



LINCOLN/LANCASTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

FROM THE LINCOLN/LANCASTER COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT, 555 S. 10TH STREET, SUITE 213, LINCOLN, NE 68508

APPLICATION NUMBER
Special Permit #25036

FINAL ACTION?
Yes

DEVELOPER/OWNER
Sower Church

PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING DATE
October 15, 2025

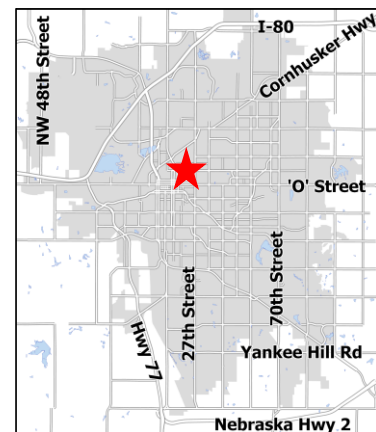
RELATED APPLICATIONS
None

PROPERTY ADDRESS/LOCATION
2640 R Street

RECOMMENDATION: CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

BRIEF SUMMARY OF REQUEST

This is a request for a Special Permit to allow a parking lot to be located within the front yard setback. The request is for the existing Sower Church located at 2640 R Street and zoned R-6 Residential. The church parking lot is undergoing an improvement project to pave an existing gravel area and improve the existing parking layout. To maximize the parking area and provide sufficient room for vehicle circulation, the church is requesting the special permit with a waiver for the parking lot to extend up to 6 feet from the property line within the three front yards of this property on N 26th, N 27th and R Street.



JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDATION

The request for the Special Permit and waiver to reduce the required 20-foot front yard setback to 6 feet for parking is compatible with the existing site and surrounding neighborhood. The existing parking area is part concrete and gravel today, which has slowly expanded without building permits to the property line today. The parking lot will continue to be associated with the Sower Church. With this project, the parking area will be completely paved, removing the gravel surface. This will create a uniform parking lot and spaces which will increase the distance from the property line to where parking exists currently. The striping of the lot will also help with keeping the existing alleyway which dissects the parking lot clear for north/south traffic access. As part of the approval, additional landscaping beyond the standard parking lot screening requirements will be required to help reduce the visual impacts within the residential neighborhood.

APPLICATION CONTACT

Nate Burnett, REGA Engineering, (402) 484-7342

STAFF CONTACT

Ben Callahan, (402) 441-6360 or
bcallahan@lincoln.ne.gov

COMPATIBILITY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The request is compatible with the 2050 Comprehensive Plan. The 2050 Future Land Use map continues to show this site as future urban residential. A place of religious assembly is a permitted use within all residential districts. The proposed project will ultimately increase areas of green space and landscaping along N 26th Street and R Street as portions of the existing gravel parking will be removed from the current location along the property line.

WAIVERS

1. To LMC 27.72.020(a) to allow parking up to 14 feet within the 20-foot front yard setback. (Recommend Approval)

KEY QUOTES FROM THE 2050 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Introduction Section: Growth Framework

Figure GF.b: 2050 - This site is shown as future urban residential on the 2050 Future Land Use Plan.

Land Use Plan - Urban Residential. Residential uses in areas with varying densities ranging from more than fifteen dwelling units per acre to less than one dwelling per acre. All types of housing are appropriate here, from detached single family, duplex and missing middle, to higher density multi-family. Undeveloped areas shown as Urban Residential may also include neighborhood-scale commercial and other compatible uses that will be added to the map after approval of development plans.

ANALYSIS

1. This is a request for a Special Permit for parking located at 2640 R Street in relation to an existing place of religious assembly, operated as the Sower Church. The property is zoned R-6 residential with the Sower Church owning the south half of this block and utilizing an existing pavement and part gravel parking lot. The Lincoln Municipal Code 27.63.170 allows for a special permit for a parking lot which can be associated with a place of religious assembly. With this special permit the applicant is requesting a waiver to allow the parking lot to extend up to 14 feet within the three 20-foot front yard setbacks on the property, keeping a 6-foot area from the parking to the property for greenspace and landscaping.
2. The site, which consists of the south half of this block owned by the Sower Church abuts a mix of single and two family residential zoned R-6 Residential to the north, to the south, and to the west across both N 26th Street and R Street. Also to the south is an automotive repair shop zoned B-3 Commercial. To the east across N 27th Street is a multitenant commercial building zoned B-3 Commercial.
3. The proposal meets the criteria set in LMC 27.63.170 which allows parking lots within 360 feet of a place of religious assembly to be considered for a special permit, provided the parking lot is primarily used in connection with the main use. Sower Church is working to improve the existing parking lot by removing a portion of the gravel parking area on the west half of the site and making it one paved lot. This site is limited by having three front yards, requiring a 20-foot front yard setback on all three sides. With the proposed parking layout, the improvement would provide approximately 51 striped parking spaces and assist with circulation on this site. The site will continue to have access on N 27th Street and access through the north-south public alleyway between R and S Street that will continue to provide full access north and south.
4. The special permit will include a waiver to allow the parking lot to extend up to 14 feet into the 20-foot front yard setbacks. The waiver is justified as the parking lot will be allowed within the front yard setback, with the condition that additional landscaping will be required around the parking lot to help minimize the visual impact for the surrounding properties. The waiver will assist with providing additional space, allowing better circulation and ensuring the alleyway remains unblocked with new striping.
5. As part of the Conditions of Approval a Landscape Plan will be required to be submitted to show the existing and proposed landscaping to be located around the property, as the north property line abuts single family residential. The existing condition along the north side of the property will be improved as the applicant is not asking for a waiver to the side yard which is required at 5 feet. Today, the parking area and gravel lot have encroached to the property line, allowing this site plan to correct the parking areas and relocate it back to the required 5 foot minimum. As part of the Conditions of Approval, Lincoln Transportation & Utilities Watershed Management is requesting verification that the proposed changes will not increase stormwater runoff onto the adjacent properties to the north.
6. The request is compatible with the 2050 Comprehensive Plan as the site is shown to continue as future urban residential. The use as a place of religious assembly is a permitted use within a residential district. The proposed parking lot improvement will increase the setback from the current lot today, allowing for additional green space and landscaping to return between the property line and sidewalk along N 26th, N 27th, and R Street. Similar requests have been previously approved for other places of religious assembly, such as the Temple Baptist Church at 51st & Randolph Street and Sacred Heath Catholic Church on N 32nd & S Street, in which the sites justified reducing the required setback by increasing the landscaping around the parking area. The improved parking area

with striping will also assist in keeping the existing north-south alley open and safe for thru traffic.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL: See attached.

EXISTING LAND USE & ZONING: Sower Church & R-6 Residential

SURROUNDING LAND USE & ZONING

North: Single Family Residential	R-6 Residential
South: Single Family Residential/Automotive Repair	R-6 Residential & B-3 Commercial
East: Multitenant Commercial	B-3 Commercial
West: Single Family Residential	R-6 Residential

APPROXIMATE LAND AREA: 1.2 acres, more or less

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Portion of Lot 3, Lots 7 & 8, and remaining portion of Lots 9-13, and the vacated east-west alley adjacent to Lot 10 and south half of the vacated east-west alley adjacent to Lots 11-13, and vacated north-south alleys adjacent to Lots 10 & 11, Block 2, Keystone Addition, located in the SE 1/4 of Section 24-10-6 East of the 6th P. M. Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska.

Prepared by Ben Callahan, Planner
(402) 441-6360 or bcallahan@lincoln.ne.gov

Date: September 18, 2025

Owner/
Applicant: Sower Church
2640 R Street
Lincoln, NE 68503

Contact: REGA Engineering
Nate Burnett
601 Old Cheney Road
Lincoln, NE 68512

<https://linclanc.sharepoint.com/sites/PlanningDept-DevReview/Shared Documents/DevReview/SP/25000/SP25036 Sower Church Parking Lot.bmc.docx>

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL - SPECIAL PERMIT #25036

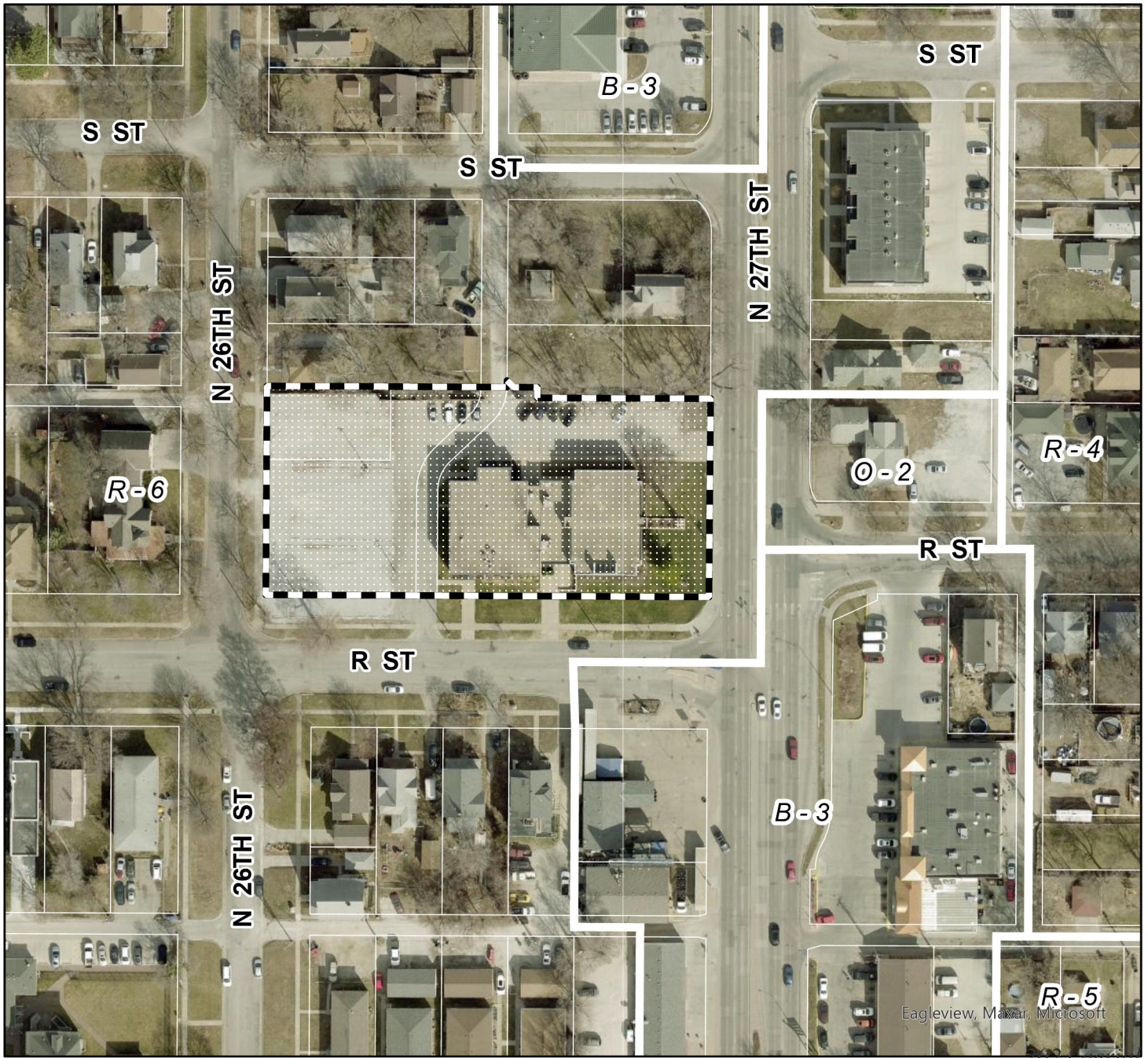
Per Section 27.63.170 this approval permits a parking lot in the R-6 Residential District for a Place of Religious Assembly with a waiver to allow parking to be located within 6 feet from the property line within the front yard setback.

Site Specific Conditions:

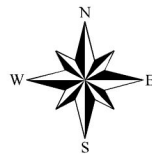
1. Before receiving building permits (if no final plat is required) or before a final plat is approved (if final plat is required) the permittee shall cause to be prepared and submitted to the Planning Department a revised and reproducible final plot plan including 2 copies with all required revisions and documents as listed below:
 - 1.1 Revise title to state "Special Permit" not "Use Permit".
 - 1.2 Update the legal description to match legal provided on ProjectDox review.
 - 1.3 Provide a legend or note to show abbreviations "PL" & "BOC" as referred to on the site plan.
 - 1.4 Provide a landscape plan showing double the amount of the required parking lot landscaping to the satisfaction of the Planning Department around the parking lot area.
 - 1.5 Show a 6-foot front yard setback to the concrete along N 27th Street.
 - 1.6 Submit a waiver to Lincoln Transportation & Utilities for parking stalls requiring a backing movement into the existing alleyway.
 - 1.7 Please provide a sheet showing the improvements will not increase any direct runoff onto the abutting properties to the north to the satisfaction of LTU-Watershed Management.
 - 1.8 Label the 5-foot side yard setback along the north property line.

Standard Conditions:

2. The following conditions are applicable to all requests:
 - 2.1 Before starting the operation all development and construction shall substantially comply with the approved plans.
 - 2.2 All privately-owned improvements, including landscaping, shall be permanently maintained by the Permittee.
 - 2.3 The physical location of all setbacks and yards, buildings, parking and circulation elements, and similar matters be in substantial compliance with the location of said items as shown on the approved site plan.
 - 2.4 The terms, conditions, and requirements of this resolution shall run with the land and be binding upon the Permittee, its successors and assigns.
 - 2.5 The site plan as approved with this resolution voids and supersedes all previously approved site plans, however all prior resolutions approving this permit remain in full force and effect as specifically amended by this resolution.



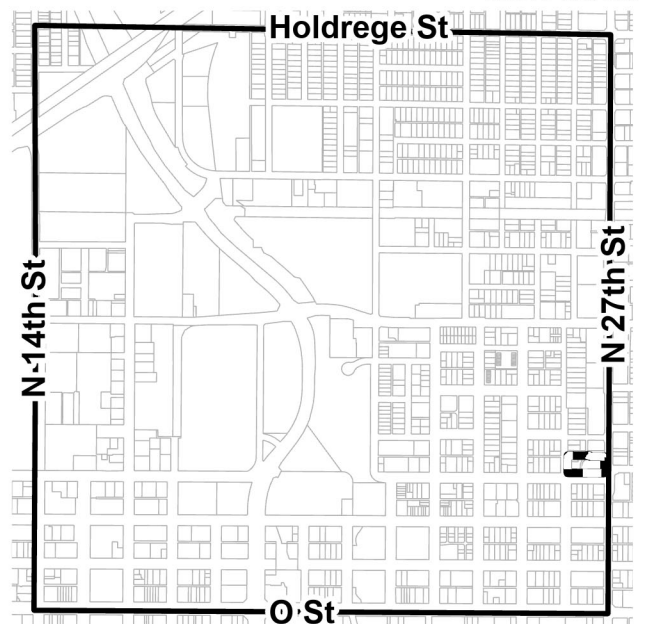
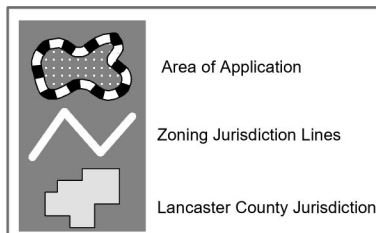
Special Permit #: SP25036
N 27th St & R St



Zoning:

R-1 to R-8	Residential District
AG	Agricultural District
AGR	Agricultural Residential District
O-1	Office District
O-2	Suburban Office District
O-3	Office Park District
R-T	Residential Transition District
B-1	Local Business District
B-2	Planned Neighborhood Business District
B-3	Commercial District
B-4	Lincoln Center Business District
B-5	Planned Regional Business District
H-1	Interstate Commercial District
H-2	Highway Business District
H-3	Highway Commercial District
H-4	General Commercial District
I-1	Industrial District
I-2	Industrial Park District
I-3	Employment Center District
P	Public Use District

One Square Mile:
Sec.24 T10N R06E



LAND SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATE:

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THIS SURVEY WAS DONE UNDER MY SUPERVISION, THAT THE SURVEY WAS DONE ON THE GROUND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MOST RECENT MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR PROPERTY BOUNDARY SURVEYS, AS SET FORTH BY THE NEBRASKA STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR REGISTERED LAND SURVEYORS AND THAT THE ACCURACY SPECIFICATION AND POSITION TOLERANCE ARE IN ACCORDANCE WITH RURAL AREA SURVEYS.

DATE: _____

KYLE E. CATT LS - 609

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

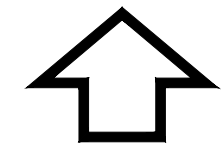
LOTS 7 AND 8, TOGETHER WITH PART OF LOTS 9 AND 10, LOTS 11 AND 12, PART OF LOT 13, AND THAT PART OF VACATED ALLEY ADJACENT, BLOCK 2, KEYSTONE ADDITION, LOCATED IN THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 24, TOWNSHIP 10 NORTH, RANGE 06 EAST OF THE 6TH P.M., LINCOLN, LANCASTER COUNTY, NEBRASKA.

SOWER CHURCH PARKING LOT EXPANSION

USE PERMIT #25036
2640 R ST.
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA 68503

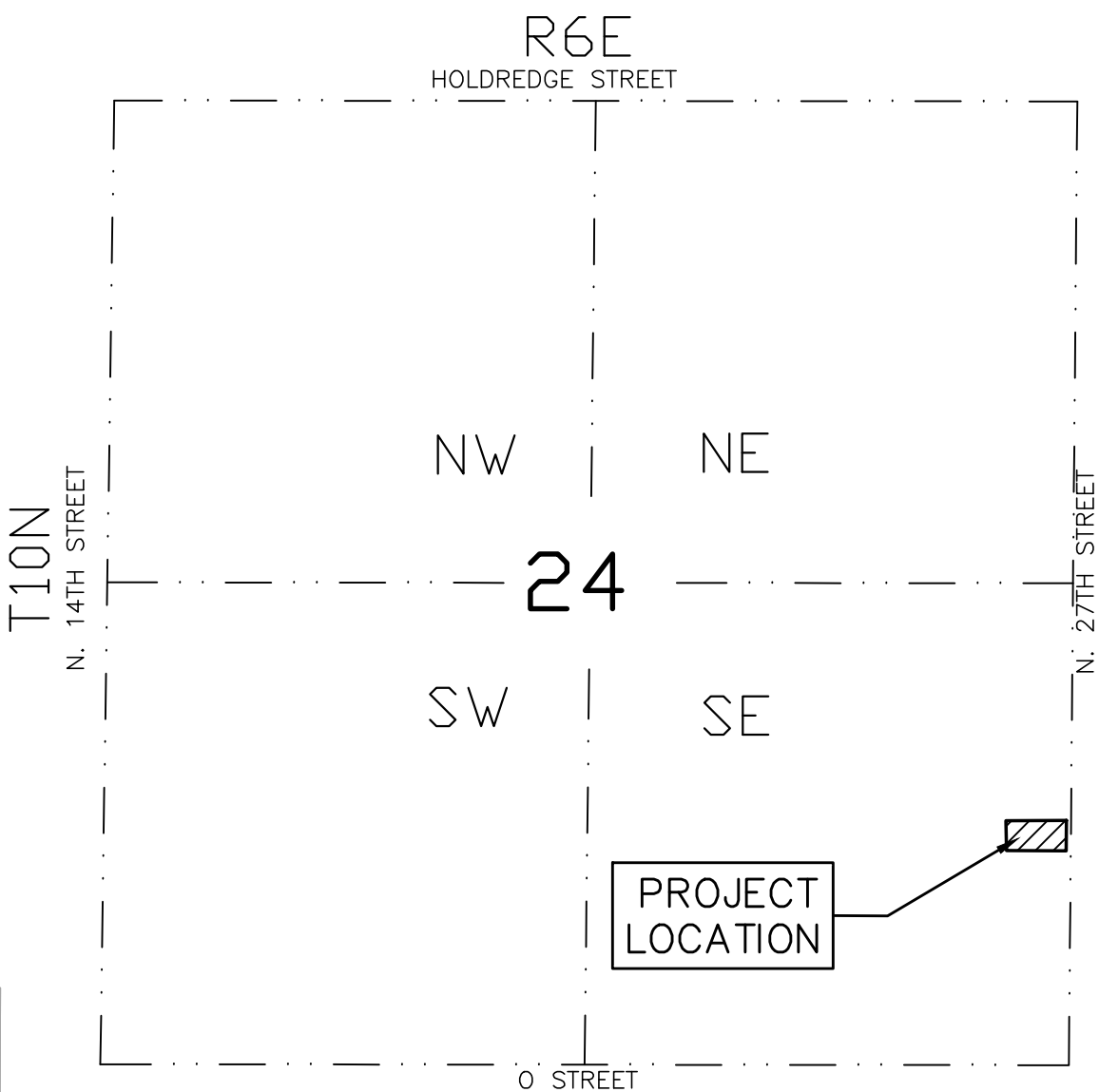
LEGEND

- PROPERTY LINE
--- BOUNDARY OF USE PERMIT



SCALE 1" = 20'

20 0 20 40 60 Feet



GENERAL NOTES

- THIS USE PERMIT CONTAINS 1.20 ACRES
- ZONING IS R-6.
- THE OWNER/DEVELOPER RESERVES THE RIGHT TO BUILD ANYWHERE WITHIN THE SETBACKS AS PER R-6 ZONING DISTRICT WITH EXCEPTION OF APPROVED WAIVERS.
- TOPOGRAPHIC GRADING CONTOURS AT NAVD 1988

WAIVERS

- PARKING SHALL BE ALLOWED WITHIN EXISTING FRONT YARD SETBACK. (27.67.030a)

OWNER

SOWER CHURCH
2640 R ST
LINCOLN, NE 68503

DEVELOPER

SOWER CHURCH
2640 R ST
LINCOLN, NE 68503

ENGINEER:

NATHANIEL P. BURNETT
REGA ENGINEERING GROUP, INC.
601 OLD CHENEY ROAD, SUITE 'A'
LINCOLN, NE 68512 (402)484-7342

SURVEYOR:

KYLE E. CATT, L.S. 609
REGA ENGINEERING GROUP, INC.
601 OLD CHENEY ROAD, SUITE 'A'
LINCOLN, NE 68512 (402)484-7342

Section Corner Ties
SE CORNER Sec. 24-T10N-R6E
FND. 1 5/8" IRON PIN IN POT RING. SE 100.0'
SET P.K. NAIL 5.32' SOUTH OF S.W. COR BRICK
BLD. WINTER DRUG BLD. AN 2.35 EAST OF
BACK OF SIDEWALK.
SW 100.0' SET CHISELED '4' IN CONC. APPROX
0.6 EAST OF EASE SIDE OF BLD.

BENCHMARK

BENCHMARK #1: SANITARY SEWER MANHOLE
NORTH RIM = 1175.13'

BENCHMARK #2: STORM SEWER MANHOLE
NORTH RIM = 1174.60'

notcall.com



PROJECT

211288

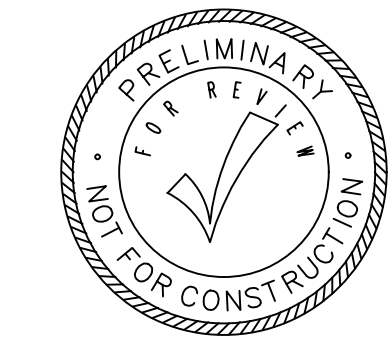
REGA
ENGINEERING

601 OLD CHENEY RD., SUITE A
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA 68512
(402).484.7342

- ENGINEERING
- PLANNING
- LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
- LAND SURVEYING
- IRRIGATION

ISSUED FOR DATE

SOWER CHURCH
USE PERMIT #25036
2640 R ST.
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA. 68503



SHEET NO.

1 of 1



September 3, 2025

Mr. David Cary
Director of Planning
Benjamin M. Callahan, Planner
City of Lincoln/Lancaster County
555 South 10th Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

Reference: Sower Church
Special Permit #1276
REGA Engineering File: 211288

Dear Mr. Cary,

On Behalf of Sower Church, we are submitting an amendment to the Special Permit #1276.

The amendment requests a waiver of parking code 27.67.030a to allow parking within the front yard setback. Currently the site already has a gravel parking lot where parking is already available within the front yard setback. The client is looking to revitalize the current gravel parking and install concrete parking which will provide improvements in quality of life to the patrons of the church. There will also be better accessibility for those who may have issues walking on gravel parking.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Dan Rosenthal'.

Dan Rosenthal, PE
Senior Project Manager

Cc: Sower Church
Enclosed: Application Form
Application Fee \$1,142.00