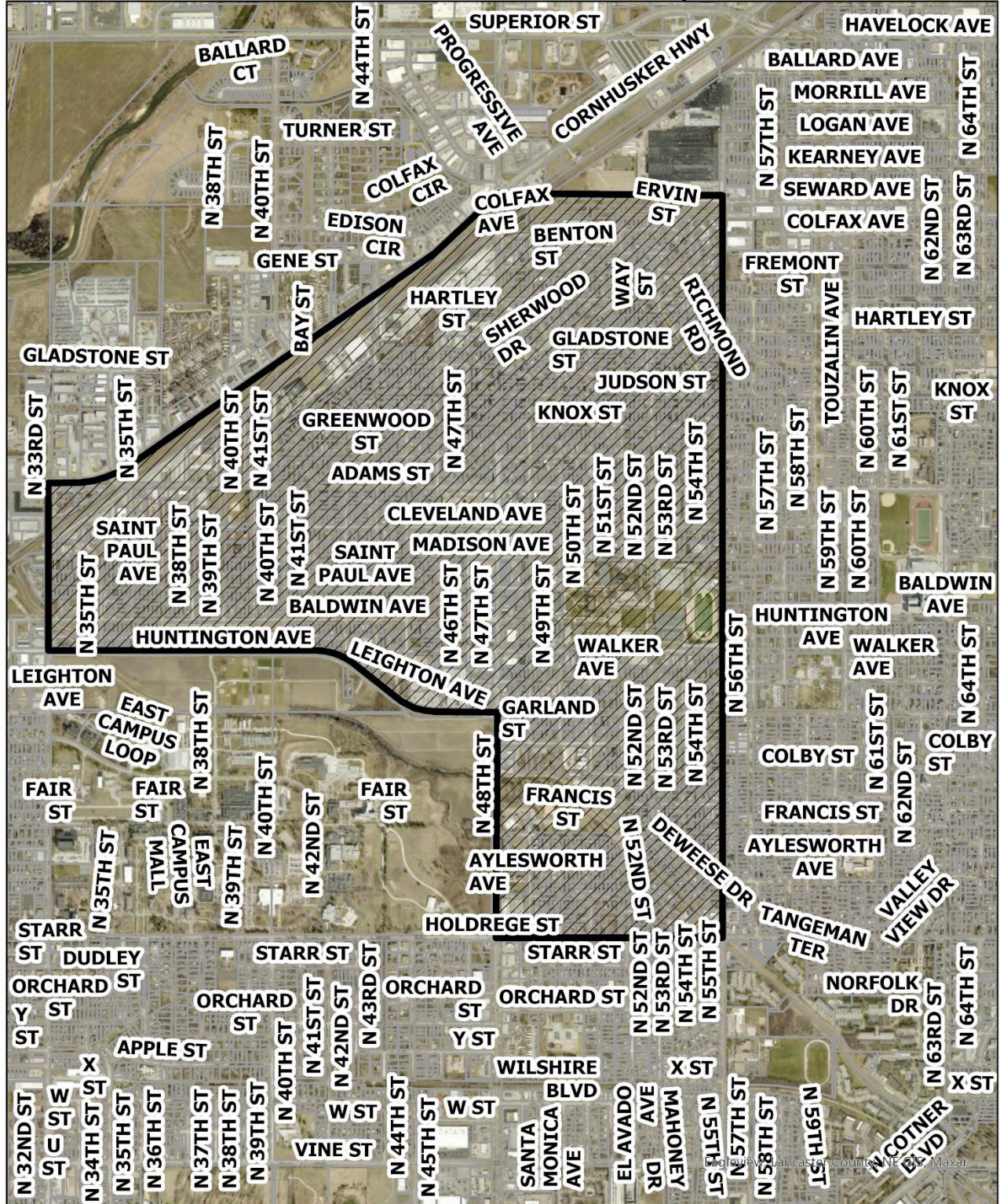








## ATTACHMENT A - Location Map



2024 Aerial



UDR25012 - University Place

Project: \_GISProjects\DevReview\UDC\_LocationMaps.aprx  
PDF: \_boards\UDC\REPORTS\Location Maps





Annual Report | Urban Design Committee

# UDC 2024







# URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Michelle Penn, Chair

Gill Peace, Vice-Chair

Frank Ordia

Emily Deeker

Jill Grasso

Tom Huston

Mark Canney

Michael Harpster

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFF

Collin Christopher

Teresa McKinstry

Juan Carrasco

Paul Barnes

Arvind Gopalakrishnan

## APPROVED

The Urban Design Committee approved this Annual Report on March 4, 2024.

## PHOTO & IMAGE CREDITS

Cover Image and inside Cover Image: Planning Staff

All other project photos, images or illustrations were provided by applicants that appeared before the Urban Design Committee and are considered part of the public record unless otherwise noted.



## Background

The Urban Design Committee was established by ordinance in 1981 to advise city government on enhancing the physical environment of our city to increase enjoyment of living in and visiting Lincoln. Per Section 4.36 of the Lincoln Municipal Code, the Committee is to consist of seven appointed citizen members serving three-year terms. The Committee meets as necessary on the first Tuesday of the month at 3 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

The Urban Design Committee member roster remained unchanged until August 2024, including Michelle Penn (chair), Gill Peace (vice-chair), Emily Deeker, Jill Grasso, Tom Huston, Frank Ordia and Mark Canney. Subsequently, Frank Ordia resigned from the committee, and Michael Harpster assumed his position in November. The Committee was staffed by Collin Christopher and Arvind Gopalakrishnan, with support from Teresa McKinstry,

Juan Carrasco, and Paul Barnes.

The committee advises the Mayor, City Council, Planning Commission, city boards, city departments, and other public agencies in matters relating to urban design, visual relationships, architectural design, and aesthetics. Reviews are generally limited to projects sponsored, initiated, or financed by the City (public projects); projects in which the City will make some financial contribution (public/private projects); and projects located on City right-of-way or other City property (private projects).

## Project Review Summary

In 2024, the Urban Design Committee reviewed 15 unique projects, with some receiving multiple reviews. Those 15 consisted of 7 TIF projects, 6 city-led projects, 2 sidewalk cafe applications (one of which was TIF funded), and 1 neighborhood design standards appeal.

# 15

**UNIQUE PROJECTS**





## TIF Project Reviews

The Urban Design Committee provided a total of eleven advisory reviews for projects requesting Tax Increment Financing (TIF). These projects vary widely in scale, scope, location and land use. Of note, they include two affordable housing projects, a sidewalk cafe project, a rowhouse redevelopment project, a townhome complex, an art studio expansion in downtown, a redevelopment of some underutilized sections of a shopping center, and a city-led streetscape project. What follows is a brief summary of each of the TIF project reviews that came before the Committee in 2024.



**Review Date(s): January**

Reserve Development proposed the redevelopment of the 130,000-square-foot former Sears building at Gateway Shopping Center, 6400 O St. The project aims to transform the existing structure into an upscale, multi-tenant space featuring three new-to-market retailers, a high-end green electric vehicle service facility, and a Lincoln hospital-affiliated urgent care and outpatient medical office. While preserving the building's original shell, the redevelopment proposed to incorporate sustainable design elements, including improved glazing, energy-efficient HVAC systems, LED lighting, and low-flow plumbing features. The south façade was planned to be modified to accommodate signage while maintaining architectural continuity through the retention of existing brickwork, a stone base, and cornice details. Additionally, site improvements included enhanced landscaping, pedestrian connectivity, and the replacement of ash trees along the east access road. As a TIF-funded project in an area without established design standards, the applicants engaged the Urban Design Committee to ensure the project contributes to reducing blight and improving the customer experience. The committee recommended approval,

# Pioneers Mixed-Income Row Housing Redevelopment

*South 46th St and Pioneers Boulevard*



**Review Date(s): February**

The Pioneers Mixed-Income Row House Redevelopment Project, located in the proposed College View Redevelopment Area, was brought to the Urban Development Department by NeighborWorks Lincoln (NWL) for tax increment financing (TIF) consideration, necessitating a review by the Urban Design Committee. The project aimed to transform a vacant lot at the northeast corner of South 46th Street and Pioneers Boulevard into a 17,000-square-foot mixed-income residential development, featuring three- and four-bedroom interlocking row houses. The plan included 12 dwelling units across three buildings—a six-plex, a four-plex, and a duplex—with seven units permanently designated as affordable housing for buyers earning 65% of the Area Median Income (AMI). The redevelopment introduced a midblock multimodal court, improved sidewalks, and additional street trees. The Urban Design Committee reviewed the project for conformance with neighborhood design standards, focusing on building design, landscaping, neighborhood integration, and blight mitigation. Based on these factors, the committee recommended approval.





**Review Date(s):** April, May

This proposal included two two-story buildings, each containing four townhome units, and was reviewed for development at the northwest corner of 26th and U Streets (Hawley Corners CUP). Situated within 300 feet of the Hawley Local Landmark District, the project required review by both the Historic Preservation Commission and the Urban Design Committee due to its request for tax increment financing (TIF). The Historic Preservation Commission evaluated the project's impact on the district and provided recommendations on its design. The townhomes, oriented east-west with porches facing U and Vine Streets, featured attached rear garages accessed via a central driveway from 26th Street. The Urban Design Committee reviewed the project in April, focusing on façade enhancements, including porches, railings, columns, doors, windows, and siding. The applicant incorporated committee feedback and presented two revised façade options in May, out of which, the first design option received approval. The project met Neighborhood Design Standards, and the committee recommended approval based on building design, landscaping, neighborhood integration, and blight mitigation.



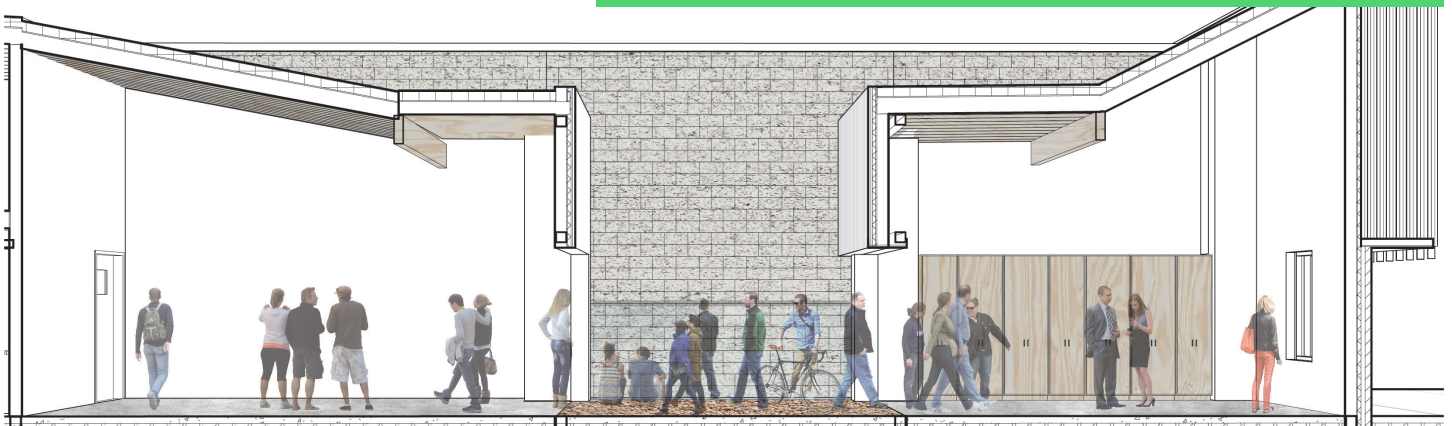
**Review Date(s): October 2023, June 2024**

Hoppe Development presented their proposal of a mixed-use residential project at 1000 S 13th Street, featuring 125 affordable apartment homes, ground-floor commercial space for a clinic, and over 90 open-air parking stalls beneath the building. The development integrates public amenities, including a pocket plaza, food truck/clinic pop-up infrastructure, a linear park, and a roof deck for social gatherings.

Given its request for Tax Increment Financing (TIF) assistance, the Urban Design Committee provided preliminary feedback on October 3, 2023, and the project came back with updated drawings in June, 2024. The UDC reviewed the architectural aesthetics and material choices, choice of landscaping and outdoor elements, compatibility of the design with the existing houses in the neighborhood, and blight mitigation. Despite nonconformance with Neighborhood Design Standards, staff recognized the project's thoughtful design approach and alignment with the City's Comprehensive Plan goals. The UDC recommended approval, requiring a future review of the streetscape design to ensure a cohesive urban environment.

## Constellation Studio Expansion

*S 21st and O St*



**Review Date(s): July**

Constellation Studios, located at 21st and O Street in the Telegraph District, presented their plan expansion to include professional artist studios, a retail shop, an art demonstration room, and an open-air courtyard. The design emphasized open interiors, extensive glazing for natural light, and flexible outdoor spaces connected with the retail and demonstration areas.

The project sought Tax Increment Financing (TIF) assistance and was reviewed as part of a Redevelopment Agreement with the Urban Development Department. It aligned with Downtown Design Standards, incorporating brick and metal panels, and successfully integrated new and existing structures. As part of the streetscape plan, to address safety concerns, bollards were ruled out, and planters were proposed instead to prevent vehicle encroachment while enhancing aesthetics. The Urban Design Committee (UDC) recommended approval of the project, with landscaping plans scheduled for later review to ensure ADA compliance and pedestrian accessibility.



## Central at South Haymarket

205 S 10th St



Review Date(s): August

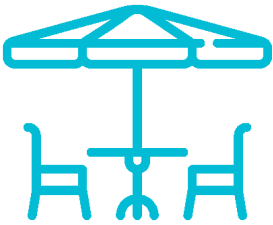
The Annex Group proposed a 6-story, 173-unit affordable housing development at 205 10th Street, targeting families. The project requested TIF funding and underwent design review under the Downtown Design Standards on November 7, 2023. It featured one-, two-, and three-bedroom units, with off-site parking negotiated with the City at 11th & N Street. The project came back in August, 2024 to present the streetscape design and some revisions in the façade.

The building's design, materials, and neighborhood integration were reviewed, ensuring compatibility and blight mitigation. Streetscape plans included sidewalk enhancements, benches, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, landscaped bump-outs, tree grates, and planting beds to improve pedestrian accessibility and sustainability. The N Street bike lane remained, with modifications at intersections for safety.

Further refinements included courtyard seating, a dog run, a playground, and planters for privacy. The building's window and balcony placements were adjusted, enhancing the design without cost-cutting. The UDC recommended approval, with minor streetscape modifications under discussion.







# Sidewalk Cafe Reviews

The Committee provided design review for 2 sidewalk cafe applications in the downtown area in 2024, one of which requested TIF assistance.



**Review Date(s):** January

MCO-LLC, owners of Aragon Tavern located on the ground floor of the 22-story Lied Place Building at 1125 Q St., applied for a sidewalk café permit to extend their dining space into the surface space abutting the public right-of-way. The proposed café, measuring 47'-2" x 9'-10", featured railings, planters, and seating designed to align with the Lincoln Municipal Code. The project requested Tax Increment Financing assistance, and after careful review, the Urban Design Committee found the proposal compatible with city standards and approved the application, allowing for an enhanced streetscape and expanded outdoor dining experience.

# Bison Witches Bar & Deli Sidewalk Café

1320 P Street



Review Date(s): July

Bison Witches proposed replacing an existing red tarp canopy with a black, more transparent structure to improve durability and functionality. The Urban Development Department sought feedback on the design, materials, and fire code compliance. Concerns were raised about the permanence of the structure, its lack of transparency, and whether it aligns with downtown standards.

Committee members questioned the need for egress, seasonal usability, and material longevity, with some viewing the enclosure as an attempt to extend the building rather than a temporary solution. While the updated direction showed improvement, the committee requested more details and renderings before making a decision.

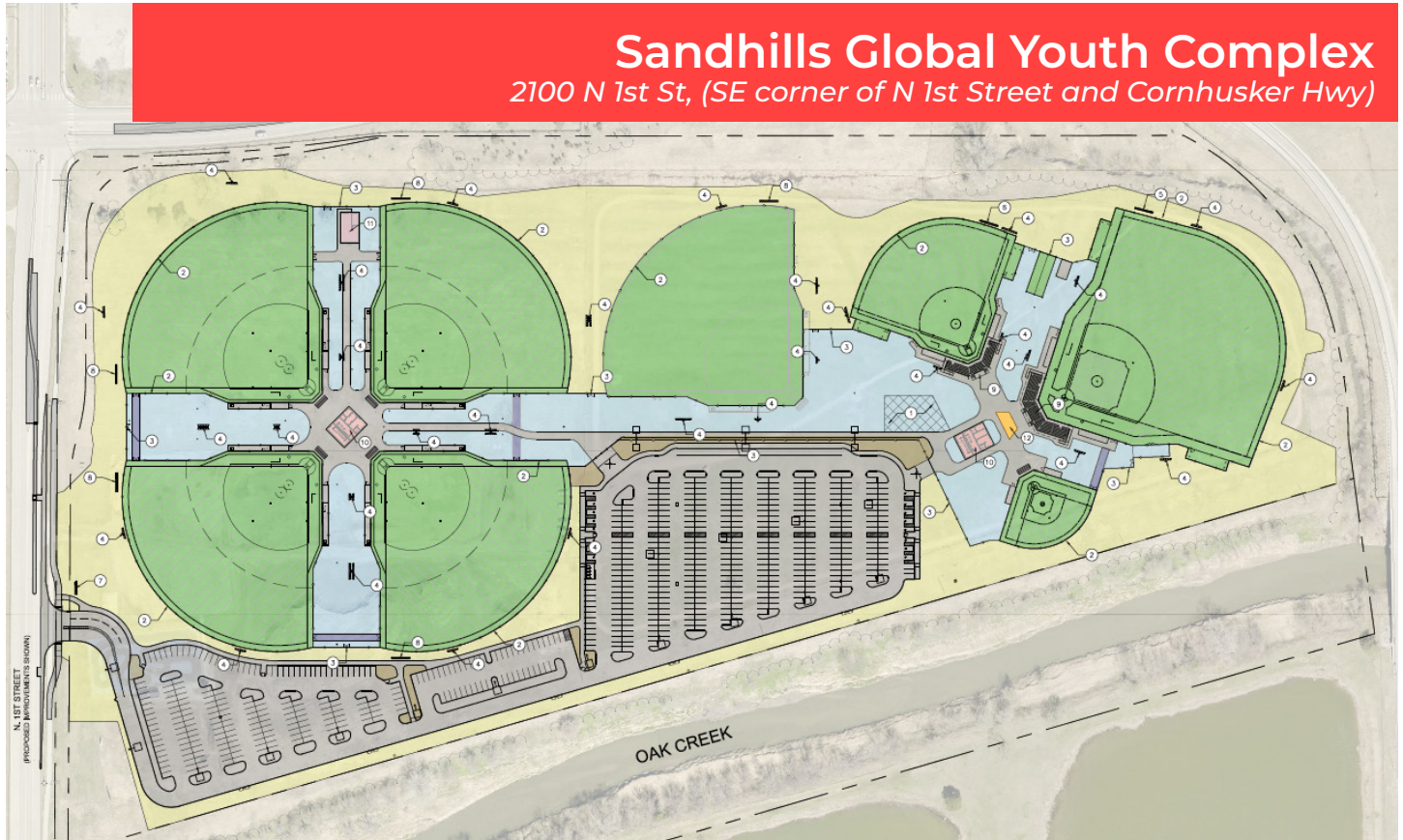






## City Project Reviews

The Urban Design Committee provided design reviews of 5 City projects ranging from Streetscape plans to Park masterplans, and sports facilities.



Review Date(s): April, May

The Sandhills Global Youth Complex (SGYC), a 40-acre baseball and softball facility at Cornhusker Highway and N. 1st Street, was reviewed by the Urban Design Committee in April. Designed for youth of all backgrounds and abilities, the complex will feature five synthetic turf fields for multi-age use, two championship fields for Nebraska Wesleyan teams, and a Homer's Heroes field for players with disabilities. Supporting amenities included concession buildings, grandstand seating, a playground, and over 600 parking spaces. This project requested funding from different public entities, including the City and the County. Given the site's location along I-180, a key entryway corridor to Lincoln, the committee emphasized the importance of its visual and functional impact. Key discussion points included landscaping enhancements, emergency vehicle access, shade structures, seating areas, and sustainability features. While no design standards existed for this area, the committee provided recommendations to improve the site's aesthetics and usability. Despite ongoing site work and scheduled completion in spring 2025, the committee noted that the site plan had yet to reflect certain suggestions, such as additional landscaping. Based on the



## Multi-Modal Transportation Center

701 S 10th St.



Review Date(s): May

At the May meeting, Liz Elliott provided an update on the Lincoln Transportation and Utilities (LTU) StarTran Multi-Modal Transportation Center, which received a \$23.6 million RAISE grant. The project aims to improve transit accessibility and safety at a new location on 10th and H street, selected after extensive site evaluations. The facility will include 18 bus bays, indoor waiting areas, bike parking, and pedestrian improvements, with environmental studies currently underway. Additional considerations include landscaping, parking adjustments, and wayfinding enhancements. Community engagement efforts are ongoing, and construction is planned to begin in 2025. The Urban Design Committee was invited to provide comments but did not conduct a formal review. The project will return for further input as designs are refined.

## Downtown Corridors Phase-1 Design

9th, 10th, 14th and O St.



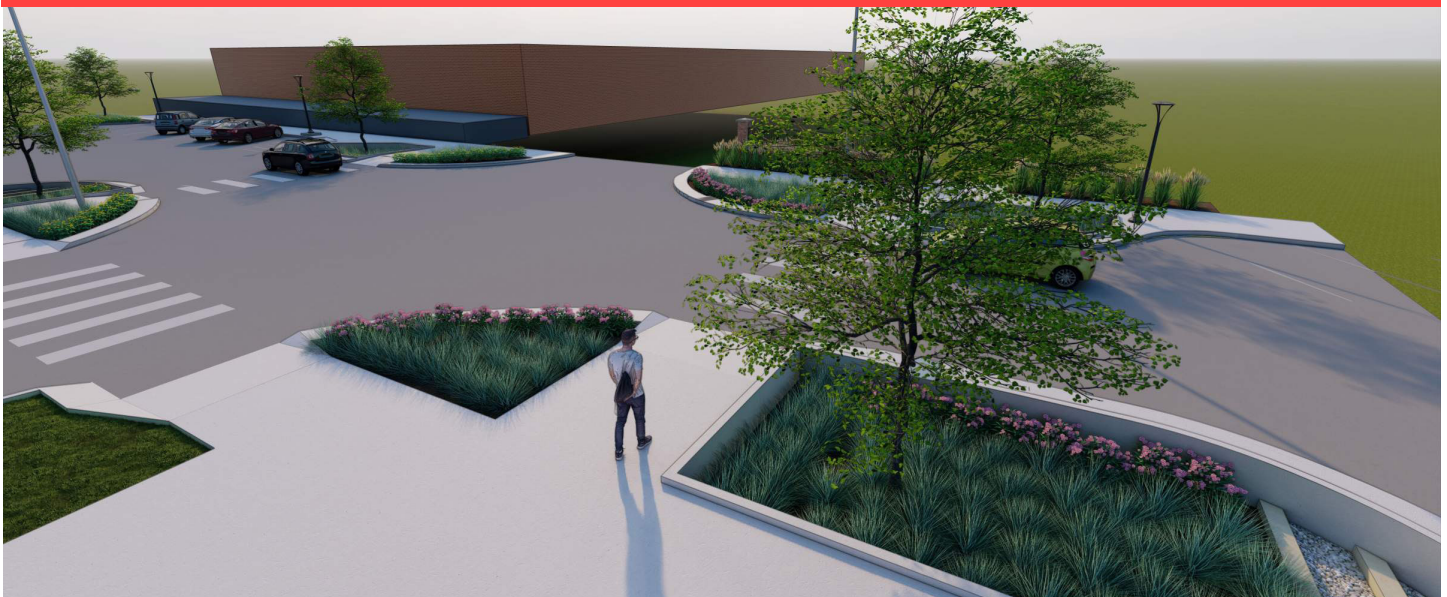


The Downtown Corridor Phase 1 Improvement Project stemmed from the 2018 Downtown Master Plan and aims to enhance streetscapes, pedestrian accessibility, and outdoor spaces. The design team began the visioning process in 2022, with construction planned for Spring 2025. Key upgrades include replacing Ash trees, sidewalk and intersection improvements, decorative lighting, and outdoor seating areas.

Funding sources include TIF districts, general funds, and State/Federal grants. The plans also addressed bike lanes, moveable street furniture, kiosk spaces, and updated parking/drop-off zones. The committee discussed branding, Husker game-day impact, bike parking, and liquor law compliance. Feedback from meetings and open houses would shape final adjustments before construction. The Urban Design Committee was in full support of the project, and recommended approval.

## South Haymarket Street and Streetscapes Master Plan

*401 7th and N St, and 7th and M St*



**Review Date(s): September, November**

As part of the Cotswold Building Redevelopment Project and South Haymarket Street and Streetscapes Master Plan, the City is proposing pedestrian improvements to the South Haymarket District, particularly at 7th & N Streets and 7th & M Streets. These improvements align with the South Haymarket Streetscape Design Standards and anticipate the South Haymarket Park, set to begin construction in spring 2025.

For 7th & N Streets, the key changes include sidewalk widening, pedestrian lighting, defined crosswalks, and a shared-use path replacing the current cycle track. Bump-outs, raised intersections, and landscaped medians will slow traffic and improve pedestrian safety. A mid-block crossing with a flashing beacon will enhance connectivity to the Gold 4 Parking Garage. At 7th & M Streets, the improvements include wider sidewalks, ADA-accessible connections, stormwater enhancements, and landscaped bump-outs to define parking areas. These enhancements support pedestrian movement and future connectivity.

The City staff, working with consultants, have integrated elements from the Downtown Master Plan (2005 & 2018) and the South Haymarket Neighborhood Plan to enhance connectivity, safety, and urban resilience. The project is set for bidding in September 2024, with construction completion by summer 2025. The committee recommended approval.

# South Haymarket Park Plan

*7th St and N St.*



**Review Date(s): November**

The Parks and Recreation Department presented the plans for South Haymarket Park, located in the South Haymarket District, covering 8.5 acres. The park aims to support economic development, create a larger downtown greenspace, connect the Haymarket District to southern neighborhoods, and enhance the urban area. Key features of the park include a skatepark, a dog park, and a gathering space with a water feature.

The park's design includes a community building, playground zones, a pump track, and a trail system connecting existing bike paths. A major goal is improving walkability downtown and increasing accessibility through new pedestrian crossings and bike connections. The park will also host events and feature informal spaces for relaxation, including a "Hearth" gathering area and swings overlooking the Haymarket District. The park is designed with attention to sustainability, with drought-tolerant plants and responsible water usage.

The construction phase is set to begin in spring 2025, with the park opening in 2026. The community building will be elevated to blend with the park's design, featuring both indoor and outdoor spaces. Staff parking options and public restrooms are also part of the plan. The committee expressed enthusiasm for the park's evolution, with a vote to approve the plans contingent on further review of the community building structure.



# Holdrege Streetscape Plan

*Holdrege, 23rd to 33rd St*



**Review Date(s): November**

The Urban Development Department and Erickson Sullivan Architects presented the streetscape enhancement project for Holdrege Street between 27th and 33rd Streets. Since the project aims to improve the public Right-of-Way and could receive TIF funding, the Urban Design Committee was asked to review the landscape design. The corridor, located between a busy commercial district and the UNL East Campus, was identified as a critical area needing improvements, including the replacement of aging street trees, damaged sidewalks, and inadequate public transportation amenities. The proposal focused on enhancing pedestrian safety, comfort, and aesthetics while maintaining the corridor's historic character.

Key design elements include ornamental pedestrian lighting, new benches at bus stops, and a landscaped median at 28th and Holdrege, featuring a decorative Clinton Neighborhood sign. Flowering ornamental trees were selected to create seasonal visual interest, particularly in spring. ADA accessibility improvements, such as the installation of new curb ramps and the replacement of damaged sidewalks, were prioritized. The plan also aims to enhance the entry to the corridor, improve the neighborhood's identity, and foster community pride. The project would be phased, with construction likely to begin in 2026 after final designs and funding are secured.





## Appeals

The Urban Design Committee conditionally approved a Neighborhood Design Standards appeal for a single-family house on 4207 Pioneers Boulevard that required a number of waivers and go through the appeals process.

### Gruenemeyer House *4207 Pioneers Blvd.*



In 2023 and early 2024, the Urban Design Committee reviewed a unique residential proposal featuring a fully underground home with only the garage visible above ground. Such designs are uncommon in Lincoln and do not align with established neighborhood design standards, requiring numerous waivers. The Planning Director denied these waivers, prompting a detailed review process. Over three months, the design team made significant revisions, integrating key design elements and presenting updated renderings that ultimately gained committee approval. However, due to property-related issues on the applicant's end, the project did not move forward, and the application was ultimately withdrawn. The original owner of the property then applied a design that was previously approved administratively by planning staff.



# URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

2024 ANNUAL REPORT