

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.

NAME OF GROUP:	URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE
DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:	Tuesday, February 4, 2025, 3:00 p.m., County-City Building, City Council Chambers, 555 S. 10 th Street, Lincoln, NE.
MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:	Mark Canney, Jill Grasso, Tom Huston, and Emily Deeker; Michael Harpster, Gill Peace and Michael Penn absent.
OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:	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 48th 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/46th and then 48th 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. 27th open house near 40th & 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.