



NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

The Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission will hold a meeting on **Friday, February 27, 2026 at 8:30 a.m.** in the County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska, in **City Council Chambers** on the 1st Floor. For more information, please contact the Lincoln City/Lancaster County Planning Department at 402-441-7491.

AGENDA

February 27, 2026

1. Approval of meeting record from [January 23, 2026](#)

Discuss & Advise

2. [Sidewalk Café Playbook](#) (Planning & Development Services Department; UDR26015)
3. [LPS Parking Lot at 2403 and 2411 J Street](#) – Preliminary Discussion (Lincoln Public Schools: UDR26016)
4. Staff report & miscellaneous

**AT THIS TIME, ANYONE WISHING TO SPEAK ON AN ITEM
NOT ON THE AGENDA, MAY DO SO.**

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 Lincoln Commission on Human Rights at 402-441-7624, or the City Ombudsman at 402-441-7511, as soon as possible before the scheduled meeting date in order to make your request.*

MEETING RECORD

Advanced public notice of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission meeting was posted on the County-City bulletin board and the Planning Department's website.

NAME OF GROUP: NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Friday, January 23, 2026, 8:30 a.m., City Council Chambers, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Eileen Bergt, Kile Johnson, David Quade, Andrea Gebhart and David Landis

Ann Post and Heidi Cuca absent

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Collin Christopher, Paul Barnes, David Cary and Kristi Merfeld of the Planning and Development Services Department; Matt Hansen with the State of Nebraska; Bob Ripley and other interested citizens were present.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission Meeting

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

Johnson then called for the approval of the minutes of the regular meeting held October 24, 2025.

Motion for approval made by Landis; seconded by Bergt.

Minutes were approved 5-0: Bergt, Gebhart, Landis, Johnson and Quade, voting "yes"; Cuca and Post absent.

DISCUSS AND ADVISE:

UDR 26002 Federal Garage Streetscape Enhancement at 100 Centennial Mall South

January 23, 2026

Members Present: Bergt, Gebhart, Landis, Johnson, and Quade.
Cuca and Post absent.

Collin Christopher, Planning and Development Services Department, 555 S 10th Street, Lincoln NE came forward and stated that this is a preliminary, advisory review for a project originated by the Downtown Lincoln Association (DLA) and their maintenance team. They have created a program to identify streetscapes within downtown that have excessive sidewalks where some of that excess could be converted into landscaping. They did some of this work on 17th and 18th streets this year – both north and south of O Street – and are now turning their attention to S 16th Street adjacent to the Federal Parking Garage.

Christopher suggested that this is a project that should be easy to implement and is pretty straightforward. The team has developed two concepts for review and would like to get feedback before proceeding to discussions with GSA. If all goes well, the project could get built this year.

Christopher pointed out the location and highlighted the “sea of concrete” on that side of the garage. He also pointed out the tree planters and their deteriorated condition. He contrasted this side with the Centennial Mall side of the garage, which has turf and healthy street trees and a much narrower sidewalk.

Christopher showed the first concept, which included a 12’ sidewalk running down the center of the streetscape with landscaping on either side. From a streetscape perspective and downtown perspective this is the preferred option, because it gives plenty of room to plant trees, but also creates space to establish more of a visual buffer against the garage. That said, staff is expecting that the GSA may not be supportive of this concept because of potential security risks associated with a landscape bed abutting the garage.

Next, he pointed out that they would be bumping out the streetscape at the south end to reduce the crossing distance across N Street and to “shadow” the angled parking tray. The N Street cycle track median on the south side of N Street is already being extended all the way to the crosswalk as part of the Pershing block redevelopment. So with the combination of the bump out on the north side and the extension of that median on the south side, there will be a much shorter crossing distance. For pedestrians, this is a win.

Christopher then moved on to the second concept, which showed a 14’ sidewalk against the garage, and a 24’ wide landscape bed extending to the curb. He explained that the building doesn’t actually go to the property line and so there is about 14 feet

of space from property line to the edge of the building that is owned by the federal government. Preserving this for the sidewalk would leave room for an extra-wide landscape bed between the sidewalk and the curb that could support lots of soil volume and plant life. While plants would likely thrive in this environment, the garage can't be screened quite as well and pedestrians are forced to walk along the frontage of an ugly, inactive building. While not ideal, staff still views this concept as a major upgrade to what is there today. As with the previous concept, the second concept proposes bumping out into N Street at the intersection.

Christopher concluded his introduction and asked for feedback on the two concepts.

Landis replied that it was mentioned that there would be resistance to the first idea. Who is resisting and why is the first option not a good one for them?

Christopher thought the resistance would be from the operations manager at the federal building. Ideally from a security and operation standpoint they want to maintain that sidewalk right along the edge of the building. *(Staff Note: It has been confirmed that GSA's biggest concern would be having plant material against the building in which someone or some object could hide or be hidden.)* Additionally, within the last 4 or 5 years they have repaved a lot of this concrete without telling the City that it was being done, so there would be some wasted costs on their end from having previously completed that work.

Landis stated that this is an unwelcoming streetscape and it has been made to be so unattractive. The block is not inviting and discourages people to walk it.

Bergt replied that the west side of the building has a turf area next to the building that is owned by the government. There is no landscape on this at all. Is turf okay with them in this space? She suggested that a third alternative would be to leave the bed against the building in the first option as turf-only. This would allow it to better match the Centennial Mall side and make it feel more cohesive with its surroundings. Bergt emphasized the need to look at the whole streetscape.

Bergt mentioned she worked on the planters next to the building after the Oklahoma City bombing, to make a barrier. On the streetscape they put in planting beds, but the crosswalk comes out to the street at the corner. Using the crosswalk and then continuing straight across to the south is preferred rather than forcing people to angle back toward the garage. The sidewalk against the garage does not feel like a nice place to walk because of the way the building façade angles out. Making this area against the building a turf bed like the other side would be preferred over the second concept. She asked about the width of the sidewalk.

Christopher responded that the concept shows it at about 12 or 13 feet. He said that her third concept makes a lot of sense and would be a good compromise.

Quade asked if they push back and don't want the turf on their property, do we end up with an extra 12-foot-wide public sidewalk adjacent to their private sidewalk or do we default to the second option for a sidewalk that is adjacent.

Bergt commented that it is probably better to default to the second option, but it doesn't seem like it fits the whole streetscape. She was not sure if they would like that, since they just replaced all the concrete in this area.

Quade stated they will say that they have replaced the concrete. He then asked who will be maintaining this area of turf?

Bergt replied that she could see that they would not like that.

Christopher commented that the City has taken over full financial responsibility for maintenance of the streetscape on this block. In the past, the GSA would pay DLA separately but they decided recently that they did not want to participate anymore, so the City now pays DLA for the maintenance.

Bergt responded that the turf condition will be the same on the east side, so it should not be an issue. She did understand since the concrete is only a couple of years old, they could be concerned about pulling it up.

Johnson asked who would pay for this?

Christopher confirmed that the City would pay for this work.

Quade asked about the large section of concrete mid-block and why the landscape bed had not been extended further south here.

Christopher responded that there was a light pole, but that the pole could be located in a landscape bed if desired. He didn't think there was any other reason. *(Staff Note: upon further review, there is also a bus stop here, so the landscaping was reduced to provide room for bus loading/unloading.)*

Johnson asked if users enter on the north and exit on the south?

Christopher was unsure how the garage functions.

Johnson questioned if there is an elevator off the side?

Bergt replied that there is a maintenance door in the middle.

Christopher said the bed could be extended.

Quade stated that he likes what Eileen was saying, but assumes that they are going to come back and have those disagreements.

Christopher replied that another downside of the second concept is that the City will probably want their own public sidewalk. If this is all private, will the federal government agree to an easement to allow the City to use that as a typical sidewalk? Probably not, so then the sidewalk will need to be made even larger to give us an actual public way for pedestrians. Christopher agreed that the first concept is what he would prefer, and if there is a way to compromise with them to make it work with turf or some other solution that would also be his preference.

Gebhart commented that she does not have a strong preference in either direction. She does like the first option from a pedestrian use, because it is a straight line and a person does not have to jog over closer to the building. The second option is nice because even though it stands out a little bit on 16th Street, it is a major corridor. Creating more of a buffer for pedestrians feels appropriate and she likes that. The plants will likely thrive a little bit better with the larger soil volume. There is no strong preference.

Johnson mentioned that he likes the sidewalk in the middle. Looking at the west side, that sidewalk is on the outside but there is parking there that creates a buffer. In this case, a sidewalk on the outside would be right next to traffic, which is not good. The bump outs are a great improvement. The sidewalks would work if they were in the middle as opposed to next to the building. If people are coming out either place that gives the pedestrian and the driver more opportunity to see each other. Otherwise a pedestrian could be walking right next to the building and walk right out in front of an oncoming car. The middle sidewalk is a good one.

Christopher stated that this is just an advisory review at this point, and that he appreciated all the feedback. He suggested that they might be back in a couple months with a fully developed plan for review and approval.

Adoption of 2025 NCEC Annual Report

January 23, 2026

Members Present: Bergt, Gebhart, Landis, Johnson, and Quade.
Cuca and Post absent.

Christopher stated that there was not going to be a lot of time spent on the annual report, since almost everyone was present when he went over it in depth last November at the Capitol. He proceeded to discuss some of the main highlights of the report and emphasized the role NCEC plays in improving the Capitol Environs. He touched on the PBC temporary parking lot, the 14th and Lincoln Mall intersection improvements, and the Goodhue tree removal and replacement project. In each case, the Commission was able to make the project substantially better than what was originally proposed. Concluding his summary of the report, he mentioned that staff was requesting a formal vote and approval of the report. He asked if there were any final comments.

Johnson mentioned that it has come to his attention that the “no parking” around the Capitol is not being enforced during construction. He noticed when leaving one day that a car next to the Capitol in the first spot south of the intersection had a ticket. He thought that was great that they are enforcing that open space so the visibility for pedestrians and people coming north is preserved.

Johnson asked for a motion to approve the annual report.

Quade motioned for approval and Landis seconded the motion. Motion approved 5-0; Bergt, Gebhart, Landis, Quade and Johnson voting “yes”; Cuca and Post absent.

Staff Updates and Miscellaneous

Christopher replied there were no staff updates and no new applications yet for the next meeting. He appreciated everyone’s attendance today.

Bergt stated that she has been reappointed to the Commission recently.

Johnson said he did not know that but thanked her for agreeing to step into that role again. He asked If there was anyone at this time wishing to speak on any item not on the agenda.

Bob Ripley, Resident 3022 William Street Lincoln Ne, came forward and stated he had a citizen comment or more of a question for Eileen on landscaping around the federal garage. He is trying to think of maintenance with regard to the federal parking

facility and if groundcover would be an option. Turf is high maintenance and looks bad really fast if not cared for. He would recommend groundcover for an option. He has installed it on his property in several places. It does require maintenance and trimming once every 2 months, but not as much as mowing.

Bergt mentioned that litter is a big thing with groundcover. It would be an issue every day to stay on top of. Since the other side is turf, the City is already mowing in the area. Turf keeps it clean and creates no issues with security.

Ripley replied that there are a number of places where there is pavement right against the building. These two hard surfaces create an oven for a pedestrian. If the landscaping would be near the building and the sidewalk separated by some landscaping, it would soften the appearance and the acoustic aspect of it all. It leads to a more pleasant pedestrian experience as opposed to having a condition where a sidewalk is right up against the building and it creates a reflector of all sorts of things. The people that use spray paint don't have easy access to wander along the building this way.

Eileen suggested you could also plant junipers in there that are low maintenance.

Bob asked if this will be irrigated.

Eileen responded that it would need to be irrigated if there was turf. There are a lot of options, and she does like the idea of something closer to the building. She does not love the idea of another extra-wide sidewalk.

David said they just love concrete in the federal government

Bob replied that the cooperation of the GSA can be affected greatly by a conversation with the delegation and that makes it more cooperative. When they get a call from someone other than the City, GSA's opinion can change.

Moving on to another topic, Christopher stated that when going through the budgeting cycle, there was a request from Parks for he and his team to take over maintenance of the Lincoln Mall medians. This area has not been maintained the way he would like it to be the last several years. So, he is exploring the possibility of taking over responsibility of the medians. This transition would happen in the fall of this year.

Johnson asked if the trees would be replaced.

Christopher responded that the trees are specified in the design standards. Any changes to the general makeup of the landscaping would have to be approved by this Commission.

Bergt commented that she believed Larry Enerson designed the medians and they would be hard to change.

Johnson stated that with no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:03 a.m.



NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

APPLICATION NUMBER	Urban Design Record #26015
APPLICATION TYPE	Advisory Review
ADDRESS/LOCATION	Eligible areas within the Capitol Environs District
HEARING DATE	February 27, 2026
ADDITIONAL MEETINGS	-
APPLICANT	Paul Barnes, Planning and Development Services
STAFF CONTACT	Collin Christopher, 402-441-6370, cchristopher@lincoln.ne.gov

RECOMMENDATION: ADVISORY REVIEW ONLY

Summary of Request

In coordination with Project O Street, the Planning and Development Services Department has authored a text amendment change related to sidewalk cafes. The origin of this text amendment comes from a desire from City staff and downtown stakeholders to update the requirements for sidewalk cafes to allow them to be better integrated into the downtown environment. Location, types of barriers, access, acceptable materials, and the incorporation of amenities into the sidewalk cafes were all considered. How alcohol can be served within the context of these new standards was also examined. Beyond the design and placement of the sidewalk cafes, the text amendment offers a streamlined process for approval of a café space. Plus, a Sidewalk Café Playbook has been developed to make the whole approval process easier to navigate. Finally, and maybe most relevant to the Capitol Environs, the amendment is proposing that sidewalk cafes now be allowed in all O-1 zoning districts instead of just the B zoning districts as is currently allowed. As the Commission likely remembers, all of the City's O-1 zoning is located in and around the Environs District.

The Commission is being asked to weigh in on the content of the playbook, as well as the proposal to add O-1 to the allowable zoning districts for sidewalk cafes.

Compatibility with the Design Standards

The Capitol Environs Design Standards do not specifically get into sidewalk cafes. However, there are a number of relevant standards and guidelines that have been copied below that can be used to provide direction for sidewalk cafes in the district. They touch on durability, color neutrality, rhythm and organization, and the need to complement existing mall design elements, such as the existing site furniture on Centennial Mall.

Design Standard 18: General Landscape of All Malls

The landscape of the Capitol Malls should enhance the Capitol setting and vistas:

- by providing canopy and definition at the mall edge, but leaving the centers of the malls more open, allowing on-axis views of the Capitol,

- by creating a sense of organization and unity through form, color, texture, and spacing that may be lacking in the adjacent architecture,
- by establishing a rhythm of visual and physical movement leading ultimately to the Capitol,
- by providing seasonal change and interest.

Guideline 18.2:

Provide seating in as many locations as appropriate. Benches should:

- be of high quality, refined materials,
- have backs,
- be readily available commercially or easily repaired in-house,
- be of neutral colors,
- be placed along edges to take advantage of shade and allow pedestrians to be close to circulation but not in it.

To provide seating opportunities for conversation, combine benches, trash cans, ash urns and small tables of similar construction and installation.

Design Standard 22: Centennial Mall Landscape

Centennial Mall is the District's most formal landscaped mall, providing a varied, safe, and attractive pedestrian environment, with opportunities for interaction and enjoyment, within a design framework that offers continuous views of the most prominent facade of the Capitol. The redesign and rebuilding, rededicated as "Nebraska's Centennial Mall" in 2016, establishes:

- strong, well-defined edges;
- continuous, accessible walkways lined with pedestrian-scale lighting;
- open center accented with plazas and water features.

This overall design should be maintained and any proposed changes should be evaluated against whether they enhance this design.

Guideline 22.4:

A consistent family of street furniture, such as benches, trash receptacles, bollards, planters, tables, and chairs, has been installed in the 2014-16 rebuilding of the Mall. It should be maintained and any new elements should be within this design program.

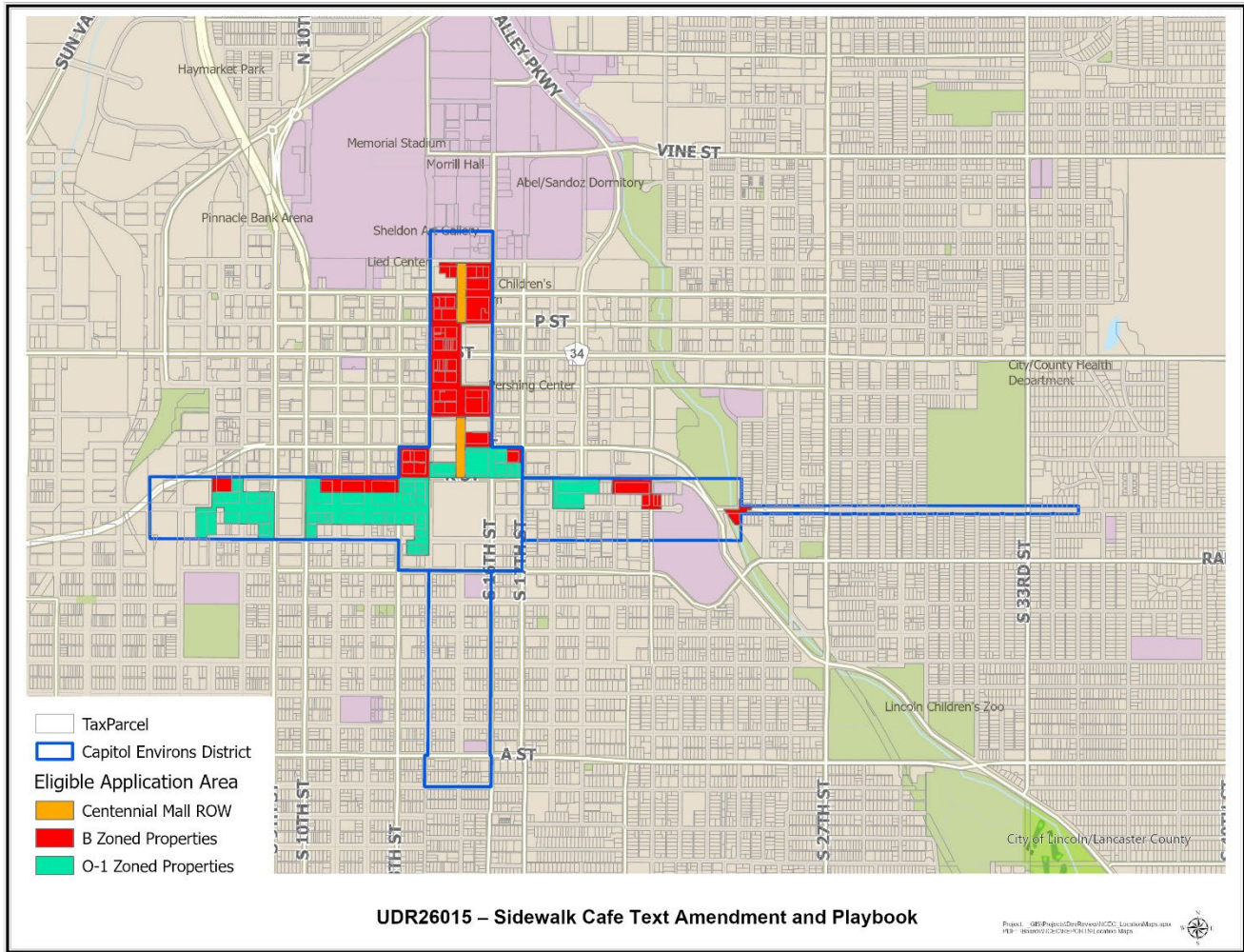
Guideline 22.5:

Privately-installed furniture adjacent to the Mall should be reviewed by the Commission for overall compatibility, durability, and high quality.


Recommendations/Action

Again, the Commission is being asked to weigh in on the content of the playbook, as well as the proposal to add O-1 to the allowable zoning districts for sidewalk cafes. If there are specific elements of the playbook that the Commission believes should be more closely considered as they relate to the Capitol Environs District, that feedback would be appreciated at this time.

ATTACHMENT A – LOCATION MAP



The properties highlighted in orange, red and green above represent those areas in which a sidewalk café could be applied for within the Nebraska Capitol Environs District.



Sidewalk Café Guidebook

A Guide to Help Lincoln Businesses Develop and Maintain Sidewalk Cafés



CITY^{of} LINCOLN



CONTENTS

About the Guidebook	3
Application Process	4
Using the Design Guidebook	6
Design Requirements	12
Appendix	19

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN CREATING A SIDEWALK CAFÉ

The City of Lincoln is committed to supporting local businesses. Whether you are just starting to explore the idea or ready to apply, this guide is here to walk you through every step of the process.

CAFÉ SEATING IN THE RIGHT OF WAY

Lincoln is known for its vibrant dining scene, and our local restaurants and bars provide essential economic, cultural and community benefits for our city. To support the local restaurant industry, the City of Lincoln has developed these design standards to help restaurant and bar owners continue to use the public right of way to expand their dining areas through café seating on sidewalks. This program aims to offer clear and consistent guidance for the use of outdoor dining furnishings and structures in the right of way

ABOUT THE STANDARDS

These standards ensure that all outdoor dining installations in the public right of way are accessible for emergency responders, provide space for public transit operations and loading zones, and prevent street safety hazards. All installations must comply with ADA standards for accessibility. The standards acknowledge the importance of serving individuals with disabilities, ensuring that everyone in our community can benefit from these enhancements and seating options. By adhering to these design standards, permit holders have clarity about permitted and non-permitted uses and can ensure that their right-of-way outdoor seating meets all requirements.



APPLICATION PROCESS

After you submit an application, a team member will get in touch with you to complete the permitting process. The City of Lincoln will support applicants as much as possible to make sure they meet the permit requirements. This is what applying for an Sidewalk Café **Permit looks like:**

Step 1: Verify Eligibility

Verify that your property falls within an approved zoning district.

Step 2: Complete Application

Complete the Sidewalk Café Permit Application and submit all required materials. Make sure to:

- *Answer all questions completely*
- *Upload all required documents*
- *Pay the \$150 annual fee*

Submitting a complete application helps avoid delays.

Step 3: City Review

City staff review new applications to confirm compliance with zoning, safety, and design standards.

Step 4: Receive Your Permit

Once approved, the City Clerk's Office will contact you with next steps to finalize payment and issue your permit. Cafés must be set up as approved, display the permit on site, and remain subject to inspection.

Prepare Application Materials Checklist

Before starting your application, collect the following materials:

- Business and property information
- Required permits
- Photos of proposed furniture and equipment
- A site plan with dimensions
- Proof of insurance
- A \$5,000 bond, if applicable

Questions about the design standards or potential deviations should be directed to the Planning and Development Services Department at **402-441-7491**.

PERMIT ELIGIBILITY

Sufficient pedestrian passageway

My outdoor café would leave AT LEAST 5 feet of unobstructed clear passageway on the sidewalk.	Yes, you are eligible.
My outdoor café would leave LESS THAN 5 feet of unobstructed clear passageway on the sidewalk.	No, you are not eligible.

Alcohol sales

My outdoor café does NOT sell alcohol	Does not have any barrier around it.	Yes, you are eligible.
My outdoor café DOES sell alcohol	Does not have any barrier around it.	No, you are not eligible.
	Does have a barrier with an opening of less than 8 feet.	Yes, you are eligible.

Proximity to permanent objects in the right of way

My outdoor café:

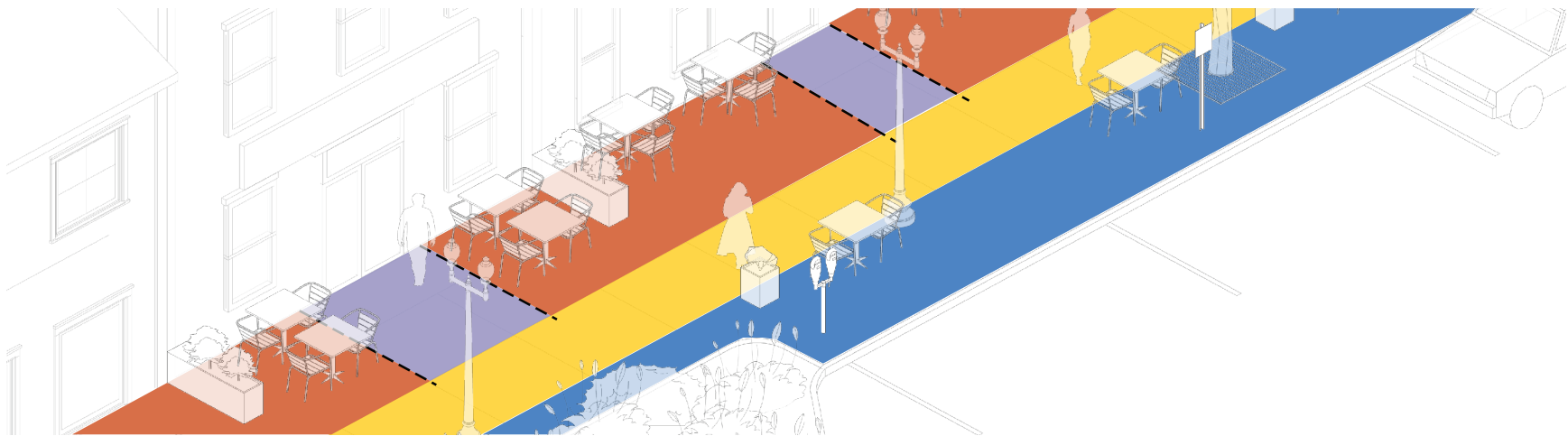
Is within 5 feet from crosswalk landings, curb ramps, bus stops, or bus shelters.	No, you are not eligible.
Is within 2 feet from the edge of the curb from driveways, parking, or loading zones.	
Is within 3 feet from fire hydrants, parking meters, signage, or bike racks.	
Has a clear zone of less than 5 feet in the front of business entry & exit points.	
Has a clear zone of less than 5 feet in front of business entry and exit points.	
Maintains a clearance of less than 10 feet from crosswalks.	
Is near an intersection or driveway, but located outside of the sight triangle defined by the City.	Yes, you are eligible.

USING THE DESIGN GUIDEBOOK

City of Lincoln Café Seating Program Design Principles

Design for maintenance • Accessible for all • Quality materials and finishes • Easily removable

Throughout the design guidebook, diagrams illustrate requirements and recommendations to obtain a sidewalk café permit.



Sidewalk Zones Explained

Curb Zone

This is the area next to the street. Café seating may be placed here if all required buffers and safety clearances are maintained.

Building Entrance Zone

Keep this space open in front of doorways to allow safe and easy access in and out of the building.

Frontage Zone

This is the area along the building where café seating is typically placed.


Pedestrian Passageway

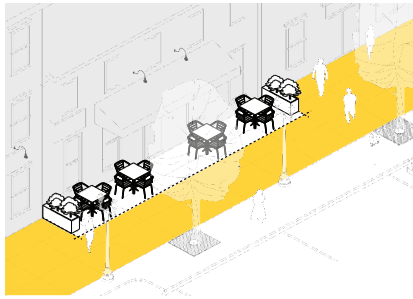
Keep at least 5 feet completely clear so people can walk through comfortably and safely.

SIDEWALK CAFÉ TYPES

If your café is directly against your building, there must be at least five feet of clear passageway between the café and the street. If café seating is placed both near the building and at the curb, the five-foot passageway must run between them.

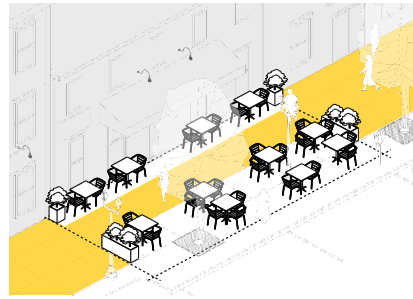
In areas with heavier foot traffic or special site characteristics, the City may require a wider passageway.

 min. 5' unobstructed pedestrian passageway



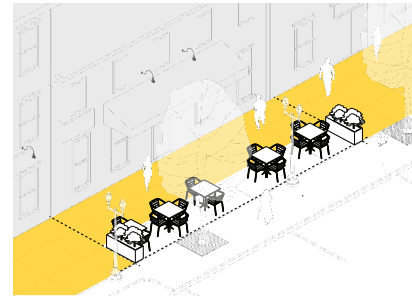
Building abutting

Sidewalk café located directly next to the building.



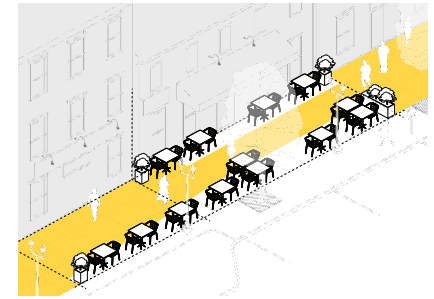
Split by pedestrian passageway

Sidewalk café on both sides of the pedestrian passageway, encroaching the curb zone.



Curbside

Sidewalk café near the curb side of the pedestrian passageway.



Split by pedestrian passageway and abutting neighboring property

Sidewalk café on both sides of the pedestrian passageway, and abutting part of the neighboring property.

SIDEWALK CAFÉ CRITERIA

Use of Public Property

Your café must sit on public sidewalk space between your building and the curb.

You cannot extend into the street or public parking spaces.

If your café footprint uses the space in front of a neighboring business, you'll need a notarized agreement from that property owner.

When reasonable, new sidewalk cafés should align with existing cafés on the same block face to accommodate a consistent, direct pedestrian passageway.



Serving Alcohol?

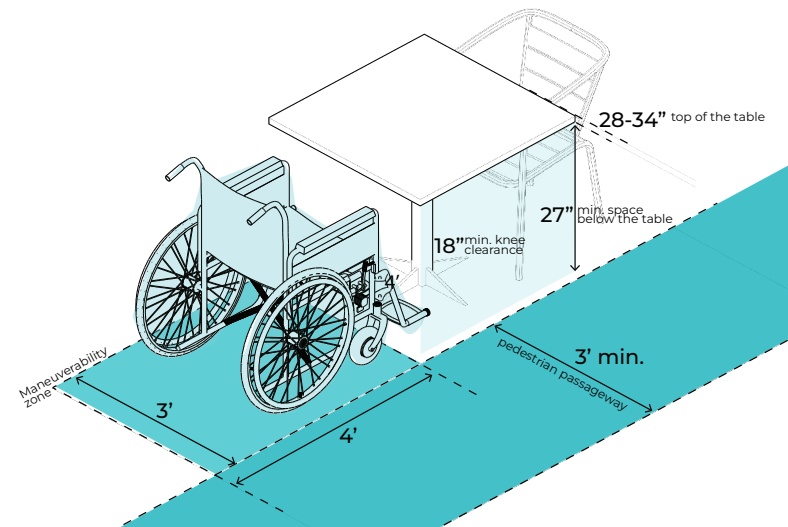
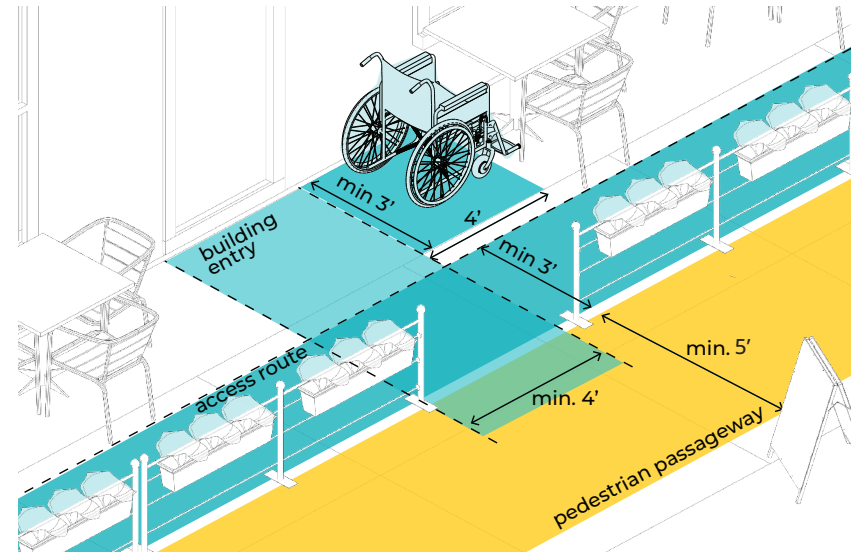
If you plan to serve alcohol, your sidewalk café must be delineated with movable rigid barriers or planters.

You must hold a valid liquor license from the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission.



ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- The sidewalk cafe space must have a minimum 4-foot wide accessible entry from adjacent pedestrian passageway.
- Cafes serving with capacity over 50 people must have two such entry points.
- Inside the café, a minimum three-foot-wide accessible path that connects accessible features must be provided.
- At least 5% of tables, but no fewer than one, must meet ADA standards:
 - **Table height:** 28 to 34 inches (measured from the ground to the top surface)
 - **Knee clearance:** 27 inches high, 30 inches wide, 19 inches deep
- Surfaces must be relatively flat, with a maximum 2% cross slope (perpendicular to the curb) and 5% running slope (parallel to the curb).



RESPONSIBILITIES AND MAINTENANCE

Sidewalk café permit holders are responsible for keeping their café seating well-maintained and in good repair to ensure safety, accessibility and cleanliness of these spaces. Permit holders must follow these maintenance procedures:

Operational requirements

- Adhere to the approved layout: your café must match the plan approved by the City. Any changes, including furniture types, layout adjustments, or added elements like heaters, require City review and approval.
- Keep your permit on display: your active sidewalk café permit must be visible from the public sidewalk at all times.
- Sidewalk cafes may operate during hours noted in your approved application. You may not operate earlier or later without written permission from the City.
- You are responsible for keeping the sidewalk café and surrounding area clean, safe, and free of debris at all times.

PERMIT CONDITIONS

Emergencies and Complaints

- The City or emergency services may require the temporary removal or closure of your sidewalk café in the event of public safety concerns, construction or utility work, or severe weather.
- If complaints are received about safety, accessibility, or obstruction, the City may inspect your café and require corrective action.

Renewing your Permit

- Sidewalk café permits are valid for one year.
- To continue operating, you must submit a renewal application before your current permit expires.
- If there are no changes to your layout, a streamlined renewal process may be available.
- The City may deny renewal if your café has violated regulations or failed inspections.

What Could Cause Your Permit to Be Revoked?

The City reserves the right to revoke your permit at any time if you:

- Fail to maintain the required clearances or accessible paths
- Operate outside of approved hours or boundaries
- Do not maintain cleanliness or safety standards
- Ignore the required corrections following a City inspection
- Misrepresent your café setup in your application

GENERAL DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

Furniture

- All proposed furniture (tables, chairs, benches, etc.) must be commercial-grade, durable for outdoor use, and their specifications must be included in the permit application.
- Furniture should be removable and not permanently affixed to the sidewalk.
- When not in use for extended periods of time, businesses are encouraged to remove the furniture from the sidewalk.

Materials

- Acceptable materials include stainless steel, powder-coated aluminum or steel, and treated hardwoods or composites proven for durability.
- While not a requirement, we recommend that applicants consider water drainage on flat surfaces when selecting furniture. Tabletop selections are encouraged to include metal meshes, slats, or alternative materials like solid surface acrylic to prevent water pooling.
- A variety of materials may be used for landscaped planters, but materials that are susceptible to salt damage like concrete, are discouraged.

Barriers and Defining Features

- If alcohol will be served, the café must be delineated by a rigid barrier or other defining feature at least 36" in height.
- Barriers must maintain a minimum 4-foot-wide open entrance, preferably located in front of the business entrance, and shall not exceed 8 feet in width.

Temporary vs Permanent Elements

- All sidewalk café elements, except those attached directly to the building, must be temporary and removable without tools.
- Any element requiring drilling or bolting into the pavement is considered permanent and is generally not allowed unless otherwise approved by the City.

TYPES OF RIGID BARRIERS, OR OTHER DEFINING FEATURES

Requirements

- Barriers must be free-standing, stable, well-balanced, and removable. They must not pose any risk of tipping or causing tripping hazards.
- Height and placement of barriers, and other defining features will be reviewed case-by-case, particularly near street or alley intersections where sight triangles are critical for the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.
- Barriers must maintain clear visibility between the street and café.
- Planters and rope barriers must have a lower edge no more than 27 inches above the ground so people with vision impairments using a cane can detect them.
- Rigid barriers taller than 60 inches may be permitted only at café corners or adjacent to building façades, not along curbs.
- Businesses must ensure regular maintenance of the planters and keep the plants healthy, well-pruned, and free of debris.



Prohibited barrier types

- Unstable sectional fencing
- Chain-link fencing
- Trash receptacles used as barriers
- Corten steel
- Plastic lattice
- Untreated lumber

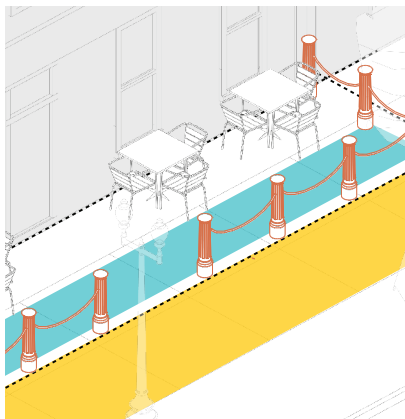
Or any material not intended for permanent outdoor architectural use.

TYPES OF RIGID BARRIERS OR OTHER DEFINING FEATURES

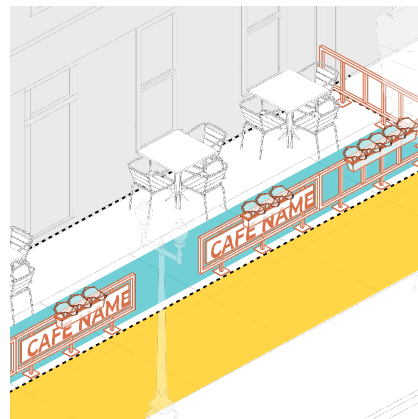
The City of Lincoln encourages creative, well-designed, and visually appealing solutions for sidewalk café enclosures, including planters, and other rigid barriers.

- Acceptable materials include:
 - **Metal:** Powder-coated steel, aluminum, or wrought iron with a durable, weather-resistant finish.
 - **Wood:** Hardwoods or treated softwoods suitable for outdoor environments.
 - **Cable or tensioned rail systems:** Stainless or coated steel cables supported by a rigid frame.

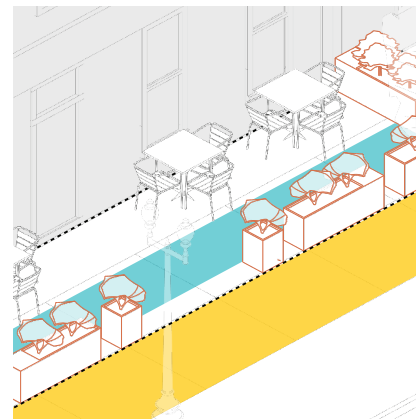
- **Planters:** Constructed from metal, wood, or other stable, weather-resistant materials such as high-density polystyrene. Heavy materials like stone or concrete may be used sparingly.
 - **Tempered glass or acrylic panels:** Supported by metal or wood framing for a clean, modern aesthetic.
- The above are approved types of movable rigid barriers that may be used to enclose a sidewalk café space. The selection of materials, dimensions, and placement of these barriers will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis.



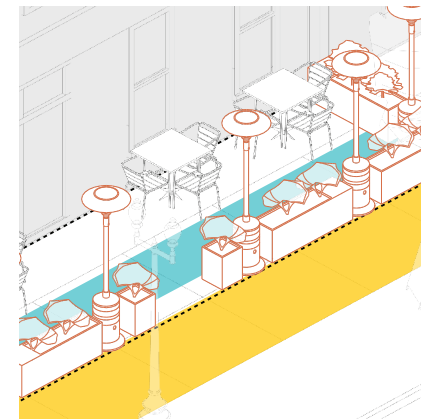
Rope barrier bollards



Customized movable barricade/partitions with planter boxes



Landscape planters



Landscape planters + heaters

OVERHEAD ELEMENTS

Permitted

- Roller shades will be approved on a case-by-case basis and must maintain an opacity of 95% or less, corresponding to a minimum transparency (openness) level of 5% or more; fully opaque shades are not permitted.
- Shades with higher openness percentages let in more light and offer a clearer outside view, making them ideal for spaces like sidewalk cafés that allow visibility to the sidewalk and from the sidewalk into the café.
- Awnings, shades, railings, umbrellas, and other sidewalk café features may only display the name of the business and should not be used to advertise any other products.

NOT Permitted

- Shade sails are not permitted. Awnings, coverings, and shades must not obscure the building façade or disrupt the transparency of the ground-level frontage.



Awning with the business name

✔ Permitted.



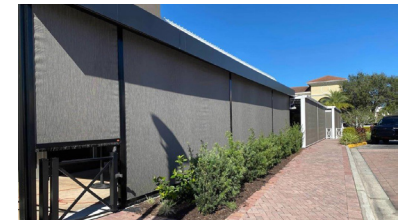
Umbrella with a brand name

✘ Not permitted.



Transparent shades

✔ Permitted.

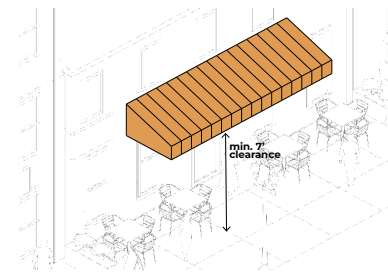


Opaque shades

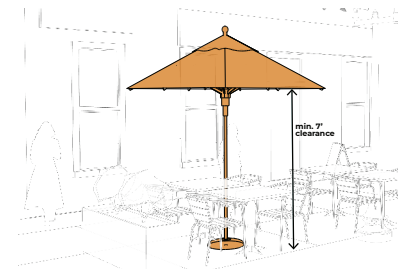
✘ Not permitted.

Clearance

- Overhead elements, including awnings, umbrellas, pergolas, or other elements are permitted as long as they meet the code requirements and do not obstruct circulation or visibility for pedestrians or drivers.
- Retractable awnings are allowed, as long as the awning is fully supported by its attachment to the building and not via vertical posts on the sidewalk.



Awning attached to the building.

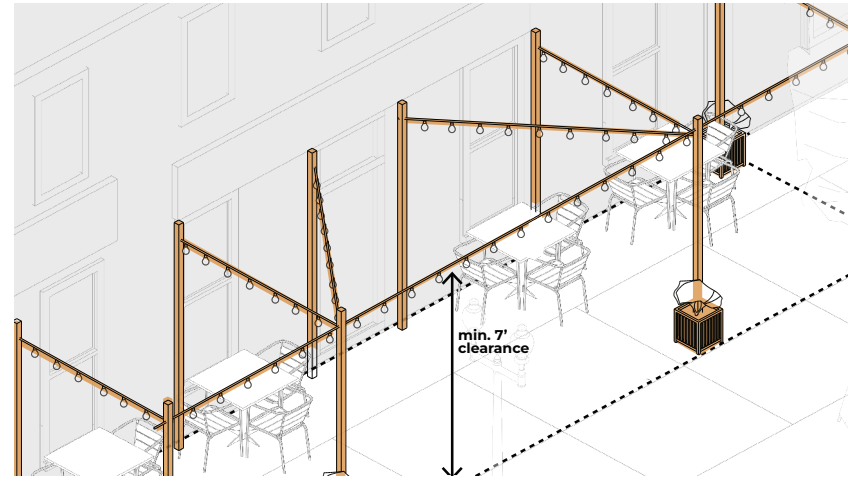


Umbrellas

LIGHTING AND HEATING

Lighting

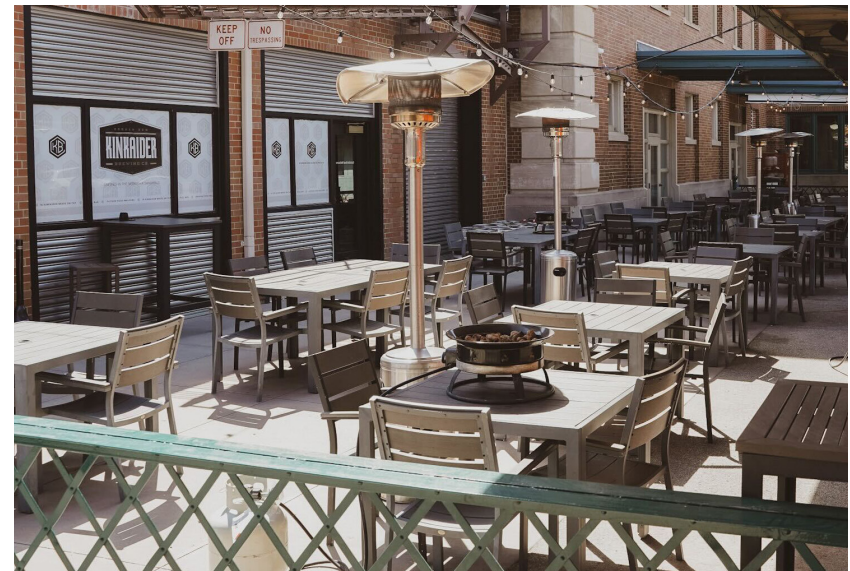
- Lighting must be low-glare, downward-facing, temporary in nature, and must be UL listed, meaning it's been safety-tested and approved for outdoor use.
- Power cables that extend overhead or on the ground surface of the pedestrian passageway are prohibited.
- Lighting equipment must not be attached to or strung through street trees or any other public infrastructure.
- Lighting elements must avoid added glare for pedestrians or drivers. Approved lighting must be low-level output and directed downward.



Posts with overhead festoon lighting

Heating

- Heaters must be portable, UL-listed, and approved by the Fire Prevention Bureau. No wood-burning fire pits are allowed.
- Propane and electric heaters are allowed, subject to approval from the Fire Prevention Inspector.
- Floor-mounted patio heaters must maintain a minimum clearance of 5 feet from buildings and any combustible elements such as awnings or overhangs.
- Heaters may not be permanently installed in the public right-of-way, but must be securely fastened to the ground using a cable and lock system, and shall not be relocated during business hours.
- Sprinklers are mandatory for any sidewalk café that includes overhead or floor-mounted patio heaters.



HAYMARKET EXCEPTIONS



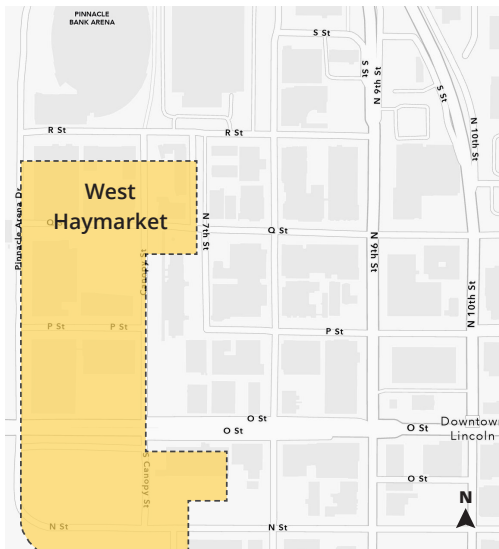
Historic Haymarket

Since the Historic Haymarket is a designated local landmark, all proposed sidewalk cafés within the area are subject to review and approval by the Historic Preservation Commission.

Per standard 16.6 of the Historic Preservation Design Standards, sidewalk cafés and other dining areas in or adjacent to the public right-of-way should be designed with high-quality materials and low railings to avoid obscuring views of the historic buildings.

The proposed design of the sidewalk cafés must complement the architectural elements of the abutting building.

Sidewalk cafés located on loading docks must have a secured barrier along the full length of the dock.



West Haymarket

All new sidewalk cafés in the West Haymarket are required to use a consistent railing design, as shown on the left. No other railing types are permitted in this area.

You can find out if your business is located in the Historic Haymarket or West Haymarket by searching your address at [Lincoln.NE.gov/GIS](https://www.lincoln.ne.gov/GIS).



RESOURCES

Application Form and Checklist

To start your application, visit [Insert link to the webpage/ application]

If you need a printed copy, contact the Planning Department using the information below.

City Code References

For full details on sidewalk café regulations, see:

Lincoln Municipal Code Chapter 14.54 – Sidewalk Cafés

[Insert hyperlink to code section]

“Additional design and safety standards are outlined in City guidebook and may be updated periodically. ”

Who to Contact for Help

Have questions? We’re here to help. Contact the City of Lincoln Planning and Development Services Department:

Planning and Development Services Department

555 S. 10th Street, Suite 213

Phone: 402-441-7491

Email: plandev@lincoln.ne.gov

Website: [Insert website URL]



NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

APPLICATION NUMBER	Urban Design Record #26016
APPLICATION TYPE	Advisory Review
ADDRESS/LOCATION	2403 and 2411 J Street
HEARING DATE	February 27, 2026
ADDITIONAL MEETINGS	-
APPLICANT	Brooke Hay, Lincoln Public Schools and Erin Bright, Olsson
STAFF CONTACT	Collin Christopher, 402-441-6370, cchristopher@lincoln.ne.gov

RECOMMENDATION: ADVISORY REVIEW ONLY

Summary of Request

Lincoln Public Schools is proposing to build a parking lot on the two vacant lots – 2403 and 2411 J Street – at the east end of the J Street environs corridor. The primary environs boundary stops around 24th Street, though the J Street right-of-way is included in the district all the way to S 35th Street. As a result, only the western 20' of the 2403 lot is deemed to be in the district. This, combined with the fact that LPS is exempt from other design standards that may otherwise apply here, makes this a difficult proposal to review and analyze.

As the Commission knows, parking lots are generally discouraged in the district. When they are allowed, there is a high bar to meet. That said, staff is of the opinion that the site in question should be viewed with much more flexibility than one much closer to the Capitol might be. In discussions with the applicant, staff has emphasized the need to consider screening along the J Street frontage of the two lots in order to minimize the visual impact of this proposed parking lot.

The applicant is early in the design process but is moving quickly and would like to get some initial feedback on what will be expected for screening the parking lot. The initial plan they have submitted shows landscaping at the two north corners of the parking lot fronting J Street

Compatibility with the Design Standards

As previously noted, LPS is exempt from typical landscape design standards, which would require landscaping around the entire perimeter of the parking lot. Further complicating the situation is the fact that the entirety of the parking lot itself is outside of the district. While the J Street design standards and guidelines have been copied below, this proposal might require a unique solution that meets the needs of the site and its position along the eastern edge of the district.

Design Standard 26: J Street/East Landscape

By its long-established pattern of land subdivision, J Street/East is and can remain the least symmetrical of the Capitol Malls. Its topography lends special interest to approaching the Capitol along J Street/East, which makes

it especially desirable to support vehicular, bicyclist, and pedestrian use of this corridor. The impact of J Street/East can be enhanced by addressing its various segments differently. The "South and East Mall Plan" approved by the City Council in 1986 provides general guidance to the development of the public landscape of this Mall.

The first block and a half east of the Capitol should be formal in character, lined with oaks. The first block (16th to 17th) could be closed to vehicular traffic and have a quiet but inviting character, taking advantage of its grade-level accessibility from the Capitol and existing trees.

The open space of the second block (17th to 18th Streets) could be expanded southward when possible, to remove the awkward visual terminus of this Mall at 17th Street. The off-center right-of-way of the rest of J Street/East is mitigated by topography and need not be adjusted.

Guideline 26.1:

Develop the 16th to 17th block of J Street/East with wide sidewalks at the north and south edges, a central area of low, colorful plantings, seating parallel to the sidewalks, and attractive lighting based on the original streetlights on Capitol Square.

Guideline 26.2:

Enhance J Street/East from 16th to Capitol Parkway by continuing the established line of red oaks on the north side, improving the south sidewalk as a bike path, and allowing variety or interest in landscape features on private property.

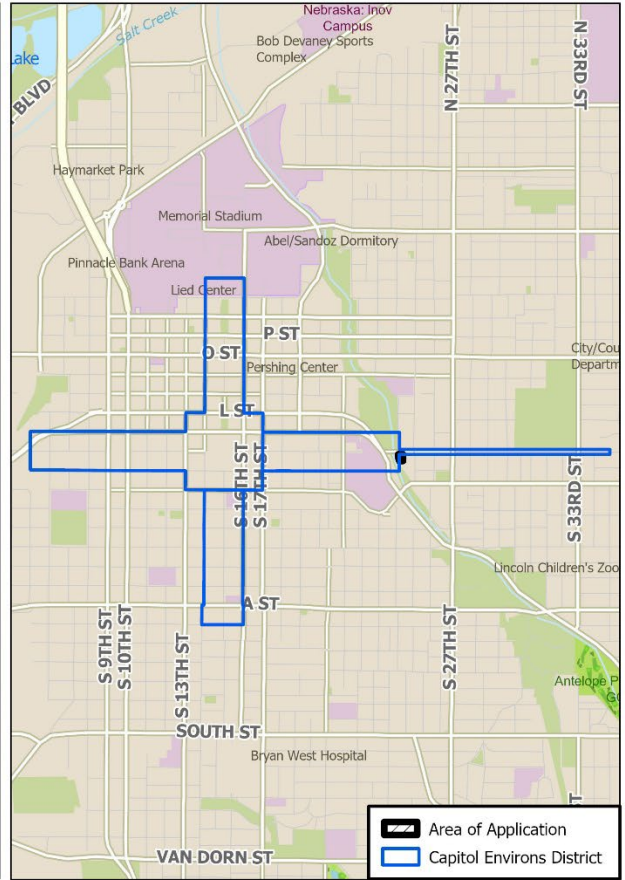
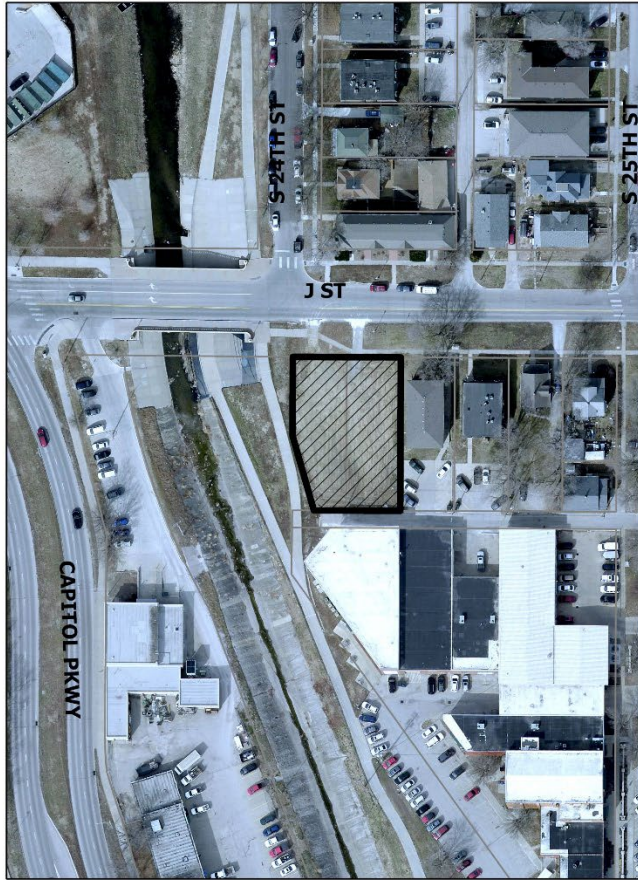
Recommendations/Action

At this point, the Commission is being asked to provide guidance to the applicant and staff on what should be expected for screening the proposed parking lot before a formal application for a certificate is submitted in March.

Staff is generally of the opinion that required landscaping should be limited to the portion of the parking lot bordering J Street, but any guidance for the applicant related to species selection, screen density, alternative materials or anything else that the Commission views as relevant should be discussed with the applicant.

ATTACHMENT A – LOCATION MAP

ATTACHMENT A - Location Map



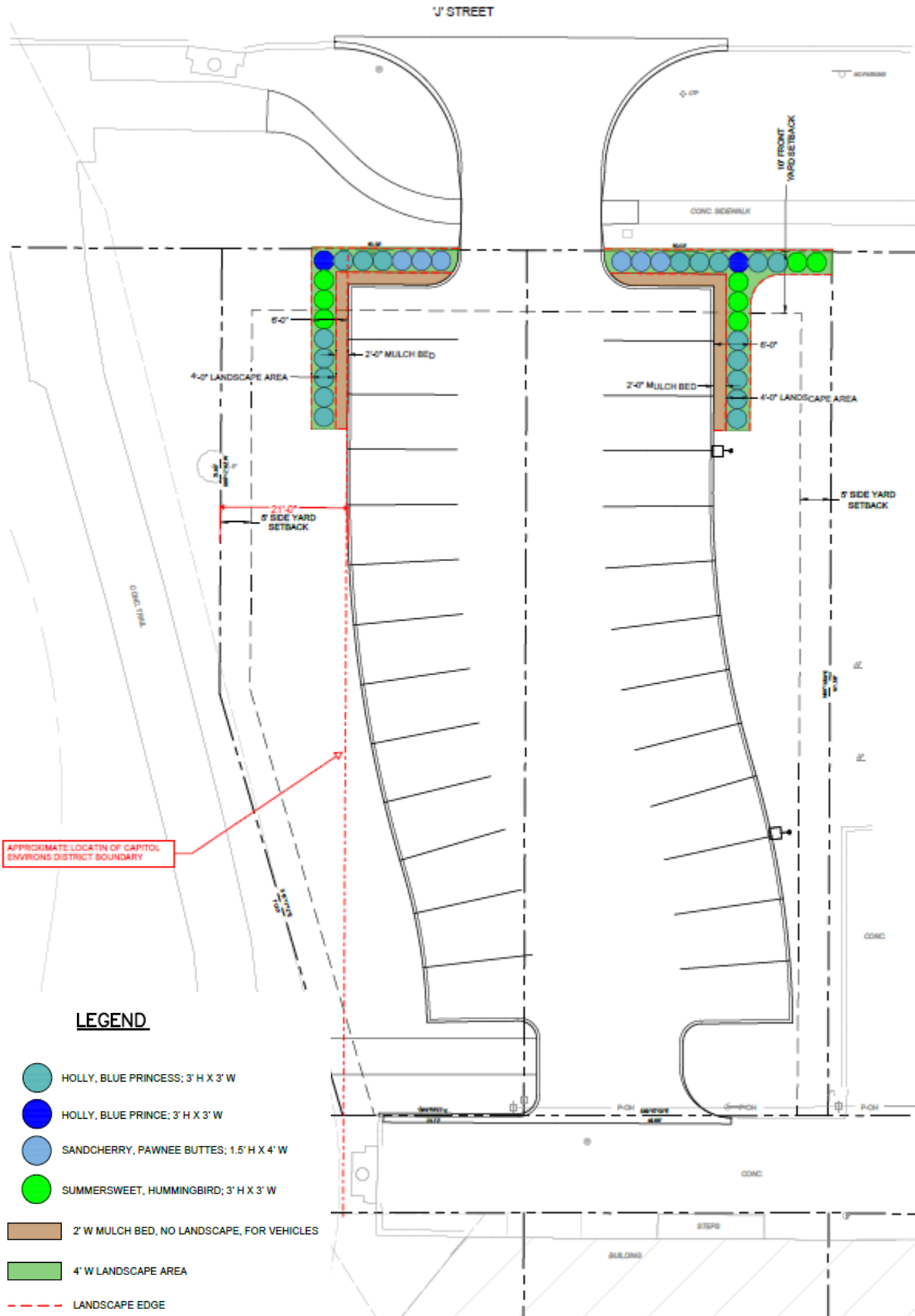
2024 aerial

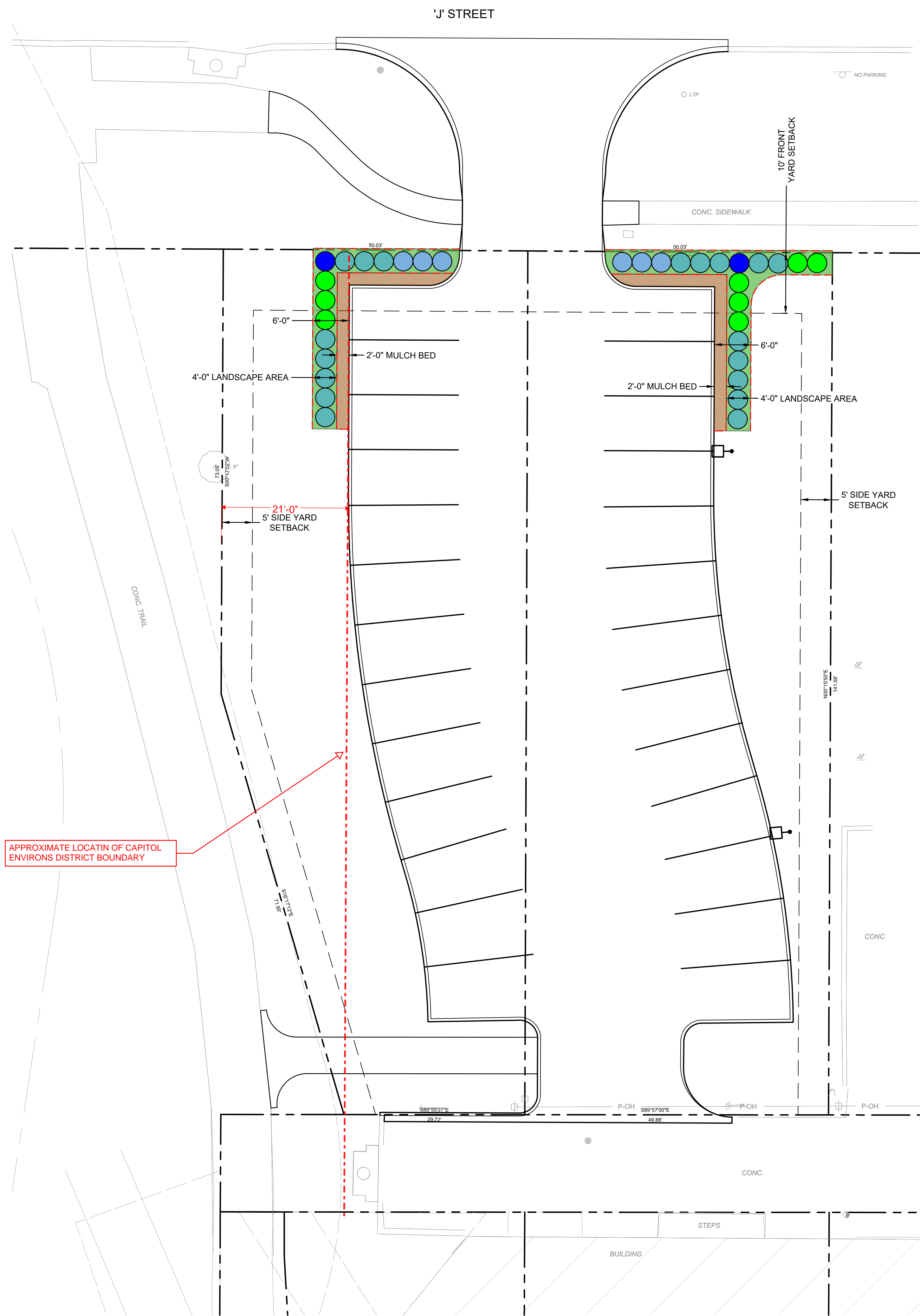
UDR26016 - LPS Parking Lot (2403 & 2411 J St)

Project: GISProject26016\UDR26016 - LPS Parking Lot.aprx
File: GISProject26016\UDR26016 - LPS Parking Lot.mxd
Map: GISProject26016\UDR26016 - LPS Parking Lot.mxd



ATTACHMENT B – SITE PLAN



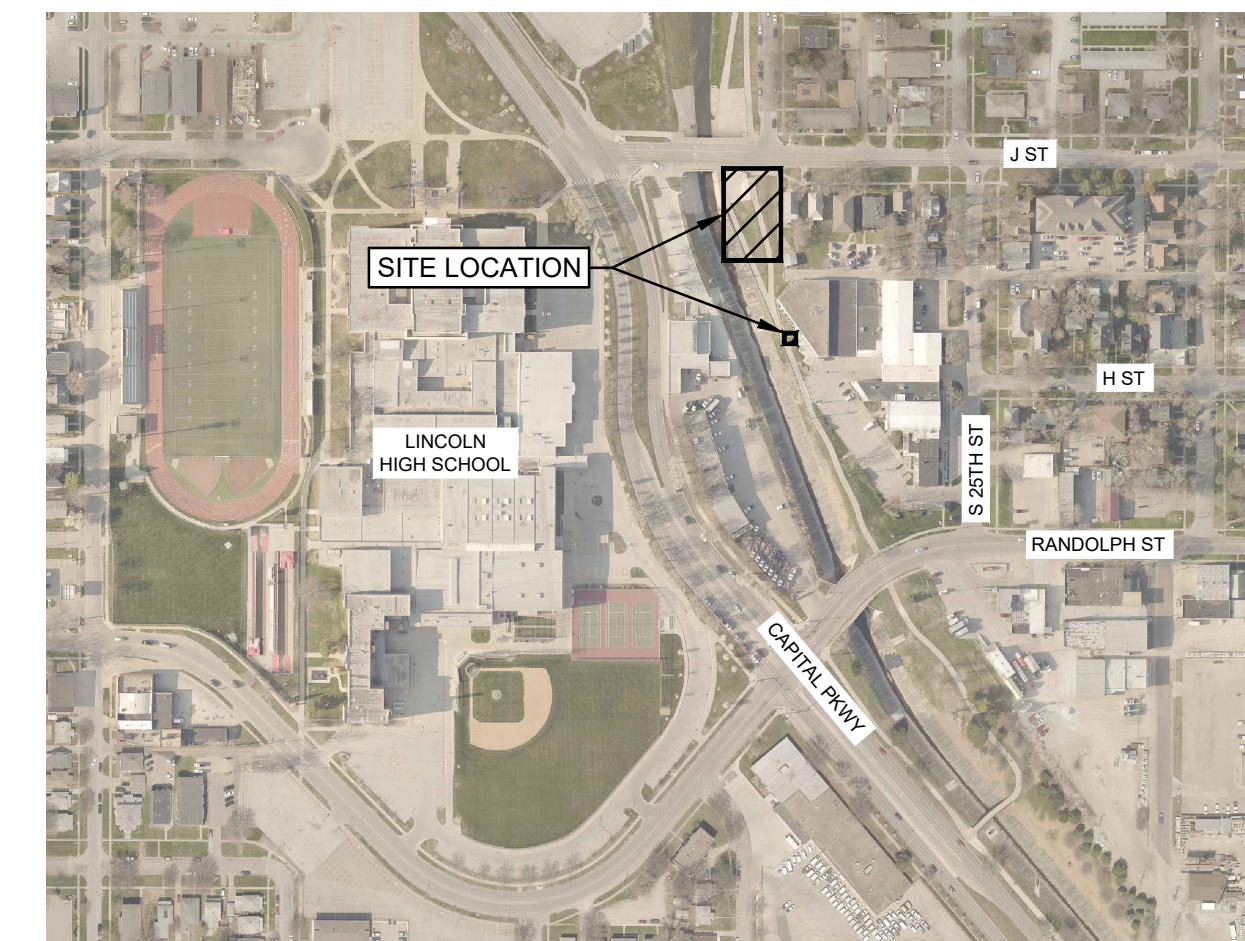


LEGEND

- CURB INLET
- CONTROL POINT
- GUY WIRE
- LIGHT POLE
- POWER POLE
- ROOF DRAIN
- SATELLITE DISH
- STORM DRAIN MANHOLE
- SIGN
- SANITARY SEWER MANHOLE
- STUMP
- TELEPHONE RISER
- CONTOUR LINE
- SANITARY SEWER LINE
- STORM SEWER LINE
- OVERHEAD POWER

LEGEND

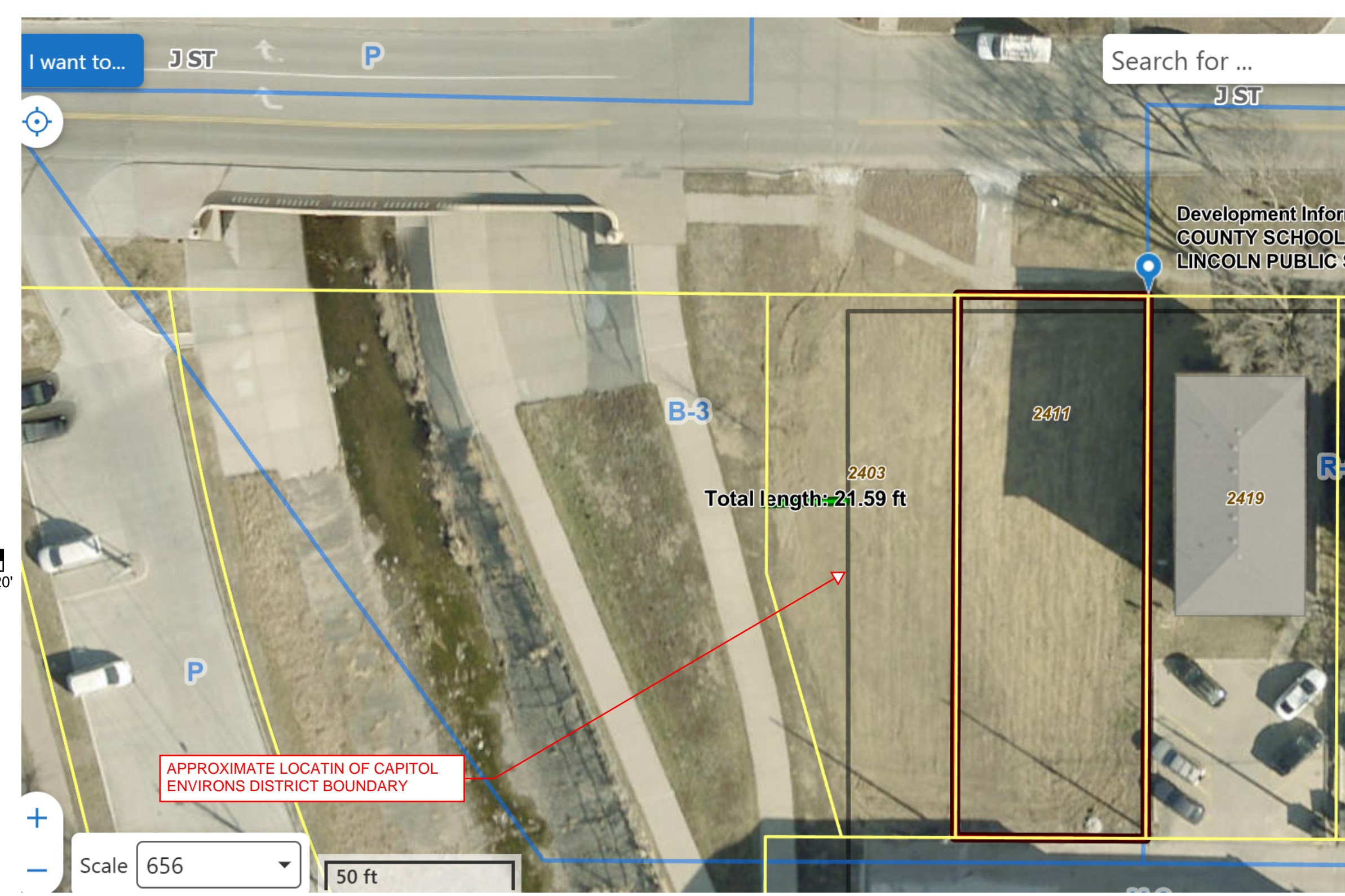
- HOLLY, BLUE PRINCESS; 3' H X 3' W
- HOLLY, BLUE PRINCE; 3' H X 3' W
- SANDCHERRY, PAWNEE BUTTES; 1.5' H X 4' W
- SUMMERSWEET, HUMMINGBIRD; 3' H X 3' W
- 2' W MULCH BED, NO LANDSCAPE, FOR VEHICLES
- 4' W LANDSCAPE AREA
- LANDSCAPE EDGE



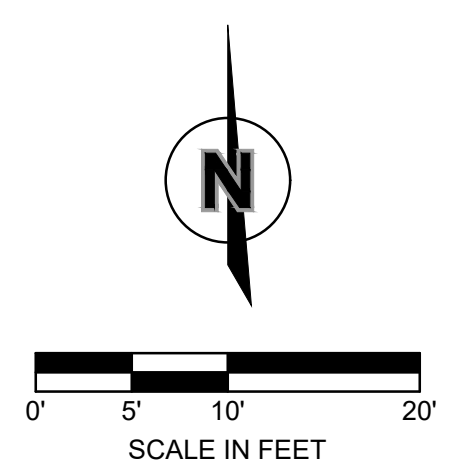
VICINITY MAP
NOT TO SCALE



APPROXIMATE LOCATIN OF CAPITOL ENVIRONS DISTRICT BOUNDARY



APPROXIMATE LOCATIN OF CAPITOL ENVIRONS DISTRICT BOUNDARY



601 P Street, Suite 200
 P.O. Box 84608
 Lincoln, NE 68508
 olsson.com
 TEL 402.474.6311
 FAX 402.474.5063
 Olsson - Engineering
 Nebraska COA #CA-0638

REV. NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY

LANDSCAPE PLAN
 J STREET PARKING LOT

OPERATIONS AND J STREET PARKING LOTS
 25TH AND J STREETS

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

drawn by: GH
 designed by: EB
 project no.: 025-06519
 date: 01.XX.2026

2026

SHEET
L100