PLAN forward

Lincoln-Lancaster County
2050 Comprehensive Plan

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



CITY of LINCOLN

LANCASTER COUNTY
EST. 1859
NEBRASKA

DRAFT

November 9, 2026

The Lincoln-Lancaster County 2050 Comprehensive Plan embodies Lincoln and Lancaster County's shared vision for the future, out to the year 2050. The theme of the Comprehensive Plan is "Plan Forward," because envisions a future that not only looks forward in time, but also forward in concept with new and innovative ideas to support our growing community. The development of the Comprehensive Plan included extensive public input with contributions from all facets of the community – from local leaders and topic area experts, to regular citizens who have shared interest in building a strong vision for Lincoln and Lancaster County.

The Planning and Development Services Department wishes to thank the following:

- The community experts and leaders, City-County staff, and Planning Commission members who volunteered their time to serve on various Comprehensive Plan committees and provided input on plan content.
- The hundreds of Lancaster County residents who attended the in-person and virtual events and participated in the public surveys.
- Students from the UNL Community & Regional Planning Program studio classes from Spring 2020, Spring 2021, and Fall 2024 who provided invaluable research on background topics in the Plan.

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PlanForward 2050 was developed by the Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning and Development Services Department. Should you require a reasonable accommodation in order to fully participate or information in an alternative format, please contact us at 402-441-7491.

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Goals

CITY of LINCOLN

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The PlanForward goals offer a broad horizon for the community's future to the year 2050. The goal statements, supporting text, and data form the basis for the desired future condition in Lincoln and Lancaster County to be Livable, Equitable, Thriving, Resilient, and Innovative. The goals also provide guidance for individual land use decisions, public and private investments, and other actions that collectively will determine the future for the people that live in Lincoln and Lancaster County. Every policy in PlanForward includes action steps that will support one or more of these goals. Most importantly, we will plan forward as One Community.



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2.4



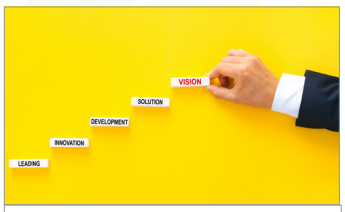
G2: Great Neighborhoods

2.6



G3: High-Quality Workforce

2.8



G4: Economic Opportunity

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G5: Equity and Inclusion

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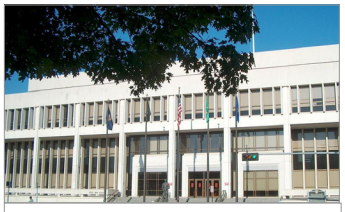

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G12: History and Culture

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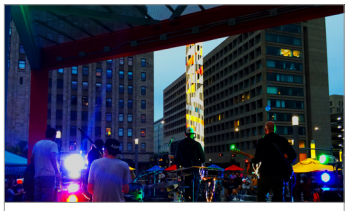

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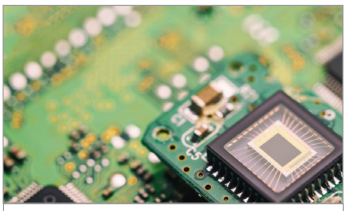

G14: Technology

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G15: Transportation

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G1: Safe, Affordable, and Accessible Housing

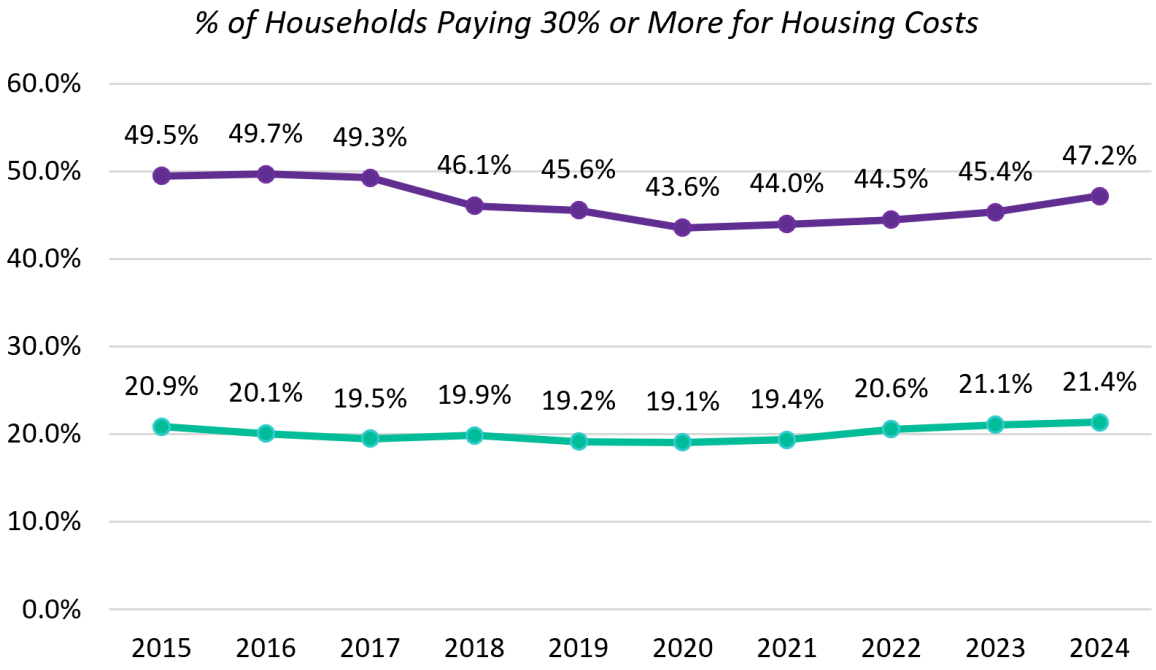
Lincoln and Lancaster County will support the development of safe, affordable, and accessible quality housing that meets the diverse needs of the community.



One of the essential elements of the community and PlanForward is housing. Ensuring safe, adequate, and affordable housing is an important function in maintaining the vitality of neighborhoods and the city as a whole. Our community supports making homes available to families that are both affordable and safe. Emerging scientific evidence links health outcomes such as asthma, lead poisoning, and unintentional injuries to substandard housing. Resources to provide enhanced access to safe, affordable, and accessible housing should be distributed equitably across the community in order to help promote good physical and mental health and foster economic stability.

The federal Office of Housing and Urban Development defines cost burdened households as those paying more than 30% of income towards housing, and in Lincoln, those households making less than $25,000 per year are at most risk of being cost burdened. Although Lincoln's housing market is affordable for most households, housing costs continue to increase and should be addressed proactively. PlanForward understands the ongoing need for affordable housing and supports development of 5,000 affordable units by the year 2030. There were 3,201 affordable units constructed,rehabilitated, or subsidized between 2020 and the end of FY 2024/25, which is ahead of schedule for reaching the City's goal of 5,000 new affordable units by 2030.

Figure G1.a: Cost Burdened Households in Lincoln



American Community Survey 2019 - 2024

The City of Lincoln adopted the *Affordable Housing Coordinated Action Plan* in December 2020. This plan seeks to support the development of a housing market in Lincoln that is reflective of the diverse community of residents that makes up the city. The action items identified in the Affordable Housing Coordinated Action Plan attempt to address quality of life issues and improve the overall economic health in Lincoln and more importantly, protecting and advancing the health, safety, economic opportunity, and quality of life of every resident. This means creating housing options for all income levels and ages throughout the city. While the main focus of this plan is on how to address housing needs for the city's residents earning less than 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI), no one market stands in isolation. Markets are interdependent on each other, whether that is different income levels or product types. A healthy housing market allows individuals to move through the market at different stages of life. When the market does not supply the product type a household needs, there can be a break in the system that can affect many different households.

PlanForward outlines a plan for adequate growth areas and lot supply, but other market forces can impact the overall cost of housing. Those outside influences should be acknowledged and monitored. Over the past decade, the city's housing construction has focused on market rate multi-family and single-family detached units. Only 16% of the city's 19,000 units constructed between 2016 and 2025 were townhomes or duplexes, and the vast majority of the multi-family were large scale projects. Additional variety, also known as “missing middle,” is needed to serve a broader demand within the City.

The City supports several initiatives to ensure that affordable housing is also safe and high-quality housing.

The federally funded Housing Rehabilitation Program offers 0% interest loans to help low- and moderate-income homeowners repair and improve their homes. The program is administered locally by the Urban Development Department.

The Lead Safe Lincoln Program works to prevent and reduce lead exposure for children and families in the community. Its activities include testing children for lead, evaluating exposure risks, removing lead hazards from homes, and replacing lead water service lines.

The Lead Hazard Control Grant Program provides assistance to property owners to eliminate or stabilize lead-based paint hazards and other sources of lead within homes. The Healthy Homes Grant Program offers financial support for repairs that address health and safety issues. Eligible hazards include mold, radon, electrical concerns, roof deterioration, and climate-control problems.

Policies Related to this Goal

P1: Housing Affordability

P2: Existing Neighborhoods

P3: Developing Neighborhoods

P7: Redevelopment Incentives

P61: Industrial Zoning and Pipelines

Community Indicators Related to this Goal

Housing Indicators

G2: Great Neighborhoods



Lincoln and Lancaster County will support great neighborhoods within both developing and redeveloping areas of Lincoln.

A great neighborhood is one where residents are able to get the goods and services to meet daily needs within close proximity to their residence including a variety of housing options, grocery stores and other commercial services, quality public schools, public open spaces and recreational facilities, affordable active transportation options, and civic amenities. In other words, Great neighborhoods "*Put the stuff closer together so it's easier to get to the stuff*."- Paul Mogush, Minneapolis Planner.

Housing variety, both in housing type and lot size, provides for interesting neighborhoods and accommodates changing household preferences, but, more importantly, provides affordable housing options. Housing variety should include townhomes, senior living facilities, low/no maintenance condominiums, accessory dwelling units, multi-family development, and even small lot single-family.

Great neighborhoods are an important part of urban life for many reasons including: support for healthier lifestyles and convenience, stronger markets for neighborhood commercial centers and businesses, efficient and equitable public investment, and energy efficiency and emissions reduction.

Downtown Lincoln is a good example of a great neighborhood in Lincoln as it serves as an attractive place to live and is the central location for commerce, government, entertainment, and the arts. The growth and development policies embodied throughout PlanForward will meet development needs for a growing population, will align with the 2050 growth scenario, and will support more great neighborhoods both on the edge and within the existing city.

Policies Related to this Goal

P1: Housing Affordability

P2: Existing Neighborhoods

P3: Developing Neighborhoods

P5: Downtown

P6: Nodes and Corridors

P8: Infill and Redevelopment

P10: Supporting Small Businesses

P13: Commercial and Industrial Centers

P14: Commercial Infill

P29: Neighborhood Parks

P34: Urban Design Standards

P45: Early Childhood Care and Education

P60: Technology

P61: Industrial Zoning and Pipelines

P69: Transit

P70: Active Transportation

Community Indicators Related to this Goal

Housing Indicators

Recreation Indicators

G3: High-Quality Workforce

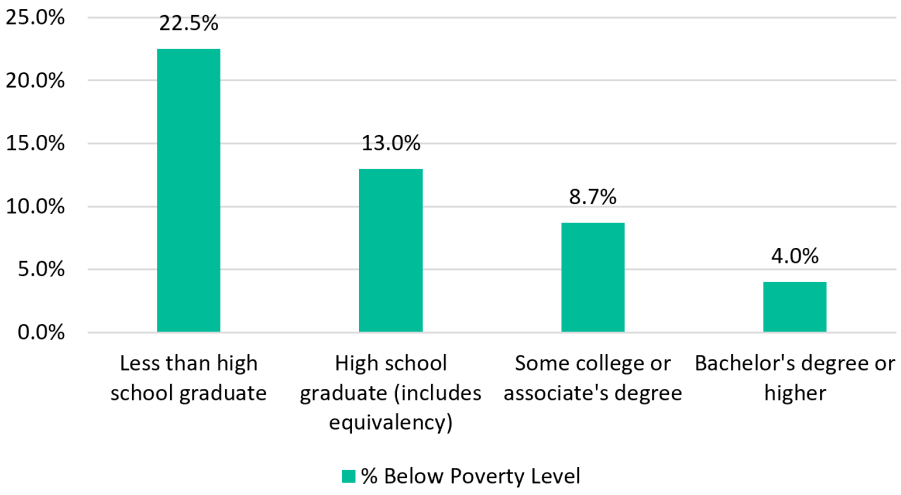


Lincoln and Lancaster County will strive to remove barriers to economic stability and mobility in the community by supporting a skilled and educated workforce that is able to adapt to economic, technological, and cultural changes.

The benefits of a high-quality workforce are twofold: 1) it is important that residents from diverse backgrounds have the opportunity to acquire the education and skills necessary to obtain quality jobs, and 2) it is important for business owners and entrepreneurs to have access to a high-quality workforce so that they can sustain and grow their businesses. A high-quality workforce benefits the entire community because it attracts quality employers and entrepreneurs, growing our population and tax base, supporting investments that enhance the quality of life across a variety of sectors, and positioning Lincoln and Lancaster County to compete successfully in the economy of today and tomorrow.

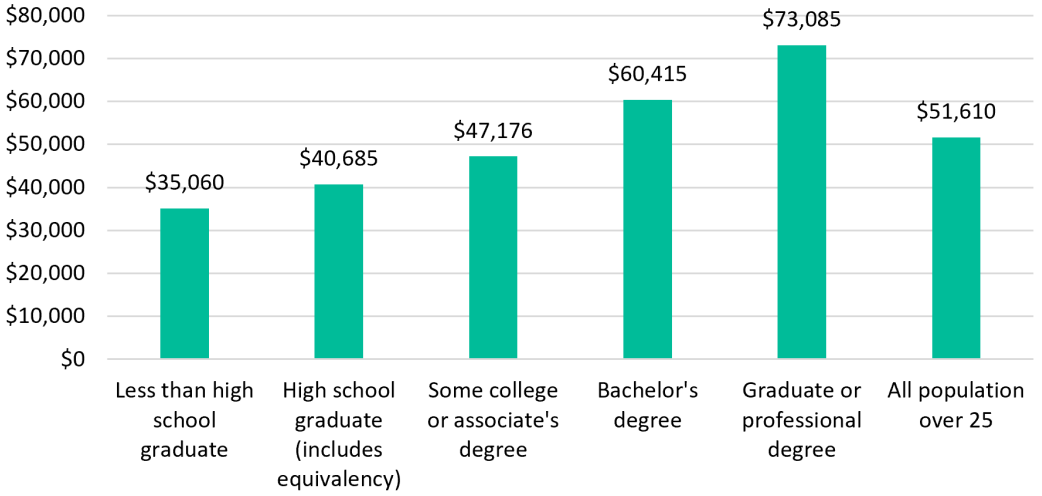
There is a strong connection between educational attainment and poverty status. In Lancaster County, an individual who did not graduate from high school is five times as likely to be in poverty than someone with a 4-year or higher college degree. Likewise, median earnings increase with higher levels of educational attainment.

Figure G3.a: Poverty Status for Age 25 and Over, Lancaster County



American Community Survey 2019 - 2024

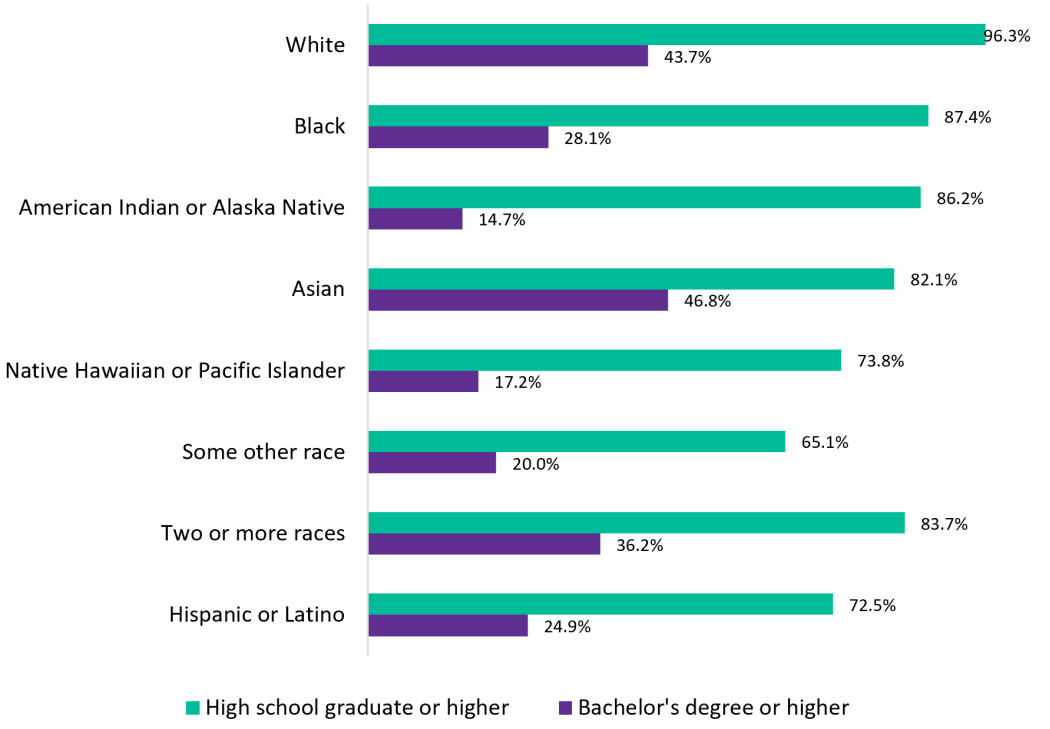
Figure G3.b: Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months, Lancaster County



American Community Survey 2019 - 2024

Some groups disproportionately experience barriers to educational attainment, which is reflected in lower median incomes. These barriers to access start in youth and continue throughout a lifetime: a child not having a parent or adult present, or not having access to preschool education; an adult facing time and financial barriers to higher education and job training, often due to family obligations. At a national level these barriers are more prevalent in certain racial and ethnic groups, and this is illustrated locally by the race-based disparity in educational attainment, labor force participation, and median income in Lancaster County.

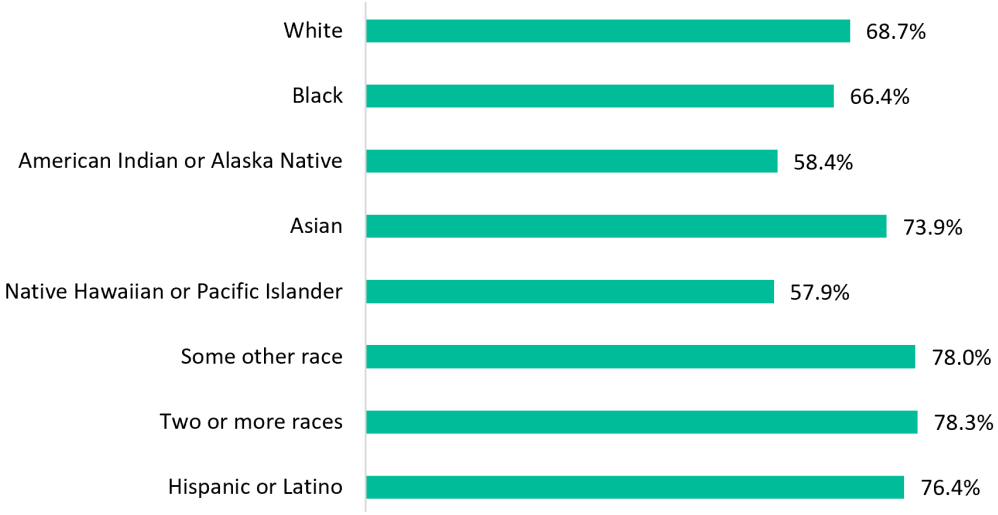
Figure G3.c: Race and Educational Attainment, Lancaster County



American Community Survey 2019 - 2024

Another challenge to maintaining a high-quality workforce is ensuring that individuals who are displaced from work for a long period of time (for childbirth and the raising of children, recession or pandemic-related job loss, injury or disability, etc.) are able to re-enter the workforce. When people experience short-term unemployment, they go through real economic stress and temporary hardship, but most recover. Much more devastating is involuntary long-term unemployment. People may lose their house, spouse, confidence, and self-worth. Economist Gene Sperling describes this as a loss of "economic dignity" and many people never recover.

Figure G3.d: Labor Force Participation, Lancaster County



Note: In Lancaster County the overall labor force participation rate is 69.7 percent. This number includes individuals 16 and over who are actively working or seeking work. The local rate is similar to Nebraska's rate of 68.6 percent, and compares favorably to the national rate of 64.0 percent. *American Community Survey 2019 - 2024*

Labor force participation is also a challenge with individuals experiencing a disability. According to the American Community Survey approximately 11 percent of Lancaster County residents have a disability. Disabled individuals make up a much larger percentage of working age population not in the labor force (22 percent), meaning they are not actively seeking work. For those seeking work the unemployment rate for disabled individuals (7.4 percent) was more than twice as high as those without a disability (3 percent) in 2019.

Working on a local level to support and encourage workforce participation and secure employment can help to ensure that everyone wanting to participate in the workforce can do so.

There are additional barriers that could make it more difficult for the local workforce to secure high-quality jobs over the next 30 years. Some of today's jobs will become obsolete as new technologies and automation change the workforce needs, especially with entry-level positions. The skills required by employers will continue to change, and job training and education will continue to be an urgent priority so that individuals or even segments of entire generations are not left out.

To achieve the goal of a high-quality workforce, Lincoln and Lancaster County will focus on policies that ensure equitable access to education and training, emphasize partnerships between education providers, workforce development agencies, and local employers, and will work to address other economic barriers to achieving economic stability and mobility.

Policies Related to this Goal

P1: Housing Affordability

P2: Existing Neighborhoods

P3: Developing Neighborhoods

P5: Downtown

P6: Nodes and Corridors

P9: Skilled, Diverse, and Trained Workforce

P10: Supporting Small Businesses

P40: Libraries

P43: Health Care Access

P44: Education

P45: Early Childhood Care and Education

P60: Technology

P63: Transportation Access and Opportunity

P69: Transit

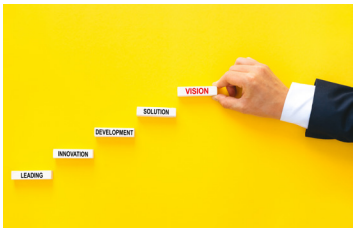
P70: Active Transportation

Community Indicators Related to this Goal

Economy Indicators

G4: Economic Opportunity

Lincoln and Lancaster County will have high-quality jobs in an economic environment that supports business creation, innovation, and expansion.



A key element to a livable community - one that can attract and retain individuals to maintain population growth and economic prosperity - is the presence of high-quality jobs. Key attributes of a high-quality job include a living wage that can support a household's daily needs, benefits such as paid sick days and health insurance, and job security.

One factor in developing high-quality jobs is having a talented workforce. Where skilled labor chooses to live is increasingly a key decision factor for business growth and relocation. Although teleworking has been more prevalent in recent years, it is expected that most employees will still live in the same community as their employer.

Equitable skills and training initiatives, discussed in the High-Quality Workforce goal, will ensure that Lincoln and Lancaster County have a strong supply of talented workers. Quality-of-life attributes, such as diverse and accessible housing, good shopping, restaurants and entertainment, quality schools and healthcare, a sense of safety, and amenities such as parks and trails are important to ensuring that skilled individuals want to remain or relocate to our community.

In addition to cultivating a talented workforce, it is important to have an economic environment that supports business creation, innovation, and expansion. Elements that contribute to a successful economic environment include:

- Skilled and educated workforce, including tradespeople
- Strong partnerships between educational institutions, major employers, and other workforce resources such as the American Job Center
- Site and infrastructure availability
- Clear and consistent development regulations with a streamlined review process
- Financial incentives, such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and technical assistance with grant opportunities

Policies Related to this Goal

P1: Housing Affordability

P2: Existing Neighborhoods

P3: Developing Neighborhoods

P5: Downtown

P6: Nodes and Corridors

P7: Redevelopment Incentives

P9: Skilled, Diverse, and Trained Workforce

P10: Supporting Small Businesses

P11: Parking Requirements

P12: Economic Growth

P13: Commercial and Industrial Centers

P14: Commercial Infill

P15: Infrastructure and Economic Development

P16: Rural Economy

P17: Predictability

P68: Transportation and Economic Health

P72: Freight

Community Indicators Related to this Goal

Economy Indicators

G5: Equity and Inclusion



Lincoln and Lancaster County will establish equity - regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, country of origin, religion, age, economic status, or zip code - as a core principle in the planning, decision-making, and policy development processes.

Acknowledging disparities that exist in our community is vital in order to properly discuss equity as a core principle of PlanForward. We also acknowledge in this plan that there are ongoing work efforts which are moving us in the right direction toward eliminating disparities. Under this goal and others in PlanForward, we identified local trends that relate to measurable aspects that focus on race and ethnicity disparities within housing, income, poverty, juvenile justice, educational attainment, labor force participation, and health. In 2020, the total percent of minorities living in Lancaster County was 20.5%. It is anticipated by 2050, the total percent of minorities living in Lancaster County will be approximately 35.3% based on historic trends and growth projections.

In the 1930s, cities across the nation created redline maps to shore up and secure home loans for mostly white people. These redline maps were utilized so that realtors and mortgage lenders assisted in the practice of isolating minorities, specifically Black populations, in areas that would suffer lower levels of investment than their white counterparts. This practice created a racial disparity of homeownership and limited generational wealth among minority populations in two main ways. First, redlining was predatory exclusion where homes or loans could not be acquired within certain areas. Second, “reverse redlining” created predatory inclusion where non-white areas are targeted for higher prices and taxes, subprime loans, etc.

Redlining Practices

Redlining transformed explicit racism into structural racism that is still affecting our community today. In 1968, the Fair Housing Act was signed into law that established the protected classes of race, color, national origin, and religion, while sex was added in 1974 and familial status and disability were added in 1988. After the passage of the Fair Housing Act, there was no power among the federal authorities to enforce it. Much like the other laws, enforcement depended on local civil rights organizations to run the investigations, find evidence, find plaintiffs, etc. Even when evidence of discrimination was found, there was not any actual enforcement until 20 years later in 1988.

Lincoln was not immune to housing discrimination. A local look shows:

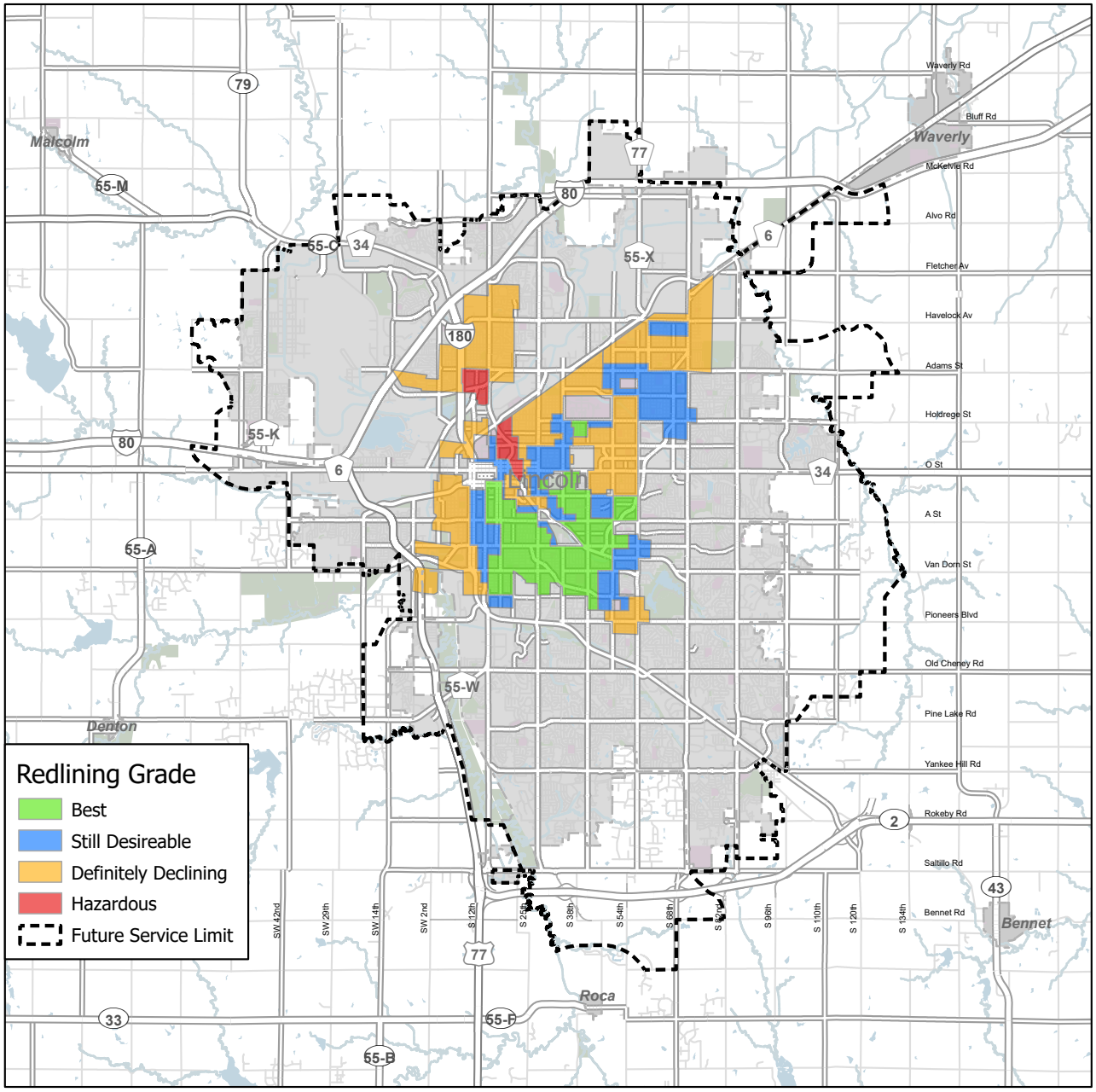
- In 1916, Sheridan Boulevard was the first area in Lincoln to introduce race restrictions, even before the redline map was introduced. Only “those of the Caucasian race” could purchase with the only exception for non-white residents being if the homebuyers had maids or servants that were black.
- In 1924, race clauses were introduced in the Piedmont area.
- In 1930s through 1950s, the Brownbilt area south of Randolph school also had race clauses. These purchase agreements banned the sale of properties to “Africans, Chinese, or Japanese.”

For most of these restrictions, the developers used federal funds from the Federal Housing Administration and Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), that through deeds, prohibited anyone other than the white race. These covenants were generally in effect until 1975.

As mentioned before, in the 1930s, the government-sponsored HOLC introduced the private-sector to redlining when it produced color-coded maps of urban areas; black neighborhoods were marked in red, which indicated that they were the riskiest areas to insure mortgages. White residents received virtually all loans from the Federal Housing Administration between 1934 and 1962. Federal Housing Administration insurance would not back loans in the "Declining" or "Hazardous" areas. These areas were mostly, or solely populated by the black population. Thus, potential black homeowners could not get FHA backed loans to purchase or improve homes. The homes in these areas would thus fall into disrepair or would become totally dilapidated. The presence of just one black person could deem the area declining or hazardous.

When we review the redline map of the 1930s and recent minority population and poverty trends, we see almost 100 years later, it's the same map. The redlining effects of black and other people of color are still visible today. Knowing and understanding this exclusionary practice and its lingering effects is important to include in the Comprehensive Plan, so the community can have a conversation about issues that continue to plague our fellow community members and how we can work to promote equity in the community.

Figure G5.a: Lincoln "Redline" Map, 1933

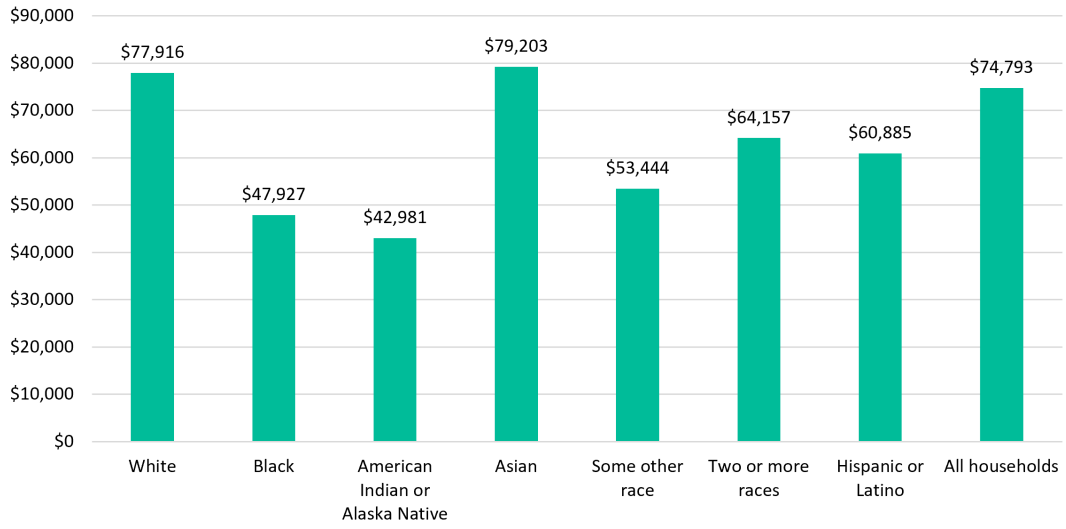


DRAFT

Median Individual and Family Income

According to ACS data for Lancaster County, the median income for households is $74,793. As we examine income disparities in the community, we note that White (not Hispanic or Latino) households account for 82.8% of all households and earn a median income of $77,916. Asian households are also above the County median with a household income of $79,203, the highest of any racial or ethnic group. Households of all other racial and ethnic groups have median incomes below the overall County median.

Figure G5.b: Median Household Income, Lancaster County



American Community Survey 2019 - 2024

Income disparities are also seen between gender of householder and familial status.

Table G5.a: Median Family Income, Lancaster County

Household Income	# of Households	Median Income
Families	78,277	$101,840
- With own children of householder under 18 years	34,832	$101,684
- With no children of householder under 18 years	43,445	$102,003
Married-couple families	60,777	$115,998
- With own children under 18 years	24,839	$125,540
Female householder, no spouse present	12,009	$47,621
- With own children under 18 years	6,914	$39,751
Male householder, no spouse present	5,491	$67,266
- With own children under 18 years	3,079	$63,651

American Community Survey 2019 - 2024

Poverty Status

The disparity in incomes can be seen in the poverty status, which shows that 37,206 individuals are currently below the *2026 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia*. While a majority number of individuals below the poverty line identify as White, the percentages show that minority communities in Lancaster County are disproportionately affected by poverty.

Table G5.b: Poverty Status in Past 12 Months, Lancaster County

	Below poverty level	
	Population	**Percentage**
White	24,923	10.2%
Black	2,622	24.2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	595	32.8%
Asian	1,493	11.0%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	33	13.6%
Some other race	1,050	14.1%
Two or more races	4,959	18.6%
Hispanic or Latino	5,005	18.9%
All	37,206	10.2%

American Community Survey 2019 - 2024

Housing Tenure

Homeownership has provided housing stability and wealth development for residents in Lancaster County for generations. Approximately 63.1% of White households own their home, while less than 26.8% of Black families own their own homes and 38.0% of Hispanic or Latino families own their homes. While homeownership is something that should be attainable for individuals and families that desire to be homeowners, the availability of safe, affordable, and accessible housing is necessary for those who need or want to rent.

Table G5.c: Housing Tenure, Lancaster County

	Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied	
	Population	**Percentage**	**Population**	**Percentage**
White	70,060	63.1%	40,930	36.9%
Black	1,120	26.8%	3,052	73.2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	238	33.2%	478	66.8%
Asian	2,520	49.4%	2,585	50.6%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	4	4.5%	85	95.5%
Some other race	719	26.9%	1,959	73.1%
Two or more races	3,108	41.0%	4,478	59.0%
Hispanic or Latino	3,355	38.0%	5,476	62.0%
All	79,065	58.9%	55,061	41.1%

American Community Survey 2019 - 2024

Juvenile Justice

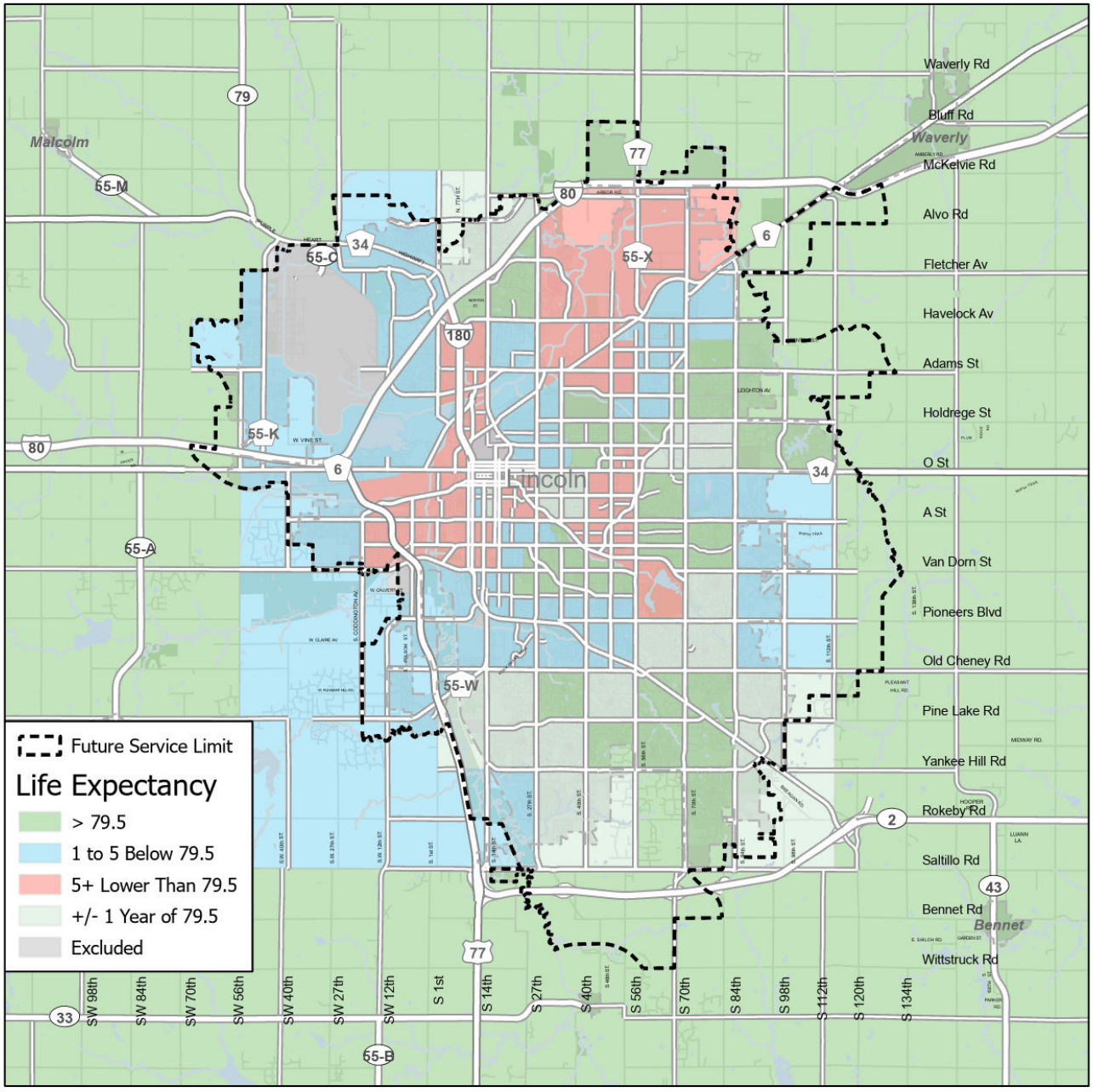
In 2017, Lancaster County signed on as a Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) site. The JDAI Collaborative prepares a *Lancaster County Comprehensive Juvenile Justice Services Plan* which reviews data that traces individual youths' involvement with the juvenile justice system from initial contact through disposition and human service intervention. The disproportionality of non-white youth and families living in poverty, reduced educational attainment and medical care, and overall youth in the justice system, permeate our community as it does in so many others. The justice collaborative is focused on reducing disparities in the system, has developed a nationally recognized diversion program, committed to make every decision through a racially informed lens, and infuse restorative justice principles throughout all services.

Health Status

Health disparities are often looked at as differences in health status between the white population and racial/ethnic minorities; however, race and ethnicity, gender, age, disability, social and economic status, and geographic location all contribute to an individual's ability to achieve good health. The five domains of the *Social Determinants of Health* provide the framework that Public Health uses to discuss and address health disparities, including: Economic Disparity, Education Access and Quality, Healthcare Access and Quality, Neighborhood and Built Environment, and Social and Community Context. Lincoln's low cost of living does not offset lower incomes and persons from racial and ethnic minority populations struggle to achieve equity in educational attainment, employment, and income.

Lincoln has geographic concentrations of extreme poverty and poor health. Based on a resident's Census Tract, their projected life expectancy can differ by 20 years. In general, health outcomes in those older parts of Lincoln are not as good as elsewhere in the community. Death rates by disease vary across the community as do obesity rates in schools, behaviors such as smoking and binge drinking, uninsured rates, and a host of maternal and child health measures. The Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department in conjunction with the community's hospital systems and other public health partners, conducts a comprehensive Health Status Assessment and broad engagement of health discussions across the community. The resulting planning documents are the Community Health Assessment and the Community Health Improvement Plan which drive much of the ongoing strategic focus to improve health outcomes. Additionally, the LLCHD provides mapping and narrative utilized by community partners to further discussion of health disparities and their inequitable distribution throughout Lincoln and Lancaster County. Indicators around health, activity, and connected people for the 2050 Comprehensive Plan are guided by the LLCHD's 2024 Community Health Assessment and the 2025 Community Health Improvement Plan.

Figure G5.c: Life Expectancy



Life expectancy data source: Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department

An idea to assist people in need was discussed during development of PlanForward, known as a Navigation Hub. This would be a universal intake for multiple services to eliminate the redundancy of paperwork and eliminate barriers to accessing resources for individuals and families. This idea would need additional discussion with appropriate government agencies, non-profits, and services providers.

PlanForward's goals and policies take into account the historic and current racial and social inequities in our community. By intentionally incorporating a lens of racial equity into all policy decisions, identifying how our decisions may unintentionally reinforce racial disparities, our community can better understand and eliminate these disparities and create a more equitable community for every resident.

Policies Related to this Goal

P1: Housing Affordability

P2: Existing Neighborhoods

P3: Developing Neighborhoods

P5: Downtown

P6: Nodes and Corridors

P9: Skilled, Diverse, and Trained Workforce

P22: Local Food

P40: Libraries

P42: Law Enforcement

P43: Health Care Access

P44: Education

P45: Early Childhood Care and Education

P47: Civic Participation

P60: Technology

P61: Industrial Zoning and Pipelines

P63: Transportation Access and Opportunity

P65: Complete Streets

P69: Transit

P70: Active Transportation

Community Indicators Related to this Goal

Economy Indicators

Housing Indicators

Transportation Indicators

Recreation Indicators

G6: Healthy, Active, and Connected People

Lincoln and Lancaster County will be a healthy community that continuously creates and improves both its physical and social environments where every person is free to make choices amid a variety of healthy, available, accessible, and affordable options.



The interaction between people and their environments, natural as well as human-made, has re-emerged as a major public health issue. A community that encourages healthy, active, and connected people is one that continuously creates and improves both its physical and social environments. Examining the interaction between health and the environment requires considering the effects of factors in the broad physical and social environments, which include housing, access to community facilities and resources, land use, transportation, industry, workforce development, and agriculture.

Making the healthy choice the easy choice is one way to help people achieve optimal health.This can be accomplished in many ways such as: working with schools and businesses on wellness initiatives; improving local access to healthy foods and creating community gardens; creating a community plan to account for health impacts of new community projects; continuing to implement the Complete Streets program to encourage active transportation; and creating community gardens.

As a public health function, the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department serves as a chief health strategist to strengthen, support, and mobilize community partnerships to improve the health of the community. Data on vital statistics, behaviors, communicable disease and other indicators of health status is compiled in the Community Health Assessment and includes the participation of partners such as Bryan Health Systems and CHI St. Elizabeth, Nebraska Hospital Association, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, and others. The assessment includes detailed information about the health of our community, including geographic health disparities. The Lincoln Community Health Endowment's Place Matters project has utilized such maps to answer the question, "How does where we live, learn, work, and play affect our health?" The maps, which can be accessed through the Community Health Endowment website, show that health disparities are not geographically distributed equitably throughout the community. Continued implementation of the CHIP recommendations is an important element to ensuring a healthy, active, and connected community.

The *Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)* is developed based on and in conjunction with the Community Health Assessment. The CHIP includes goals, objectives, and strategies organized within three priority areas: access to care, suicide prevention, and addressing depression. The CHIP is a guiding document to address these community health needs. Continued implementation of the CHIP recommendations is an important element to ensuring a healthy, active, and connected community.

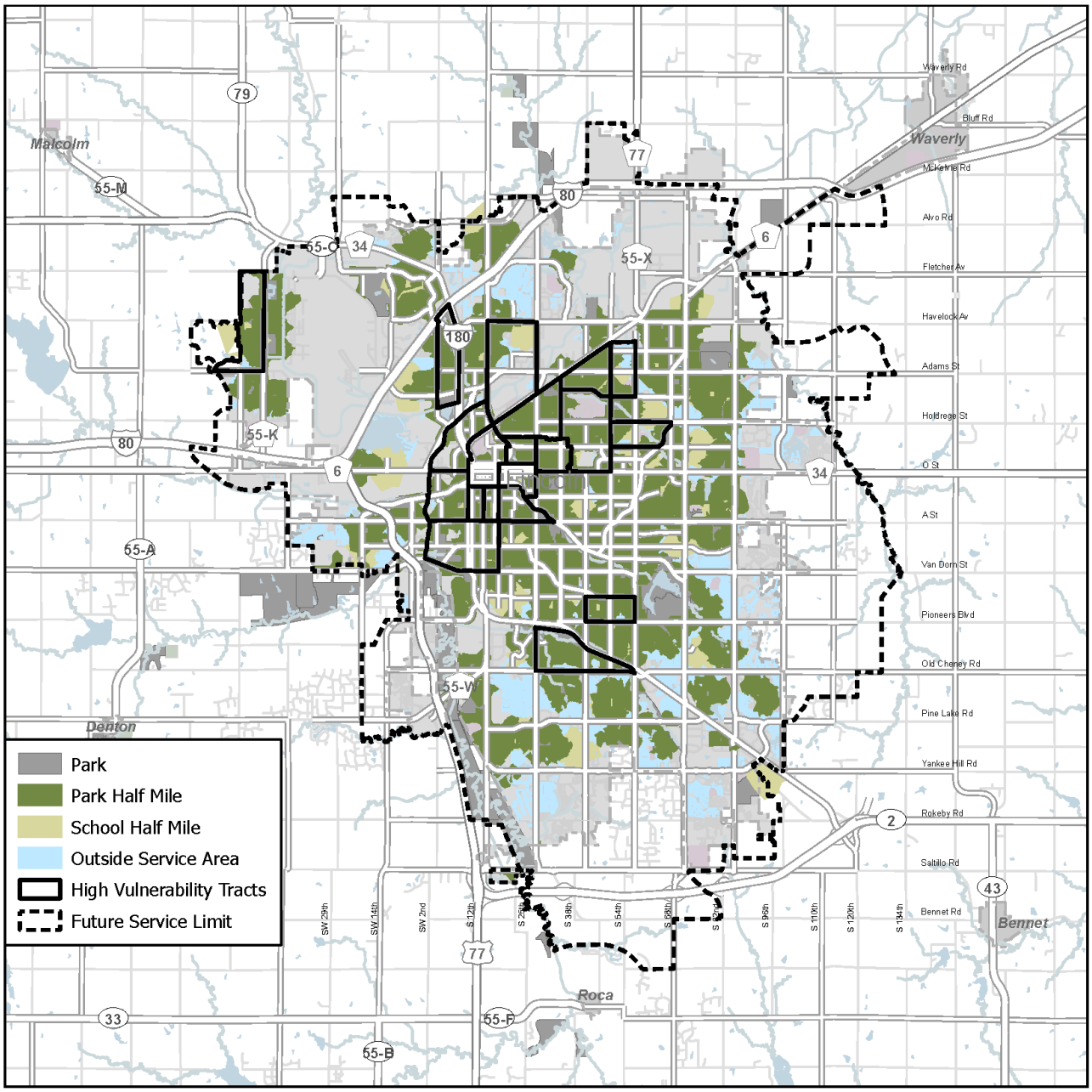
The *Lincoln Age-Friendly Community Three-Year Action Plan* was adopted in 2026. Lincoln is experiencing a rapid increase in its aging population. The number of residents age 65 and older is projected to double from 31,000 in 2010 to 61,000 by 2030, with continued growth in the decades ahead. This demographic shift creates both opportunity and urgency. The Lincoln Age-Friendly Community Three-Year Action Plan establishes a focused, data-driven roadmap.

Guided by community input and local data, the City has prioritized three domains for concentrated action: Communication and Information, Transportation, and Housing. These priorities reflect the areas where targeted investment and coordination can produce meaningful improvements in daily life.

- Communication and Information focuses on expanding digital literacy, strengthening Aging Partners as a trusted point of connection, improving coordination among service providers, and reducing barriers that limit social participation.
- Transportation focuses on increasing awareness and comfort with public transit, incorporating age-friendly considerations into route planning and bus stop design, and improving access to community events and services for non-drivers.
- Housing focuses on assessing high-impact, cost-effective design features for aging in place, advocating for policy and funding improvements, expanding incentives for age-friendly development, and addressing barriers within zoning and building codes.

Inequities in access to recreation and open spaces contribute to health disparities. The map below identifies the most vulnerable populations (percentage below poverty level; racial and ethnic minority population; life expectancy; and the percentage that passed the Youth Fitness Test) and evaluate access by a 10 minute walk to parks and schools that provide recreational opportunities. Lincoln's Community Centers and Amenities (public, non-profit, or for profit services) show opportunities for physical and emotional well-being and are mostly concentrated in the areas with the highest need. The map identifies residential units outside of the 10 minute walk in areas with vulnerable populations that should be addressed. There are also underserved/non-served residents in newer growth areas. It is important to note that while the costs for land and development of park facilities have grown since impact fees were first instituted, these fees have not increased to match inflation, creating a backlog of Neighborhood Park development. Funding for other park facilities has also been unable to keep up with inflation rates, creating a backlog of maintenance. This map does not reflect private rec facilities within apartment complexes or other private residential uses.

Figure G6.a: Parks and Recreational Facilities



Vulnerability and service area data source: Parks and Recreation Department

While over 98 percent of Lincoln residents are within one mile of accessing a trail, there are still inequities in the trail network. For example, there are instances where there are no connections into the trail system as a whole, leaving it inaccessible for residents who have concerns about on-street biking for commuting or for those who would like to ride recreationally through the community. Connecting these gaps should be prioritized over the planning horizon to create a more equitable trail network.

Sidepaths are separated paths along roadways that serve people bicycling and walking within the street right-of-way. Examples may include the 84th Street Trail and the Old Cheney Trail. Development of sidepaths should be placed further from the street to provide a comfortable buffer of grass and street trees between vehicular traffic and bicycle and pedestrians. Sidepaths may present increased conflicts with motor vehicles at driveways and intersections. Increased safety measures should be evaluated for these facility types to protect vulnerable road users.

Policies Related to this Goal

P2: Existing Neighborhoods

P3: Developing Neighborhoods

P18: Conservation Design

P22: Local Food

P23: Salt Valley Greenway and Connecting Green Corridors Concept Implementation

P25: Open Space with Development

P26: Community Forestry Management

P27: Regional Parks and Tournament Facilities

P28: Community Parks

P29: Neighborhood Parks

P30: Recreation Centers / Community Learning Centers

P31: Aquatic Facilities

P32: Other Recreational Facilities and Activities

P33: Parks and Recreation Partnerships

P39: Community Space

P43: Health Care Access

P65: Complete Streets

P70: Active Transportation

Community Indicators Related to this Goal

Growth Indicators

Economy Indicators

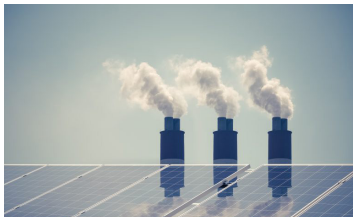
Housing Indicators

Transportation Indicators

Recreation Indicators

G7: Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

Lincoln and Lancaster County will embrace a strategic approach to growth and development that minimizes environmental harm, safeguards natural resources, and protects the health, safety and livelihoods of all residents.



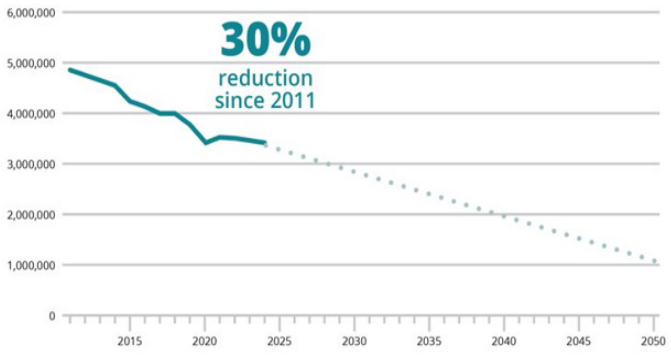
Lincoln's *Climate Action Plan* adopts a goal to reduce emissions 80% by 2050 and to make the community more resilient to climate change. Since 2011, Lincoln's greenhouse gas emissions have fallen by 30%. Lincoln Electric System, the City of Lincoln's municipal electric utility, is a key partner in working toward these goals.

In addition to energy and greenhouse gas emissions, the Climate Action Plan outlines steps to implement more sustainable solutions across a breadth of sectors, including transportation, land use, materials and resource management, local food, climate resilience, natural systems, and economic development.

In 2026, Lincoln achieved a Platinum rating from the LEED for Cities certification program, becoming only the tenth U.S. city to achieve this level under the current rating system. The Platinum rating also provides a strong basis in which to make even greater advances in years to come.

Municipal land-use policies can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by steering development toward compact, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods. In these areas, residents can reach jobs, schools, shopping, and services by walking, biking, or using public transportation instead of driving. This concept is further explained in E1: Great Neighborhoods and Housing.

Figure G7.a: Lincoln's Greenhouse Gas Reductions



Lincoln Electric System

Cities can further cut emissions by supporting infill development and redevelopment, preserving forests, wetlands, farmland, and other carbon-storing natural areas, and discouraging sprawl that increases vehicle miles traveled and infrastructure costs. This concept is further explained in the Growth Framework and E2: Infill and Redevelopment.

Zoning and building codes can also promote energy-efficient buildings, renewable energy installations, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and transit-oriented development.

Integrating these strategies into the community's guiding documents, incentives, and regulatory framework can result in lower transportation and building emissions, protect natural carbon sinks, reduce costs, and create healthier, more sustainable communities.

Environmental stewardship can create economic opportunity for Lincoln. Investments in clean energy, resilient infrastructure and efficient buildings generate local jobs and lower long-term costs for residents and City government

alike. Coordinated action with Lincoln Electric System and other partners positions Lincoln to grow sustainably while keeping utility costs predictable for households and businesses.

Achieving this goal requires sustained collaboration between the City, the County, and the broader community. As Lincoln and Lancaster County grow, this goal commits the community to managing that growth, so it does not come at the expense of the natural resources and systems residents depend on, nor at the expense of future generations. The Climate Action Plan will guide the specific steps needed to carry this commitment forward in the years ahead.

Policies Related to this Goal

P18: Conservation Design

P19: Native Prairie

P20: Ecology and Habitat

P21: Floodplains and Riparian Areas

P22: Local Food

P23: Salt Valley Greenway and Connecting Green Corridors Concept Implementation

P24: Environmental Resource Protection

P25: Open Space with Development

P26: Community Forestry Management

P48: Renewable Energy

P49: Conservation of Energy

P50: Water Quantity and Quality

P51: Groundwater

P54: Wastewater Resource Recovery Facilities

P55: Watershed Planning

P58: Waste Reduction

P59: Electric Utility

P64: Transportation and the Future

P65: Complete Streets

P69: Transit

P70: Active Transportation

P73: Advanced Mobility

Community Indicators Related to this Goal

Growth Indicators

Environment Indicators

Recreation Indicators

G8: Community Resiliency



Lincoln and Lancaster County will be resilient to the climate hazards they will face.

Lincoln's climate is changing, and the community will feel that shift in the decades ahead. Making our community more resilient to climate change is one of the main goals of *Lincoln's Climate Action Plan* and a key consideration for City and County leaders as they approach the growth of the community.

Average temperatures in Lincoln are projected to rise from 63°F today to 67°F by mid-century, and the number of days each year with dangerous heat conditions is expected to grow substantially, from three days today to 26 by mid-century. The increase in extreme heat days could lead to an increase in residents experiencing heat-related illnesses such as heat stroke. Those who may be particularly vulnerable include infants, young children, pregnant people, older adults; people with disabilities or certain health conditions; and people who work outdoors (or indoors with limited to no air conditioning). Factors that may increase risk include high levels of humidity, drug or alcohol use, and dehydration.



Cold extremes will become less frequent, with the number of days below freezing dropping from 135 to 106 per year, easing winter heating demand while summer cooling needs increase. This increased demand for air conditioning may place additional strain on electricity resources.

Rainfall patterns will shift too: summers and winters are projected to grow wetter, springs slightly drier, and heavy rain events more frequent, particularly during spring and winter, raising the risk of flooding and added strain on stormwater systems.

Other important climate-related hazards that Lincoln could experience include severe drought and stress on water supplies; increasing destructive wind events; food insecurity from supply chain disruptions or extreme weather events; and poor air quality from distant wildfires.

These changes will not arrive as a single dramatic event but as a gradual reshaping of the conditions Lincoln has long planned around. Approaching future growth and development with these shifts in mind, rather than treating past climate patterns as a reliable guide, will help Lincoln protect residents' health and safety, safeguard infrastructure, and support a community equipped to thrive under the conditions ahead.

Municipal land use policies can strengthen a community's resilience to climate change by guiding growth in ways that reduce exposure to flooding, extreme heat, and other climate-related hazards. Protecting natural areas and expanding green infrastructure can help moderate temperature, manage stormwater, and support overall environmental health.

Updated planning and development practices can incorporate future climate conditions, ensuring that new growth is better prepared for more frequent and severe weather events.

By integrating climate considerations into long-term planning, zoning, and infrastructure decisions, communities can protect residents and property, reduce future costs, and build a safer, healthier, and more resilient future.

Policies Related to this Goal

P18: Conservation Design

P19: Native Prairie

P20: Ecology and Habitat

P21: Floodplains and Riparian Areas

P22: Local Food

P23: Salt Valley Greenway and Connecting Green Corridors Concept Implementation

P24: Environmental Resource Protection

P48: Renewable Energy

P49: Conservation of Energy

P50: Water Quantity and Quality

P54: Wastewater Resource Recovery Facilities

P55: Watershed Planning

P59: Electric Utility

P64: Transportation and the Future

Community Indicators Related to this Goal

Growth Indicators

G9: Civic Participation

Lincoln and Lancaster County recognize the need for an equitable civic process and community buy-in during the planning and decision-making processes.



The City of Lincoln and Lancaster County have long encouraged the public to participate in local government activities. Keeping people knowledgeable and involved in implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and other community initiatives is crucial to ensuring their ultimate success. It is important to give all members of the community a voice and the capacity to influence decisions.

A key element to allowing everyone to have a voice in the civic participation process is removing barriers that prevent some members of the community from being fully engaged.

Common barriers include:

- Time: Many residents do not have the time to attend public meetings and hearings. This can be due to work responsibilities, childcare, or a lack of timely transportation options.
- Language: Residents facing language barriers may have difficulty understanding material presented at meetings or distributed online or in print. This is especially true in projects involving the Planning Department because many common planning terms or abbreviations don't have direct translations into other languages. This also applies to acronyms and jargon.
- Lack of trust: There are some residents that have a general lack of trust with government processes. This lack of trust exists for a variety of reasons, but it is something that impedes collecting the full spectrum of input from the community.
- Lack of understanding: Local government processes can be complex and it can be difficult to know how and when to become involved. This is especially true for residents with international backgrounds.
- Accessibility: An individual with hearing, visual, or other physical or invisible impairment may have trouble accessing an in-person meeting site and reviewing written or recorded meeting materials.

To achieve the goal of equitable civic participation, Lincoln and Lancaster County will work to remove these barriers so that all members of the community can be informed and involved. Examples include exploring expanded online and virtual public input methods while maintaining the option for traditional in-person engagement events located throughout the community. Equitable civic participation will require broad efforts that reach the entire community while actively seeking engagement from historically underrepresented groups.

As part of the original PlanForward process, in 2020 and 2021 the Planning Department conducted several in-person and virtual events that collected input from hundreds of residents across the community. In addition, an Equity Subcommittee was established to discuss issues related to equity in the planning process and outcomes, and collect input from residents who are typically underrepresented in our processes. In 2025 and 2026 additional in-person and virtual events were conducted as part of the Comprehensive Plan update. These events helped to affirm assumptions already in the Comprehensive Plan and identify additional priorities. More information about the public input process can be found in the Introduction section of PlanForward.

Policies Related to this Goal

P40: Libraries

P46: Public Buildings

P47: Civic Participation

P60: Technology

Community Indicators Related to this Goal

Growth Indicators

G10: Effective Government

Lincoln and Lancaster County will be responsive to community needs and provide efficient and reliable essential services to residents and taxpayers.



Lincoln and Lancaster County will focus on maintaining a sustainable tax base that continues to provide quality services to residents and businesses in an efficient and equitable manner. Fiscal decisions will continue to be data-driven and implemented through a public process that allows for transparency and citizen input. The City of Lincoln and Lancaster County promote the integration of information technology throughout the community by their use of technologies in the business of local government. This use of integrating technology will continue to deliver services efficiently and enhance the interaction with government.

A variety of activities contribute to the sustainable provision of efficient and reliable essential services:

- Implementing efficient growth practices that maximize utilization of existing infrastructure investments while reducing the need to invest in costly new infrastructure.
- Supporting economic development efforts, and incentives such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), that grow the tax base.
- Leveraging external funding sources, such as Federal and State funds and public-private partnerships, along with grants, to maximize the utilization of local tax dollars.
- Maintaining a community with a high quality of life to attract investment from both residents and businesses.

Policies Related to this Goal

P7: Redevelopment Incentives

P12: Economic Growth

P15: Infrastructure and Economic Development

P16: Rural Economy

P17: Predictability

P33: Parks and Recreation Partnerships

P34: Urban Design Standards

P35: Entry Corridors

P37: Historic Preservation

P40: Libraries

P41: Fire and Rescue

P42: Law Enforcement

P46: Public Buildings

P47: Civic Participation

P50: Water Quantity and Quality

P52: Wastewater System

P53: Gravity Flow Collection System

P54: Water Resource Recovery Facilities

P56: Landfill

P60: Technology

P74: Transportation Partnerships

P76: Transportation Maintenance

P77: Transportation Funding

Community Indicators Related to this Goal

Growth Indicators

G11: Rural Environment



Lincoln and Lancaster County will support a strong rural economy, with a focus on agriculture and other land uses, while preserving critical natural features and quality of life for county residents.

An important relationship exists between the urban, rural, and natural landscapes. Urban and rural development must maximize the use of land in order to preserve agriculture and other compatible industries, natural resources, and the overall rural environment.

Agriculture is the dominant land use in Lancaster County, accounting for roughly ¾ of the county's total land area. According to the 2022 USDA Census of Agriculture, Lancaster County has over 1,700 farms, with 95 percent of those being classified as "family owned". Total market value of farm products produced in Lancaster County was $264 million. It is important to maintain agriculture as the core element of Lancaster County's economy by supporting traditional agriculture along with emerging agricultural production methods.

The rural areas in Lancaster County are also appropriate locations for emerging energy production facilities such as wind turbines and solar farms. These industries are compatible with agricultural uses, support the community's sustainability initiatives, and have the potential to be major contributors to the local economy. Both the City and County zoning ordinances have been updated to address renewable energy production and ensure that their implementation is compatible with surrounding areas.

It is also important that critical natural features such as native prairie, wetlands, and riparian corridors are protected. Such features need to be valued and sustained as part of the overall planning process if they are to remain as vital parts of our ecosystem and natural heritage to be left for succeeding generations. The Climate Action Plan discusses these ideas in more detail. Although it is a City document, coordination with the County will be important to implementing many of the Climate Action Plan's initiatives.

Rural Lancaster County has approximately 30,000 residents living on a mix of farms and acreages. Demand remains for additional acreage development in rural areas. The Future Land Use plan currently includes area for about 25 years of additional acreage development, assuming demand remains steady.Additional acreage areas that may be added should be in appropriate locations in order to reserve land resources for efficient future urban development, agriculture, and the natural environment, while preserving the rural quality of life for existing and future residents.

Policies Related to this Goal

P4: Rural Housing

P16: Rural Economy

P19: Native Prairie

P20: Ecology and Habitat

P22: Local Food

P23: Salt Valley Greenway and Connecting Green Corridors Concept Implementation

P24: Environmental Resource Protection

P51: Groundwater

P55: Watershed Planning

P66: Transportation and Managing Growth

Community Indicators Related to this Goal

Growth Indicators

Economy Indicators

Housing Indicators

Environment Indicators

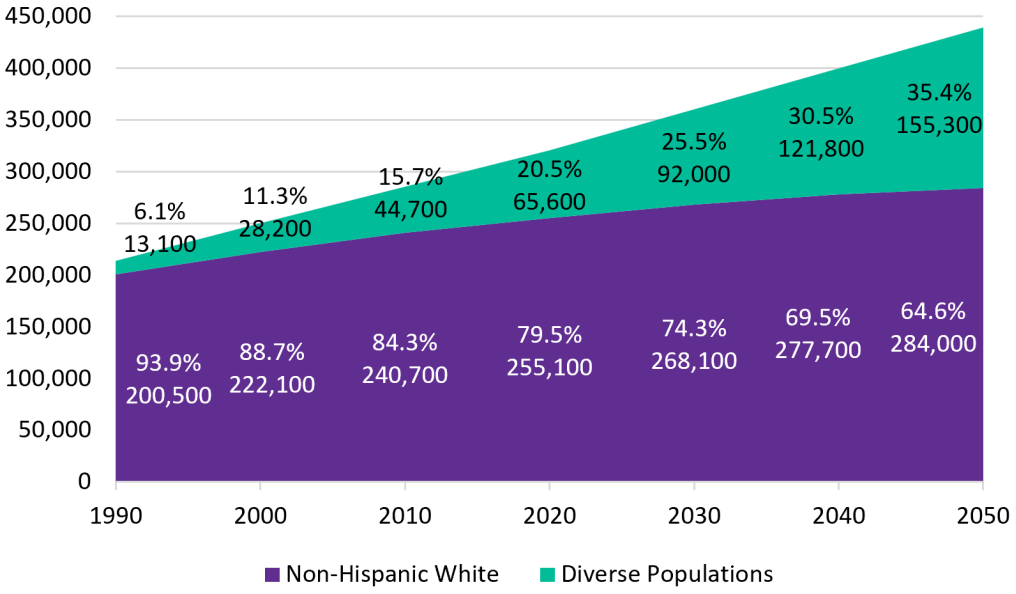
G12: History and Culture



Lincoln and Lancaster County will celebrate the community's history and diverse cultures and build upon the benefits they provide to civic health, economic vitality, and quality of life.

Preservation and enhancement of the many quality of life assets within the community continues. For a "good quality of life," a community has more than jobs, shelter, utilities and roads — there are numerous services, education, historic, natural, and cultural resources that are fundamental to enriching lives. As the population continues to become more diverse, the richness and variety of Lincoln and Lancaster County's cultural assets will enrich the quality of life for all those living here.

Figure G12.a:
Actual and Projected Population for Major Racial/Ethnic Groups, Lancaster County



UNO Center for Public Affairs Research

PlanForward embraces a growing, changing community, and the opportunities presented by the fundamental demographic changes currently occurring and expected to continue into the future. For example, Lincoln has the largest Yazidi community in North America, and Nebraska was the largest refugee resettlement per capita in 2016. Students in the Lincoln Public School system are more diverse than Lincoln as a whole. In 2024, LPS had 40.4 percent minority students, while Lincoln had 23.1 percent minority population. As these students grow up and have families of their own, Lincoln can expect an increased diversity in its racial and ethnic composition.

The community will experience further growth among existing racial and ethnic minority groups over the next 30 years. From less than 25,000 people in 2000, the number of minority residents in the County surged to almost 45,000 persons in 2010, and was 68,000 persons in 2020. It is expected that Lancaster County's minority community will grow to 155,000 persons by 2050, and will comprise roughly 1/3 of the overall population. The trend towards a more racially and ethnically diverse community is celebrated and emphasized across multiple policy areas in PlanForward.

The community's history and culture are discussed more in the Introduction section, and are reflected through historic buildings and sites throughout the county. These resources add to the desirable quality of life for current residents and should be protected for future generations. PlanForward encourages the continued use and maintenance of historic and cultural resources, including properties not formally designated as landmarks.

Policies Related to this Goal

P2: Existing Neighborhoods

P5: Downtown

P24: Environmental Resource Protection

P34: Urban Design Standards

P36: Public Art

P37: Historic Preservation

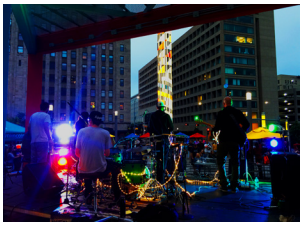
P38: State Capitol

P39: Community Space

Community Indicators Related to this Goal

Growth Indicators

G13: Community Appearance



Lincoln and Lancaster County will have a high-quality physical environment that creates a strong sense of place and community pride.

The urban and the rural landscapes of Lancaster County produce a distinctive place, offering a sense of identity to visitors and especially to residents. It is worthwhile to plan for, protect, and strengthen this character as this community continues to grow and develop.

When successful, urban design makes a community more enjoyable for residents, more attractive to visitors, and more competitive in drawing new businesses and retaining existing ones. A truly sustainable community recognizes and builds on its heritage by fostering good urban design, creating a sense of place and uniqueness that supports a strong economy, values environmental assets, and promotes social engagement and interaction.

To achieve this goal, PlanForward addresses community appearance in a variety of topic areas, including:

- Design standards that promote a high-quality built environment.
- Preservation and re-use of historic structures, including both designated landmarks and non-designated buildings.
- Entry corridors that create a positive “first impression” of the community.
- Community spaces that celebrate local art, music and culture, and promote social interaction and understanding.
- Protection of significant views and vistas throughout the county.
- Well-built public buildings that are compatible with the surrounding environment.

Policies Related to this Goal

P2: Existing Neighborhoods

P5: Downtown

P24: Environmental Resource Protection

P34: Urban Design Standards

P35: Entry Corridors

P36: Public Art

P37: Historic Preservation

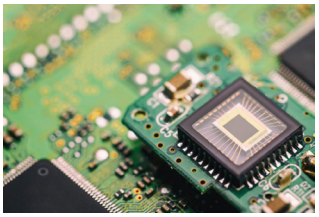
P38: State Capitol

P39: Community Space

Community Indicators Related to this Goal

Growth Indicators

G14: Technology



Lincoln and Lancaster County will support equitable access to technological innovation in order to sustain a vibrant economy, improve City and County services, and improve civic networking.

Technology has and will continue to change the way we live, impacting our personal and professional lives. Technology is also continuously evolving which brings new opportunities and challenges – 3D printers are creating new housing opportunities, our appliances are now capable of speaking to each other, and driverless vehicle technology continues to advance. Technological trends will continue to be monitored in all aspects that impact our community. Partnerships will continue to play a significant role, and opportunities will be explored with local resources such as the University of Nebraska and private companies.

The efficient use and expanded access to public wireless resources are fundamental to Lincoln's future economic growth, global competitiveness, and technology equity among its community members. Congestion of the wireless spectrum and scarcities in both licensed and unlicensed bands must be addressed for continued innovation and investment growth. Access to wireless technology in our public spaces for use by residents, visitors, and event businesses has become an everyday expectation and necessity.

In Lancaster County, 88% of households have internet access through an internet subscription. Households with an income less than $20,000 have internet access through an internet subscription at a rate of 70.8%. The high percentage of residents with an internet subscription speaks to the need and importance of technology for our residents to fully participate in civic functions, employment opportunities, lifelong learning, and access to essential services.

Table G14.a: Internet Access, Lancaster County

Total Households	134,126	
With Internet Subscription	124,712	93.0%
With no Internet	9,414	7.0%
HH Income <$20,000	13,665	
With Internet Subscription	11, 448	83.8%
With no Internet	2,217	16.2%
HH Income $20,000 - $74,999	53,572	
With Internet Subscription	48,842	91.2%
With no Internet	4,730	8.8%
HH Income $75,000 or more	66,889	
With Internet Subscription	64,422	96.3%
With no Internet	2,467	3.7%

American Community Survey 2019-2024

In 2015, the City of Lincoln partnered with Allo Communications to complete a fiber optic network, providing faster broadband speeds, including 1-gigabit service available to every home and business in Lincoln. The project was completed in 2018. The City of Lincoln and Lancaster County promote the integration of information technology throughout the community by their use of technologies in the business of local government. Examples of such activities include:

Public Internet Terminals: These terminals provide public access to the Internet for residents and visitors to Lancaster County. High speed lines and free access terminals have been placed in libraries, community centers, recreation centers, and senior centers.

City and County Websites: The City and County websites offer expanded opportunities to access government in the areas of employment, health and human services, planning and land development, general information assistance, and access to resources. The ability to conduct various government transactions online saves travel time and resources for citizens and government employees.

Advanced Audio and Video Equipment: An array of video equipment is used to broadcast local government meetings over a local cable channel and via the Internet.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS): City and County departments, in partnership with other agencies, have created an extensive system of digital geographic information that includes hundreds of layers of information on features such as natural resources, topographic features, land use, structures, floodplains, jurisdictional boundaries, and infrastructure. A broad assortment of digital imagery (i.e., photographs, permit and property information) is also included in this GIS information base.

Intelligent Transportation Systems: Information technology offers many opportunities for making better use of transportation facilities and services. Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) use computers and digital technology to get the most out of the community's investment in roads and other transportation facilities.

Green Light Lincoln: The continued deployment of Green Light Lincoln has resulted in significant improvements to the overall traffic signal system, Key benefits of this initiative are wide reaching and include: reduce the number and severity of crashes; reduce travel times, delays, and stops; reduce vehicle emissions and pollutants; reduce fuel consumption for savings at the pump; smooth traffic flow and reduce driver frustration; and delay the need for major street widening projects.

Public Wi-Fi and Wireless Internet Access: The City will partner with private broadband carriers to install outdoor public Wi-Fi systems in public spaces. Exploration of a public Wi-Fi and wireless internet access program for the community should be evaluated for community need and potential costs associated with implementation.

Educational Internet Access: The City of Lincoln, Lincoln Public Schools (LPS), Lincoln Libraries, University of Nebraska – Lincoln, and private broadband providers will partner to extend the LPS student internet access into every home and business connected to the Fiber to the Home project. The goal of the Educational Internet Access project is to ensure every student in Lincoln has access to safe and secure high-speed internet regardless of income.

Cloud-Based Public Infrastructure: Continued growth in Information Technology applications require the expansion of database storage infrastructure and cloud-based storage. The City and County will continue to migrate from on-premise to cloud-based storage and applications.

Policies Related to this Goal

P12: Economic Growth

P15: Infrastructure and Economic Development

P47: Civic Participation

P60: Technology

P69: Transit

P73: Advanced Mobility

P77: Transportation Funding

Community Indicators Related to this Goal

Growth Indicators

G15: Transportation



Lincoln and Lancaster County will strive to achieve a safe, efficient, and sustainable transportation system that enhances the quality of life, livability, and economic vitality of the community.

A balanced transportation system that supports the community's needs and equitable outcomes must include maintenance of the aging infrastructure, efficiencies to allow people to move from place to place without congestion, and availability of a wide variety of safe mobility options such as walking, biking, transit, and driving. The transportation system should be thoughtfully designed to contribute to economic vitality of the region by integrating transit, vehicular, freight, air, nonmotorized, and rail modes with land use decisions. The transportation sector is a major contributor to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; transportation decisions should reflect Lincoln and Lancaster County's stewardship of the environment. Specific transportation decisions should align with the City of Lincoln's goal to build a decarbonized and efficient transportation system, as stated in the City of Lincoln Climate Action Plan. Public funding, both locally and nationally, for transportation infrastructure is extremely tight. A successful transportation network comes from public, private, and nonprofit entities working together to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

The 2050 Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is one of the primary planning documents that guides the region's transportation investments to accomplish this goal. The LRTP outlines eight transportation goals which support the goal for transportation in the Comprehensive Plan.

Maintenance: A well-maintained transportation system.

Mobility and System Reliability: An efficient, reliable, and well-connected transportation system that leverages innovation and technology for moving people and freight.

Livability and Travel Choice: A multimodal system that provides travel options to support a more compact, livable urban environment.

Access and Opportunity: A multimodal transportation system that expands access to opportunities and enhances connections for communities with limited transportation options.

Safety and Security: A safe and secure transportation system.

Economic Vitality: A transportation system that supports economic vitality and sustainable growth for residents and businesses.



Environmental Sustainability: A transportation system that minimizes negative impacts on and strives to enhance the natural, cultural, and built environment.



Funding and Cost Effectiveness: Collaboration in funding transportation projects that maximizes user benefits and local funding, and embraces innovative funding approaches.

The eight goals developed for the 2050 LRTP are primarily aligned with national goals and federal planning factors. These goals are the foundation for performance measures, performance targets, policies, and projects described in the LRTP.

Policies Related to this Goal

P15: Infrastructure and Economic Development

P63: Transportation Access and Opportunity

P64: Transportation and the Future

P65: Complete Streets

P66: Transportation and Managing Growth

P67: Congestion Management

P68: Transportation and Economic Health

P69: Transit

P70: Active Transportation

P71: Public ROW and Access

P72: Freight

P73: Advanced Mobility

P74: Transportation Partnerships

P75: Safety

P76: Transportation Maintenance

P77: Transportation Funding

P78: Airport

Community Indicators Related to this Goal

Transportation Indicators

PLAN forward

Lincoln-Lancaster County
2050 Comprehensive Plan

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

Elements

CITY of LINCOLN

LANCASTER COUNTY
EST. 1859

The PlanForward elements contain additional information that support the policies and action steps. Each element also relates to PlanForward goals.



E1: Great Neighborhoods and Housing

3.3



E2: Infill and Redevelopment

3.20



E3: Business, Economy and Workforce

3.40



E4: Environmental Resources

3.58



E5: Parks, Recreation and Open Space

3.71



E6: Placemaking

3.86



E7: Community Facilities

3.94



E8: Energy and Utilities

3.105



E9: Transportation

3.122

E1: Great Neighborhoods and Housing



This element describes the desired pattern of development, redevelopment, and reinvestment across both established and developing neighborhoods and provides strategies to provide desired assets that contribute to complete, connected, and resilient neighborhoods.

One of the essential elements of the community and PlanForward 2050 is housing and neighborhoods. Ensuring safe, adequate, and affordable housing is an important function in maintaining the vitality of neighborhoods and the city as a whole. The key to both developing and existing great neighborhoods is land use diversity. This element provides strategies to create new and support existing great neighborhoods through a coordinated approach to housing, transportation, infrastructure, public facilities, economic development, parks and open space, environmental resources, community services, and other neighborhood assets. For existing neighborhoods, the land use diversity is often already in place, but efforts must focus on maintaining this balance and variety. The diversity of architecture, housing types and sizes are central to what makes existing neighborhoods great places to live. New construction in existing neighborhoods should continue the architectural variety, but in a manner that is sympathetic to the character of existing neighborhoods. In many developing neighborhoods, land uses have traditionally been separated, resulting in development patterns that rely primarily on automobile travel to access everyday destinations. PlanForward promotes a more integrated approach by encouraging a complementary mix of land uses that brings housing, employment, shopping, schools, parks, civic spaces, and community services closer together. This pattern supports walking, bicycling, transit, and other mobility options; improves access to daily needs; uses infrastructure and public investments more efficiently; strengthens neighborhood vitality; and creates more complete, connected, and resilient neighborhoods that can adapt to changing community needs over time.

The community continues its commitment to strong, diverse, and great neighborhoods. Neighborhoods remain one of Lincoln's great strengths and their conservation is fundamental to this plan. The health of Lincoln's varied neighborhoods and districts depends on implementing appropriate and individualized policies. In existing neighborhoods, preservation, maintenance, and rehabilitation of existing housing should continue to be the focus. Infill and redevelopment must respect the street pattern, block sizes, and development standards of the area, such as parking at the rear and porches, windows, and doors on the front street side. In both existing and developing neighborhoods, diversity of land uses, including commercial and a variety of housing types, is important provided the use fits within the character of the block and neighborhood. During the planning period, there will continue to be a need to accommodate group living which generally includes, but is not limited to: senior housing, assisted living facilities, group homes, domestic

Equity Lens

A statement in previous Comprehensive Plans encouraged single-family housing but left out the importance all other housing types. The statement has been updated as follows:

"Retain and encourage a mix of housing in existing and new neighborhoods in order to provide a mix of housing types at a variety of price points."

"Put the stuff closer together so it's easier to get to the stuff."

Paul Mogush, Minneapolis Planner

shelters, and children's homes. These essential housing types support the diverse needs of community residents at different ages, life stages, and circumstances and should be thoughtfully integrated into neighborhoods where appropriate, providing residents with access to community services, transportation, parks, and other neighborhood amenities while supporting inclusive, complete, and connected communities.

These essential housing types support the diverse needs of community residents at different ages, life stages, and circumstances and should be thoughtfully integrated into neighborhoods where appropriate, providing residents with access to community services, transportation, parks, and other neighborhood amenities while supporting inclusive, complete, and connected communities.

Great Neighborhoods

A great neighborhood is one where residents are able to get the goods and services to meet daily needs within close proximity to their residence.

Key components in the physical design of a great neighborhood include:

- **Housing mix.** A diverse range of housing options supports households of different sizes, incomes, and life stages. This mix contributes to neighborhood stability and inclusivity.
- **Convenient access to a neighborhood commercial center.** A successful neighborhood commercial center includes a vibrant blend of neighborhood-scale commercial services and social spaces. It can serve as a welcoming gathering place that helps meet daily needs, supports local businesses, and strengthens community identity.
- **Food access.** Reliable access to nutritious food is essential for neighborhood wellbeing. Grocery stores, small markets, and other food retailers ensure residents can meet daily food needs close to home.
- **Parks, trails, and other recreation facilities.** A well-distributed system of parks, playgrounds, trails, and other recreation facilities provides opportunities for recreation, exercise, and access to nature. These facilities strengthen community connections and support physical health for residents of all ages.
- **Elementary schools.** Nearby elementary schools that are safely accessible help anchor neighborhoods, support families, and encourage daily interactions that build community cohesion. Public elementary schools also provide neighborhood park facilities outside of school hours.
- **Bus stops.** Convenient access to transit, supported by well-placed bus stops, improves mobility and reduces reliance on personal vehicles.
- **Daycares.** Local childcare providers offer essential support for working families.
- **Libraries.** Library branches provide access to educational resources, technology, meeting space, and community programming. These civic amenities serve as important neighborhood anchors.
- **Safety from hazards.** Great neighborhoods prioritize resident safety by avoiding new residential development in floodprone areas, maintaining appropriate buffers from pipelines and industrial hazards, and ensuring timely emergency response. These measures contribute to long-term resilience and peace of mind.

Great neighborhoods provide increased livability for their residents. Livability is the overall quality of life a neighborhood or community provides, shaped by how well its built environment, services, and social conditions support the daily needs, comfort, safety, and well-being of its residents. There are various ways that a great neighborhood can cultivate strong livability.

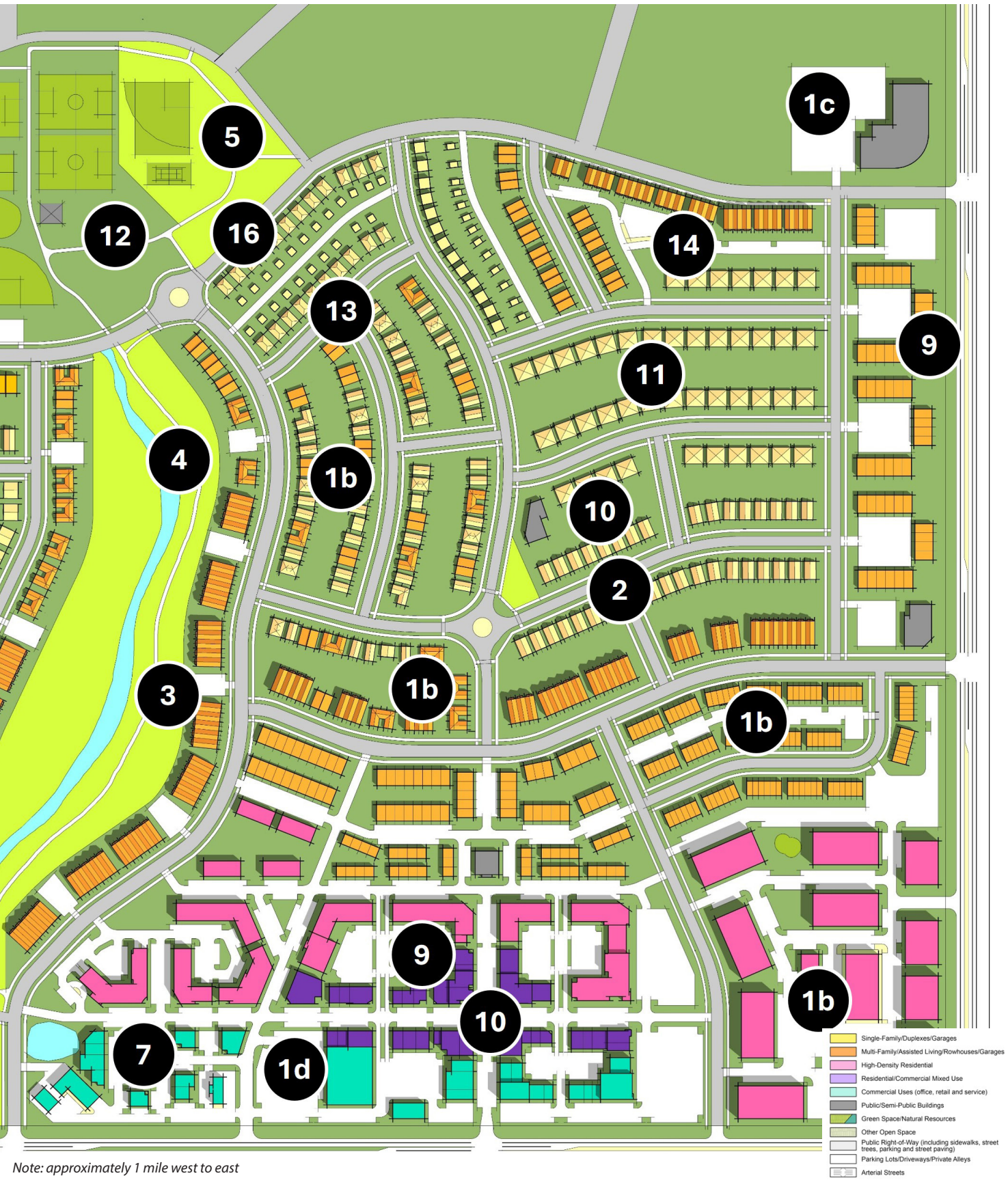
- **Walkability and connectivity.** Great neighborhoods make it easy to walk or bike to neighborhood essentials like parks, shops, transit, and schools. This reduces dependence on cars, saves time, and makes day-to-day life more convenient and active.
- **Access to essentials.** Proximity to grocery stores, healthcare, schools, and public services means residents spend less effort meeting basic needs. Everyday tasks become simpler, especially for seniors, children, and people with mobility limitations.
- **Comfortable public spaces.** High-quality parks, safe and connected sidewalks, shade, and places to sit encourage people to spend time outside. These features boost physical health and create opportunities for social connection.
- **Safety and predictability.** Well-lit streets, calm traffic, and well-maintained infrastructure help residents feel comfortable going out at any time of day. Safer environments contribute to reduced stress and more freedom of movement.
- **Strong social fabric.** Livable neighborhoods naturally foster casual interactions such as chatting with neighbors, attending local events, and using shared spaces. These everyday encounters build trust, a sense of belonging, and stronger community networks.
- **Environmental quality.** Access to nature, clean air, street trees, parks and other natural features improves health and enhances overall quality of life. High-quality natural environments encourage outdoor activity, support physical and mental well-being, enhance comfort and sense of place, and improve overall quality of life for residents. being.
- **Adaptability.** Neighborhoods designed with people in mind remain desirable over time. They attract investment, support local businesses, and maintain their character even as the city evolves.

Figure E1.a: Strategies for Design, Sustainability and Great Neighborhoods in Developing Areas



DRAFT

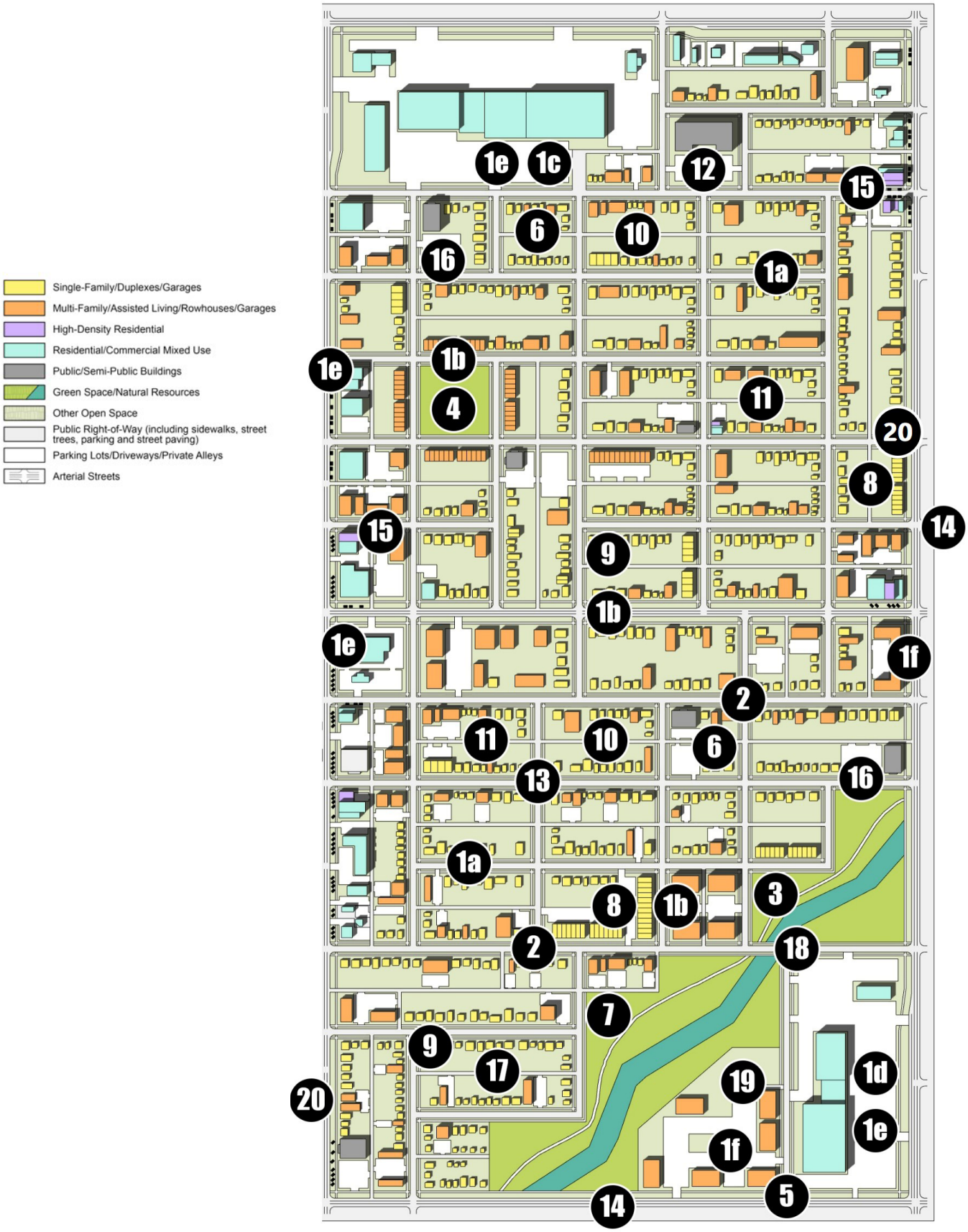
Figure E1.a: Strategies for Design, Sustainability and Great Neighborhoods in Developing Areas



Note: approximately 1 mile west to east

1. Encourage a mix of compatible land uses to develop more great neighborhoods:
    a. Develop similar uses on the same block face: residential faces residential.
    b. Support similar housing densities near each other: single-family and “missing middle” residential (3-12 units) scattered throughout with higher density residential (more than 12 units) near the neighborhood edge or clustered near commercial centers.
    c. Screen auto-oriented uses, including parking lots, from residential areas.
    d. Integrate Commercial Centers so as residents can safely access essential goods and services (i.e. not located across arterial streets) and no more than a 15-minute walk from all residences.
2. Require sidewalks on both sides of all streets in new developments and develop a program to eliminate existing sidewalk gaps across the community.
3. Encourage locations within neighborhoods to grow local food.
4. Plan for residences to be located within 1 mile to an existing or planned multi-use trail.
5. Plan for residences to be located with 1/2 mile to an existing or planned neighborhood park.
6. Provide transit stops within a reasonable walking distance from residences.
7. Plan for employment areas to be within a 15-minute walking distance to residences.
8. Plan for elementary or middle schools to be within a 15-minute walking distance to residences.
9. Design neighborhood commercial uses with a pedestrian orientation by locating parking behind the buildings. Commercial centers should serve as dynamic and active neighborhood centers that play a key role in forming a strong neighborhood identity.
10. Develop shorter block lengths to provide multiple connections across residential and commercial areas.
11. Provide pedestrian connections when maximum block lengths are exceeded.
12. Develop shared City, School, and recreational-facilities (aka SPARKLYs).
13. Require adequate curb space to allow for on-street parking.
14. Encourage alley access and shared driveways to reduce interruptions to pedestrians, to preserve on street parking capacity, and curb space to allow for on-street parking.
15. Support preservation or restoration of natural areas and limit vehicle crossings of streams and drainageways.
16. Encourage collector streets, which are typically wider and have more right-of-way when compared to local streets, to balance traffic flow within the neighborhood and provide additional space for enhanced multi-modal facilities.

Figure E1.b: Strategies for Design, Sustainability and Great Neighborhoods in Existing Areas



Note: approximately 1/2 mile west to east

1. Encourage a mix of compatible land uses to develop more great neighborhoods:
    a. Develop similar uses on the same block face: residential faces residential.
    b. Support similar housing densities near each other: single-family and “missing middle” residential (3-12 units) scattered throughout with a focus on missing middle and higher density residential (more than 12 units) near the neighborhood edge or clustered near commercial centers.
    c. Non-residential uses, including parking lots, should be screened from residential areas.
    d. Locate mixed-use centers so as residents can safely access essential goods and services (i.e. not located across arterial streets) and no more than a 15-minute walk from all residences.
    e. Support existing commercial centers and encourage inclusion of essential goods and services. Commercial centers are prime locations for mixed use redevelopment nodes that can serve as dynamic and active neighborhood centers that play a key role in forming a strong neighborhood identity. The mixed use redevelopment node section in *E2: Infill and Redevelopment*. discusses this concept in more detail.
    f. Infill and redevelopment projects should meet or exceed Neighborhood or Commercial Design Standards.
2. Require sidewalks on both sides of all streets or in alternative locations as allowed through design standards or review process and develop a program to eliminate sidewalk gaps throughout the community.
3. Strive for residences to be located within 1 mile to an existing or planned multi-use trail4. Plan for residences to be located within 1 mile to an existing or planned multi-use trail.
4. Strive for residences to be located within 1/2 mile to an existing or planned neighborhood park.
5. Integrate transit stops into developing neighborhoods and within a reasonable walking distance from residences.
6. Develop shorter block lengths to provide multiple connections across residential and commercial areas.
7. Encourage locations within neighborhoods to grow local food.
8. Plan for elementary or middle schools to be within a 15-minute walking distance to residences.
9. Design neighborhood commercial uses with a pedestrian orientation by locating parking behind the buildings. Commercial centers should serve as dynamic and active neighborhood centers that play a key role in forming a strong neighborhood identity.
10. Develop shorter block lengths to provide multiple connections across residential and commercial areas.
11. Implement historic preservation policies and action steps with appropriate rehabilitation and maintenance of buildings as well as historic streetscapes (ex: wide landscaped boulevards).
12. Retain public and semi-public uses (elementary schools, churches) as centers of neighborhoods.
13. Maintain existing pattern of streets for connectivity.
14. Maintain arterial streets with two through lanes and a center turn lane to avoid negative widening impacts on the character of existing neighborhoods.
15. Utilize streets for commercial and residential parking.
16. Encourage shared parking whenever possible: permit minor incursions of accessory parking for public/ semi-public uses into neighborhoods if properly screened.
17. Maintain alley access and encourage shared driveways to parking areas in order to reduce interruptions to pedestrian traffic, to preserve on-street parking capacity, and to reduce automobile conflict points.
18. Support the preservation and restoration of natural resources, and limit stream or drainageway crossings.
19. Encourage additional density of a variety of housing types and price points on open and available land areas.
20. Encourage middle and higher density housing in Neighborhood Edges.

Existing Neighborhoods

For existing neighborhoods, housing diversity is often already in place, and efforts must focus on maintaining this balance and variety. The diversity of architecture, housing types and sizes, and walkability are central to what make existing neighborhoods great places to live. New construction should continue the architectural variety, but in a manner that is sensitive to the existing neighborhoods. Preservation, maintenance, and rehabilitation of existing housing should continue to be the focus. Preserving existing housing for owners and renters along with a mix of supporting uses should remain the focus in established neighborhoods, with modest opportunities for infill and redevelopment.

Infill and redevelopment is supported and must respect the street pattern, block sizes, and development standards of the area, such as parking at the rear and porches, windows, and doors on the front street side. Neighborhood Design Standards apply within Lincoln's 1950 corporate limits and will continue to be a useful tool to ensure compatibility of new construction. Areas annexed after 1950 are not currently covered by the City's Neighborhood Design Standards. The City's primary strategy for residential infill and redevelopment outside of the Greater Downtown is to encourage the redevelopment and reuse of sites and buildings in commercial areas in order to create new mixed use centers that are compatible and complementary to adjacent neighborhoods. Modest opportunities for redevelopment may also be appropriate along "neighborhood edges." Neighborhood edges include arterial streets and transition zones between lower density residential and commercial areas. Between 2020 and 2050, 1,000+ well-designed and appropriately-placed dwelling units are projected for neighborhoods in the existing city — roughly a one percent increase to the existing housing stock—on vacant lots, expansions of existing apartment complexes with undeveloped land, in neighborhood edges within redeveloping commercial and industrial areas, and through accessory dwelling units. Residential redevelopment in existing neighborhoods tends to occur naturally without public intervention over a long period of time, as individual properties become obsolete or are acquired piecemeal by private or nonprofit developers.

Existing neighborhoods often contain a mix of uses including neighborhood commercial uses, parks, and schools. The patterns of land use in existing neighborhoods support walkability and already achieve many of the great neighborhoods recommendations. Successful neighborhood commercial centers are vibrant, active destinations that enhance residents' quality of life by providing convenient access to goods, services, and gathering places close to where people live. These centers support surrounding neighborhoods by creating opportunities for daily needs to be met locally, fostering community connections, and increasing neighborhood vitality and desirability. Neighborhood commercial centers contribute to the identity and character of places across Lincoln by providing gathering spaces, supporting local businesses, and creating recognizable destinations that reflect the unique needs and qualities of surrounding neighborhoods. Examples in Lincoln include Havelock, University Place, College View, Bethany, and others. Efforts should be taken to preserve, support, and reinvest in existing neighborhood commercial centers as vital components of established neighborhoods. Strategies may include supporting local businesses, encouraging adaptive reuse and reinvestment in existing buildings, enhancing pedestrian and bicycle connections, improving public spaces and streetscapes, and promoting compatible infill and mixed-use development where appropriate.



Homeownership has been a focus of past Comprehensive Plans, but statements supporting renters in our community were not included. The updated text is more inclusive of all residents in our community.

Preserving existing housing for owners and renters and a mix of supporting uses should remain the focus in established neighborhoods, with modest opportunities for infill and redevelopment.

Neighborhood commercial areas may be strengthened through a variety of approaches, including the rejuvenation of older commercial centers, the activation of underutilized spaces, or comprehensive redevelopment that creates new opportunities for neighborhood-serving businesses, housing, gathering spaces, and community amenities. The integration of neighborhood commercial areas within existing communities should be supported as a model for developing new neighborhoods, creating walkable, connected places where residents can conveniently access goods, services, and community gathering spaces.

Developing Neighborhoods

Developing neighborhoods should have a variety of housing types and sizes, plus commercial and employment opportunities. While Lincoln has some good examples of great developing neighborhoods, the land development patterns in developing neighborhoods are typically kept separate and are accessible primarily by vehicles.

Older neighborhood development patterns can serve as a model for creating successful new neighborhoods by demonstrating the benefits of connected streets, a mix of compatible land uses, a range of housing options, and access to nearby goods, services, and community amenities. Many established neighborhoods provide examples of how walkable street networks, neighborhood commercial centers, parks, schools, and civic spaces can be integrated to create vibrant, complete communities.

New neighborhoods can build on these principles by incorporating interconnected street systems, appropriately scaled development, pedestrian and bicycle connections, diverse housing types, and neighborhood gathering places. These elements help reduce reliance on automobiles, improve access to daily needs, support social connections, and create places with a strong sense of identity and belonging. By learning from the patterns that have contributed to the success and longevity of older neighborhoods, new development can create resilient, connected, and livable communities for future generations.

PlanForward recognizes the value of diversifying land uses in developing areas to achieve more integrated neighborhoods. Developing a pedestrian orientation of buildings and street networks that provides substantial connectivity is also a priority for developing areas.

New residential neighborhoods should provide a variety of housing types, sizes, and affordability levels to support residents at different ages, household sizes, and stages of life. Housing options should be integrated throughout neighborhoods rather than separated by type, creating inclusive communities with access to parks, schools, services, and other amenities. The City should support housing diversity through flexible development standards, incentives, and design strategies that encourage a mix of housing choices and contribute to complete, connected, and resilient neighborhoods. Specific examples include revising Community Unit Plan requirements regarding maximum size or modifications to the R5 and R6 zoning districts.



Mobility Nodes and Mobility Oriented Development

The *Lincoln Mobility Plan* includes two concepts that support and contribute to the development of great neighborhoods: mobility nodes and Mobility Oriented Development (MOD).

Mobility Nodes

Mobility nodes are designated locations equipped with amenities that help residents transition smoothly between walking, biking, transit, and driving. These nodes are intended to support multimodal mobility by concentrating infrastructure such as bus stops, wayfinding, bike share and car share facilities, and other features like shelters, real time arrival information, repair stations, and small scale retail.

Beyond transportation, mobility nodes also offer placemaking opportunities. By encouraging interaction among different travel modes, they can support development or redevelopment that prioritizes multimodal access rather than auto centric design. Integrated into new projects or revitalized areas, mobility nodes can enhance neighborhood identity and convenience.

Mobility nodes include infrastructure elements that help to bridge the gaps between multiple modes of transportation and enhance the user experience. Examples of infrastructure that may be part of a mobility node include: bench, concrete pad, waste receptacle, lighting, shelter, Wi-Fi, micro-mobility stations and parking, wayfinding, next bus interactive signage.

The Lincoln Mobility Plan includes recommended mobility node locations. Mobility nodes are intentionally located in areas that contain intersections of critical supportive infrastructure. For example, areas near the intersection of transit routes and current or future bike routes were considered prime candidates for mobility nodes. Additionally, major planned redevelopments and new development areas were considered ideal opportunities for potential mobility nodes so that future development can be oriented around multimodal transportation options. Mobility node areas utilize the design strategies discussed in this section along with the Mobility Oriented Development (MOD) concept discussed below and in the *Lincoln Mobility Plan*.

Mobility Oriented Development (MOD)

MOD offers a framework for reshaping development patterns around mobility hubs, shifting away from auto oriented assumptions embedded in traditional zoning. MOD doesn't seek to eliminate driving; instead, it makes alternative modes practical and appealing by encouraging a thoughtful mix of land uses, modest increases in density, and site design standards that promote multi-modal transportation.

MOD promotes compact, mixed use, and walkable environments. Around some mobility hubs, this might mean a variety of housing types that provide accessible living options for individuals and families. Around others, blending residential uses with neighborhoodscale commercial and office spaces can create easy access to jobs and services.

MOD is a natural evolution of land use that supports the city's long term multi-modal goals while strengthening community identity. By encouraging mixed-use and a variety of housing types, including "missing middle" housing, MOD helps ensure that more residents have the opportunity to live within an easy walk of mobility options and neighborhood amenities.

Elements of MOD include:

- **Land use.** A mix of land uses that includes residential and commercial. Mixed use buildings with active ground floor uses are ideal for the higher density nodes. Highly automobile-oriented uses like drive-throughs, motorized vehicle sales, and automotive repair should be avoided or permitted conditionally.

- **Density.** MOD is specifically designed to create more housing in proximity to mobility nodes. Typical areas using MOD should strive for at least 10 dwelling units per acre, but closer to Downtown could be closer to 60 dwelling units per acre.
- **Pedestrian-oriented site and building design.** Wider sidewalks, up to ten feet where possible; build-to zones that keep buildings and their entrances close to sidewalks; ground floor transparency to provide visual interest and soften the edge between public and private space; and private on-site circulation that safely and conveniently connects public sidewalks to private buildings.
- **On-site parking and circulation.** Reduced automobile parking combined with safe and secure parking for bicycles and other micromobility vehicles.
- **Integration of shared mobility.** Space for shared bicycles and scooters to promote use of active transportation and micromobility options.
- **Pedestrian comfort and safety.** Wayfinding elements and enhanced lighting create a more pleasant pedestrian experience and provide enhanced safety.
- **Housing affordability.** It is important that MOD areas provide a variety of housing price points.

More details about MOD, including implementation strategies, can be found in the *Lincoln Mobility Plan*.

Affordable Housing

The Plan recognizes that preserving our existing housing stock is one of the best ways to provide for affordable housing in our community. The Lincoln City Council adopted the *Lincoln Affordable Housing Coordinated Action Plan* in December 2020. The Affordable Housing Coordinated Action Plan recognizes that the City alone cannot address the affordable housing needs. Many community partners are identified to help implement the plan recommendations. The Affordable Housing Coordinated Action Plan also acknowledges the gap in "missing middle" housing unit types. Whereas single-family detached and multi-family units are the predominant housing type developed in Lincoln, missing middle includes the units between such as duplex, triplex, quadplex, cottage clusters, and townhouses. Missing middle housing was more prominent in the 20th century. An important element to affordable housing and great neighborhoods overall includes development of missing middle housing. Table E1.a lists existing buildings by type and decade. The numbers are for the building totals and not unit totals.

The R-5 and R-6 residential district should be reviewed for potential amendments that would encourage missing middle, as those districts already allow densities between 6 and 10 units per acre. Both zoning districts may offer opportunities for missing middle housing along neighborhood edges. See the neighborhood edges discussion in *E2: Infill and Redevelopment* for more information about implementation options.



Neighborhoods with a mix of households of varying income are beneficial and promote equity and inclusiveness in contrast to the negative impacts of concentrated poverty. Mixed income neighborhoods generally provide access to more and improved services including health facilities, grocery stores, good schools, access to quality housing, neighborhood amenities such as parks and open space, and a safer environment for people of all incomes. A choice of housing types, including owner-occupied and renter-occupied affordable housing, is a key element in promoting mixed-income neighborhoods.

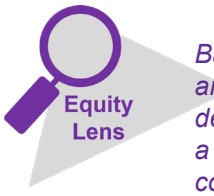
Table E1.a: Housing Type by Decade, Lincoln

Decade	3-12 Units	12+ Units
1900-1910	20	2
1911-1920	28	5
1921-1930	30	21
1931-1940	16	1
1941-1950	38	4
1951-1960	78	3
1961-1970	218	40
1971-1980	360	127
1981-1990	132	72
1991-2000	47	74
2001-2010	11	15
2011-2020	15	54
2021-2026	72	63

Note: This table shows number of parcels containing the referenced units - it does not show number of individual buildings. For example, many large apartment complexes (12+units) have multiple buildings on one parcel and could contain dozens of units. 2021-2026 includes Jan 1, 2021 - September 1, 2026.

Through the City's Urban Development Department, an Affordable Housing Fund provides local dollars tailored to meet specific needs identified in the Affordable Housing Coordinated Action Plan. The funding sources include casino funds and Turnback Tax funds obtained from sales tax collected in relation to Pinnacle Bank Arena. State legislation allows a portion of the Turnback Tax to be designated for affordable housing. The Affordable Housing Fund allows for local control and flexibility; however, funding is limited and additional sources for the Fund should be pursued.

Housing code enforcement continues to evolve with increased enforcement of the Neglected Building Registration, the continuation of proactive and performance based multifamily rental inspections, and the addition of *UPLNK reporting tool*. Implementation of increased fines for violations of property maintenance codes and increased community awareness are also contributing to the improvement of housing in Lincoln. These are big steps to improving quality affordable housing, but there may be other strategies that should be explored.



A previous action step was considered burdensome on low-income housing developments. The action step was reworded as follows:

Balance expanding housing options and neighborhood character. Infill development includes housing for a variety of incomes and should complement the character of the existing neighborhood and provide appropriate transitions where needed. Site and building considerations include transitions, scale and context.

Rural Housing

PlanForward supports the preservation of land in the bulk of the County for agricultural and natural resource purposes. Balancing the demand for rural living and the practical challenge of integrating acreages with traditional land uses will continue as Lincoln and Lancaster County continue to grow. New acreage development is not encouraged in any of the Growth Tiers except for areas already platted, zoned, or designated for low density residential development. Zoning currently allows development in these tiers under the "build-through" model and without use of Sanitary Improvement Districts (SIDs). However, careful consideration should be given to these current regulations. Compared to urban development, acreage developments consume large quantities of farmland and generate traffic that exceeds the rural capacities of gravel road. Since the growth tiers establish future urbanized areas for the City of Lincoln, additional acreage developments are a detriment to future urban growth. Eventually, all acreage areas in the growth tiers will be located within the City. Therefore, land within the growth tiers is encouraged to remain in agricultural uses.

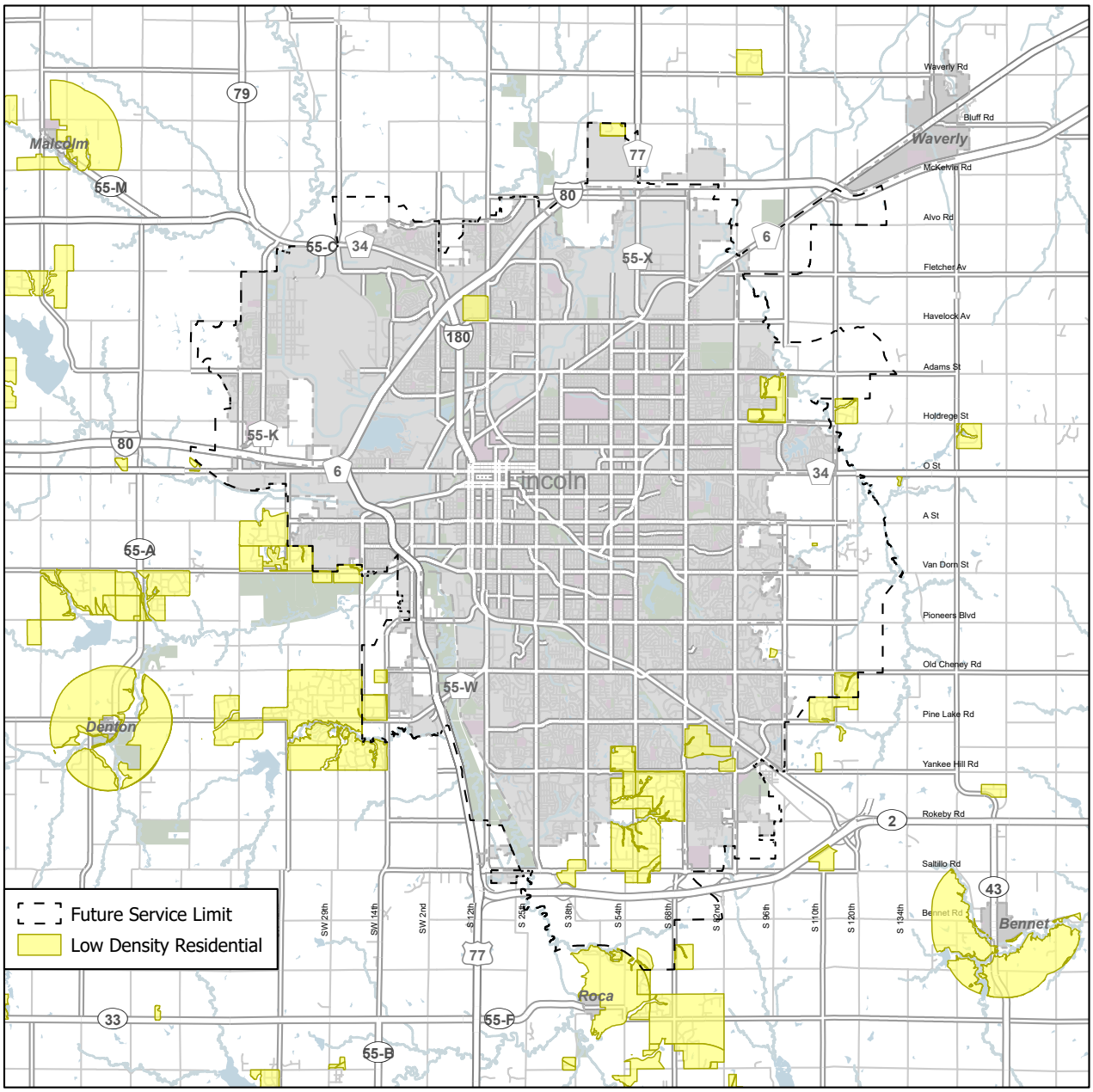
All proposals for acreages, whether designated on the future land use map for low density residential or not, should be evaluated based on factors such as paved roads, adequate water quality and quantity, soil conditions for on-site wastewater management, availability of emergency services, agricultural productivity, land parcelization, the pattern of existing acreages, and plans for future urban development. Applications for acreage designation on the future land use map or rezoning to AGR, if planned for on-site wells, should be accompanied by information on water quality and quantity. If information becomes available that land already designated in the Plan for acreages is not suitable for acreage development, that designation should be reconsidered. Areas not designated for acreages should remain agriculturally zoned and retain the current overall density of 32 dwellings per square mile (1 dwelling unit per 20 acres). Grouping acreages together in specific areas will limit the areas of potential conflict between farms and acreages. It also may enable services to be provided more efficiently, by reducing the amount of paved routes, reducing the number and distance of school bus routes, and taking advantage of more effective rural water district service.



Clustering lots in one portion of a development site, while preserving both farmland and environmental resources on the remainder, should continue to be encouraged in agriculturally-zoned areas. A considerable supply of acreage lots has been platted in recent years in this manner. The County also should continue to pursue state enabling legislation to enable clustering lots by "transfer of development rights" between non-contiguous parcels of land. It is important to note that the value of this tool, by which property owners "buy" and transfer rights to develop additional lots, will be negated if the owners simply are "given" those additional lots through rezoning. Private nonprofit land trusts are operating successfully to preserve farmland in other rural areas experiencing pressure for development. They accept donations, and in some cases have funds to pay in part for land to be conserved, including land that is cropped or pastured as well as land that is held for its natural value such as prairie, wetland, or woodland. The donations of these easements qualify as charitable deductions to federal income tax. Some other states protecting farming close to cities also have adopted tax credit programs to help encourage the donation of agricultural easements. City and county officials should encourage the expansion of an existing private trust or formation of a new one to encourage more of these donations.

Many households are not well-informed of all the implications of rural living before they make that lifestyle choice. This includes an understanding of the state's *Right to Farm* law, which protects farmers from nuisance claims when conducting normal agricultural practices, and an understanding of the difference between urban and rural public

Figure E1.c: Rural Housing on the 2050 Future Land Use Map



services (e.g. road maintenance, emergency medical, fire protection, and police). Objective information on the pros and cons of rural living should be provided to the public through continuing education efforts by the County's extension service, handouts available to county departments and local realtors, and potentially, documents filed of record with new platted lots for disclosure to prospective buyers.

Trends in Housing

Dwelling units, particularly single family detached units, are being used in different ways than in the past. Our community will likely see more emphasis on home occupations. This is partly an outcome of teleworking during the pandemic as technological advancements have allowed this to happen more easily. Going forward, people may also want or need to have 1 or 2 employees or coworkers as part of their home occupation. A recommendation from LPlan 2040 was to explore options for allowing more home occupations that are compatible with neighborhoods. Home occupations are recognized and generally allowed so long as the occupation does not become a large-scale enterprise — one that would be harmful to the residential character of the neighborhood and would violate the purpose of zoning. Home occupation trends in Lincoln and Lancaster County should be monitored. Incremental changes to home occupation regulations may be considered while not changing the overall residential character.

Since 2010, multi-family dwellings have accounted for the majority of all residential building permits, followed by single-family detached and townhomes and duplexes. This is due to several reasons including more restrictive lending practices at the end of the recession and more young households who traditionally enter the market as renters. PlanForward recognizes this increasing trend in the proportion of dwelling units that will be multi-family such as apartments, townhouses, condominiums, etc.

In 2026 Lincoln's zoning ordinance was amended to significantly increase access to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in the city. ADUs are now allowed as a conditional use in all residential zoning districts. This zoning ordinance update will increase housing opportunities throughout the county while preserving the character of existing neighborhoods. The Lancaster County zoning ordinance has allowed ADUs by special permit since 2018. In addition to ADUs, residents continue to desire detached accessory buildings for a variety of other uses, including guest rooms, pool houses, and personal recreation space.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of housing units in Lancaster County rose from 120,875 units in 2010 to 135,484 units in 2020 – an increase in the housing stock of 14,609 units. By July 2025, another 11,347 housing units were added to Lancaster County. The increase in housing units predominantly occurred in the City of Lincoln. In 2024, estimated housing occupancy for Lancaster County stood at 95.7 percent. This rate is comparable to the 94.8 percent occupancy rate in 2010. In 2024, Nebraska's housing occupancy rate was 93.6 percent and the overall national rate was 90.5 percent.

Policies Related to this Element:

P1: Housing Affordability

P2: Existing Neighborhoods

P3: Developing Neighborhoods

P4: Rural Housing

P5: Downtown

P6: Nodes and Corridors

P7: Redevelopment Incentives

P8: Infill and Redevelopment

P10: Supporting Small Businesses

P18: Conservation Design

P29: Neighborhood Parks

P37: Historic Preservation

P61: Industrial Zoning and Pipelines

P63: Transportation Access and Opportunity

P69: Transit

P70: Active Transportation

Goals Related to this Element:

G1: Safe, Affordable, and Accessible Housing

G2: Great Neighborhoods

G5: Equity and Inclusion

E2: Infill and Redevelopment



This element describes the strategy for mixed use infill and redevelopment that strives for compatibility with surroundings while accomplishing various principles of the Plan.

As discussed in the *Growth Framework section* a significant shift in demographics is expected during the planning period, which will likely create a demand for some smaller dwellings, smaller lots and more walkable neighborhoods that have retail and services integrated to serve residents. In addition, local trends show that urban living is becoming more popular as infill residential development has steadily increased in the past decade. The infill and redevelopment concept for PlanForward focuses on three elements: 1) the existing and expected large supplies of undeveloped or under-utilized commercial land, including Downtown and commercial and industrial areas, which provide the potential for high-density mixed-use redevelopment, 2) neighborhood edges that present the opportunity for "missing middle" and other higher-density housing, and 3) small-scale redevelopment within existing neighborhoods.

Infill redevelopment benefits the community in a variety of ways. The benefits are discussed in the Growth Framework section and also summarized below:

- **A focus on maintaining existing infrastructure.** A higher proportion of infill development allows the city to focus more funds on enhancing and maintaining current infrastructure and services.
- **Shorter automobile trips.** In general, with more infill there would be less distance between housing and jobs/services. This would benefit all residents by reducing system-wide lane miles traveled: fewer drivers would need to make an "across town" commute, and people taking short trips would be more likely to use other modes of transportation, which would decrease added strain on the street network.
- **Increased viability for alternate modes of travel.** A higher proportion of infill supports multiple modes of transportation. Transit becomes more effective at higher densities, and increased infill development would create increased demand for more riders along existing routes. In addition, trail and on-street bicycle facility investments become more practical with more users. This is good not only for users of non-auto travel, but also for motorists as vehicular traffic growth and related congestion can be slowed.
- **Reduced carbon emissions.** Shorter automobile trips and more users of alternative transit will help to reduce the community's carbon footprint over the next 30 years.
- **Reduced parking needs.** Mixed use infill allows for shared parking with uses that share non-concurrent demand times. For example a building with a mix of commercial and residential uses could have a stronger commercial parking demand during the day and stronger residential parking demand in the evening. This shared parking approach provides more efficient use of land, reduces unnecessary pavement, and helps limit sprawl.
- **Balanced growth throughout the community, across both existing areas and new growth areas.** Continued investment within the city ensures that our existing neighborhoods and commercial areas remain vibrant and desirable locations. More "rooftops" near existing commercial areas help to support continued commercial investment.
- **Preservation of surrounding rural areas.** Increased infill in Lincoln will help preserve the rural character of Lancaster County, including the preservation of productive farmland and sensitive natural environments.

Infill and Redevelopment Approach

The Infill and Redevelopment Approach seeks to fulfill the following objectives:

1. To provide flexibility to the marketplace in siting future redevelopment locations;
2. To offer existing neighborhoods, present and future residents, developers, other businesses, and infrastructure providers a level of predictability as to where such redevelopment concentrations might be located; and
3. To promote high-quality, durable design for redevelopment projects, including TIF projects, that enhances the surrounding neighborhood.
4. To encourage and provide incentives for residential mixed use in redeveloping commercial and industrial areas.

Balancing these objectives in a meaningful way will require diligence, mutual understanding, and an ongoing planning dialogue.

PlanForward identifies the potential for 12,000 new dwelling units to be located within the existing built-out portion of the City, roughly 25 percent of the projected 48,000 new dwelling units to be built citywide by 2050. Between 2022 and 2025 there were 3,074 infill units constructed in Lincoln, on pace for over 22,000 by 2050. While this high level of infill construction may not continue, recent trends demonstrate that there is a significant demand for housing units within the existing city.

The scale and intensity of new dwelling units will vary based on context of the surrounding area and infrastructure availability. This section provides a guide for infill housing types within different districts of the existing City.

Figure E2.a: Infill Districts



District	Housing Type	Units Per Acre	Location
Downtown and Greater Downtown	High-rise, all unit types below	N/A	Greater Downtown which includes Downtown proper, Antelope Valley, the Haymarket, South Haymarket, Telegraph District and Innovation Campus
Mixed Use Redevelopment Nodes and Corridors	Mid-rise, all unit types below	15+	Nodes & Corridors, underdeveloped, redeveloping or dilapidated commercial and industrial uses
Neighborhood Edges	Missing Middle, ADU, all unit types below	5-14	Access to arterials, Transition Areas between Neighborhoods and Non-Residential Uses
Existing Neighborhoods	Single-Family Detached, Single-Family Attached, Duplex, ADUs, units otherwise allowed by zoning	3-5	Existing, built-out residential neighborhoods

Greater Downtown

A major focus for new residential reuse, infill, and redevelopment is in the Greater Downtown area. Greater Downtown includes downtown proper, Antelope Valley, the Haymarket, South Haymarket, Telegraph District, Innovation Campus, and the neighborhoods immediately adjacent to downtown. It is roughly bounded by Salt Creek on the west and north, A Street on the south, and 27th Street on the east.

Greater Downtown is the main hub of employment, entertainment, and higher education. Over the years, there have been significant public and private investments in new building construction, renovations, and infrastructure. In order to capitalize on these collective investments, further development in the Greater Downtown should be realized.

Over 1,600 dwelling units were added in Greater Downtown from 2011 to 2020. The Plan envisions an additional 5,000 dwelling units in Greater Downtown by 2050. Between 2022 and 2025 there were 1,201 dwelling units added to Greater Downtown, on pace for 8,700 by 2050. This is well ahead of the projected pace of 5,000 additional units. If these trends continue the projection for downtown housing units will be re-evaluated with the next Comprehensive Plan update.

Information about specific action steps related to Downtown can be found in the *P5: Downtown*. Downtown is discussed in more detail with the *Downtown Lincoln Master Plan*, which was adopted in 2018 and is part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Mixed Use Redevelopment Nodes and Corridors

The City's primary strategy for residential infill and redevelopment outside of the Greater Downtown is to encourage the redevelopment and reuse of sites and buildings in underutilized commercial and industrial areas. Nodes and corridors are mixed use and transit oriented. Residential development is strongly encouraged. This strategy is meant to create new mixed use areas that complement and enhance adjacent existing neighborhoods, while maximizing use of existing infrastructure.

Redevelopment Nodes

Nodes may include a broad range of land use types including civic, residential, group housing, retail, office, and service. Potential node locations are shown on the Future Land Use map as commercial or industrial and are typically over five acres. Nodes should have access to arterial streets, public transportation, and proximity to community facilities such as parks and schools. Examples of redeveloped nodes in recent years include 35th & Holdrege/ Idylwild, 48th & Holdrege, 48th & Leighton, and 27th & Nebraska Parkway.

As the foundation of a great neighborhood, nodes should provide services and retail goods oriented to the residents in and adjacent to the development, with significant pedestrian orientation and access. The adaptive reuse of historic or other existing structures into mixed uses is encouraged.

The size, scope, and spacing of a node will depend on available land area and the surrounding context. In some cases node redevelopment includes complete redevelopment of a site, with removal of existing structures and development of a new site plan. In other cases node redevelopment includes adding new residential or mixed use structures to underutilized areas of a center, such as a rarely-used parking lot, while maintaining some existing commercial structures and uses.

Nodes should be located on arterials and have access to public transit. They should provide adequate facilities for multi-modal transportation including a complete sidewalk network, transit stops, automobile parking and circulation, and storage of bicycles. This concept is intended to create a mutually beneficial relationship between existing adjacent neighborhoods and the new mixed-use areas formed through redevelopment. Newer commercial centers

that are not yet fully developed are encouraged to utilize this concept as a guide for amending their approved plans to develop as mixed use centers.

Redevelopment Corridors

Corridors are located along major transportation corridors such as arterials. Corridors often link Mixed Use Redevelopment Nodes and/or other commercial centers. Residential mixed use redevelopment should be encouraged in these areas, and transportation enhancements may be targeted to support such redevelopment and provide a variety of housing types affordable to diverse income levels.

Corridors represent priorities for future public transportation enhancements (such as increases in level of service), areas to encourage mixed use redevelopment of commercial strips, and connections for Mixed Use Redevelopment Nodes and/or commercial centers. Corridors are typically a half block to a block wide along arterial streets in commercially or industrially-zoned areas. Since they are often located on major arterials between commercial centers, they experience a lot of traffic and usually have transit service. Corridors present opportunities for small-scale reuse or redevelopment projects and should include a mix of land use types, especially residential including a variety of housing types affordable to diverse income levels. The adaptive reuse of historic or other existing structures into mixed uses is encouraged. Due to the linear nature of Corridors, existing residential neighborhoods are often next door or across the alley from the commercial strip or industrial remnant. This close relationship makes the adoption of design standards very important in proceeding with this strategy.

Location Criteria

Mixed Use Redevelopment Nodes and Corridors should be located based on the following criteria:

- In areas where there is a predominance of commercial or industrial zoning and/or development, focusing on non-residential areas.
- In proximity to planned or existing neighborhoods and community services, to facilitate access to existing community services or to address a deficiency by providing services such as grocery stores, childcare centers, and restaurants.
- Where there is existing or potential for good access to transit, to enhance the public transit system by making it accessible to residents and to facilitate the development of neighborhood mobility nodes where residents can drive, bike, or walk to a transit stop, go to work, and then shop for their daily needs before they return home.
- On at least one arterial street to help provide for traffic and utility capacity and access to transit.
- Outside of areas with existing or potential industrial use to avoid conflicts with health and safety.
- In areas that minimize floodplain and other environmental impacts. Areas within the floodplain that already have buildings and fill are appropriate for redevelopment; projects that receive public assistance should meet a higher standard to preserve flood storage. This criterion encourages redevelopment while protecting sensitive environmental areas. Preservation or restoration of natural resources within or adjacent to mixed use redevelopment areas should be encouraged.

High-Quality Design for Mixed Use Nodes and Corridors

Figure E2.b displays design strategies that should be applied to future node and corridor redevelopment.

Figure E2.b: Design Strategies for Mixed Use Nodes and Corridors
Example 1

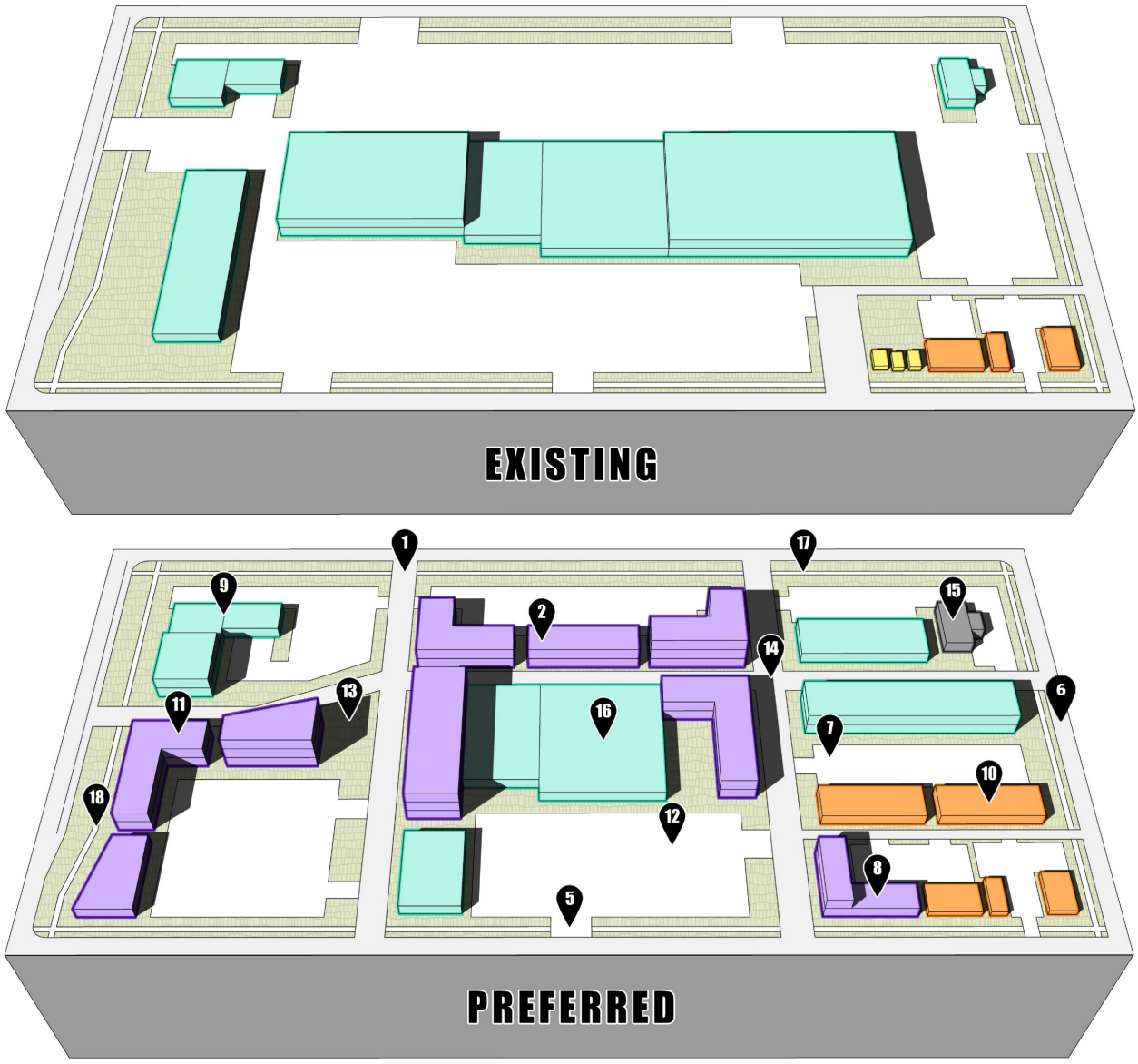
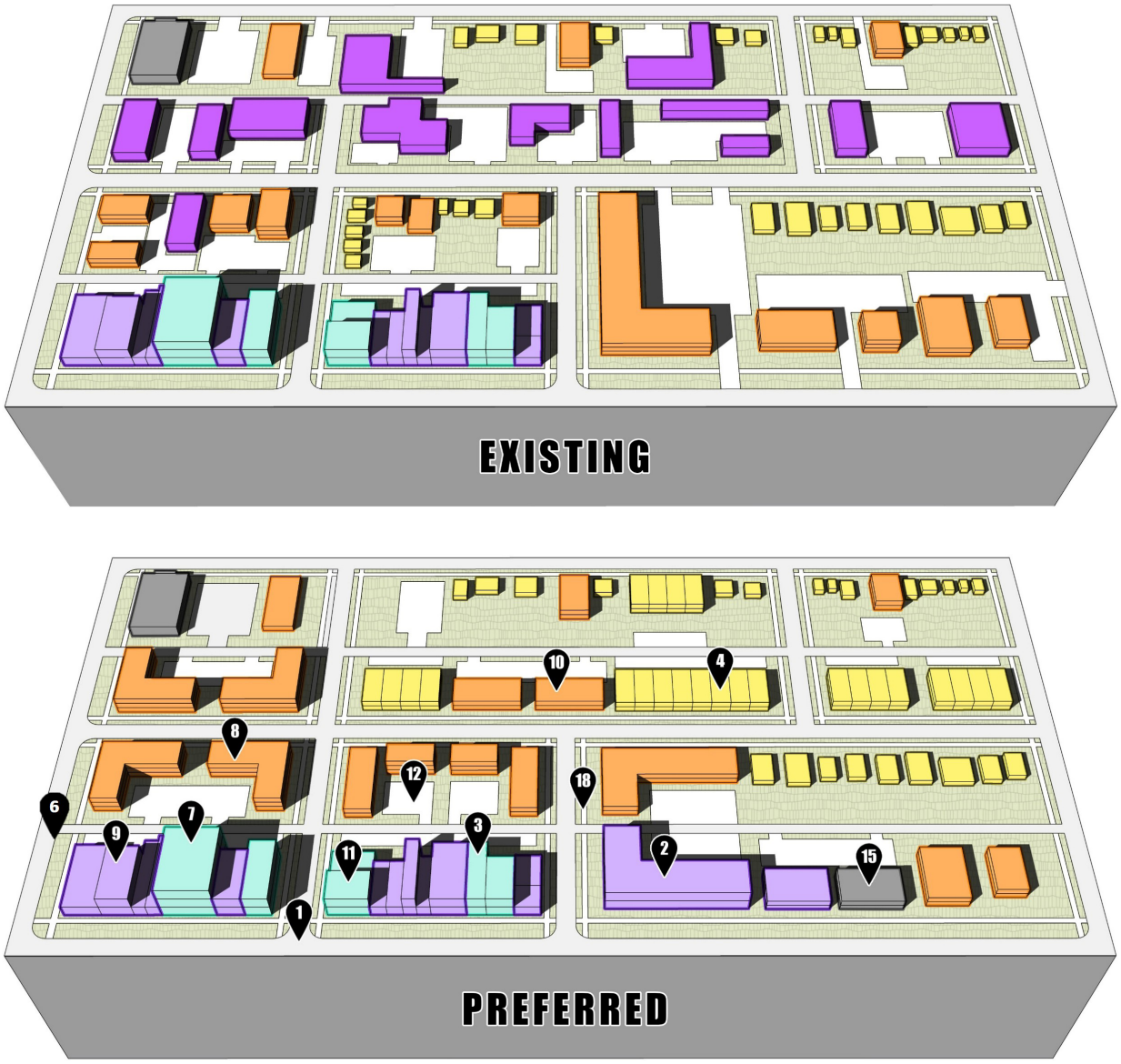


Figure E2.b: Design Strategies for Mixed Use Nodes and Corridors
Example 2



1. Maintain existing vehicular access, relocate drives as needed, share access where possible, and discourage additional vehicular access to an arterial street.
2. Encourage a higher Floor Area Ratio for commercial redevelopment.
3. Encourage a wide variety of commercial tenants.
4. Face existing residential uses with new residential uses rather than the backs of buildings.
5. Align commercial driveways with existing streets where possible.
6. Discourage commercial driveways that interrupt the blockface of a residential street, especially when residences face the street.
7. Encourage shared driveways and interconnected parking lots where possible.
8. Orient buildings to the street, especially corners. Create build-to zones so that buildings are close to the street and sidewalk.
9. Maintain or adaptively reuse existing structures (especially historic structures) where possible.
10. Incorporate a variety of residential price ranges and use types such as rowhouses, apartment buildings, apartments in mixed use buildings, live-work units, and group housing. These buildings could also serve as a transition to the existing neighborhood.
11. Encourage a vertical mix of residential and commercial use types. Mixed use buildings with active ground floor uses are ideal for higher density nodes.
12. Encourage shared parking between land uses with different peak demand periods.
13. Create public/semi-public green or open spaces such as parks, plazas, or community gardens.
14. Establish or re-establish an internal public or private street network within the node that has substantial connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods to maximize access and mobility options.
15. Encourage public/semi-public uses.
16. Encourage supermarkets or specialty grocery stores to locate within nodes.
17. Encourage substantial connectivity and convenient access to neighborhood services (stores, schools, parks) from nearby residential areas.
18. Create a high quality pedestrian experience. Promote activities of daily living within walking distance, and provide sidewalks on both sides of all streets, or in alternative locations as allowed through design standards or review process. High traffic sidewalks should be wider than a typical sidewalk, eight to ten feet, to support shared space between walking and micromobility. Utilize wayfinding elements and enhanced lighting create a pleasant experience for pedestrians.

An accessory component to the redevelopment node concept are mobility nodes and Mobility Oriented Development (MOD), both of which are featured in the *Lincoln Mobility Plan*. Mobility nodes are designated locations equipped with amenities that help residents transition smoothly between walking, biking, transit, and driving. The Lincoln Mobility Plan identifies specific locations for mobility nodes based on planned and existing mobility infrastructure access. Many potential mixed use redevelopment nodes have been identified as suitable locations for incorporating mobility node elements.

MOD offers a framework to make alternative modes of transportation practical and appealing by encouraging a thoughtful mix of land uses, modest increases in density, and site design standards that support multi-modal transportation. Figure E2.b includes strategies with key MOD concepts. Additional explanation for the mobility node and MOD concepts can be found in *E1: Great Neighborhoods and Housing* and the *Lincoln Mobility Plan*.

Mixed use nodes and corridors are often developed using the Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning tool. The PUD, also discussed in the *Growth Framework section* of this Plan, is a zoning tool that allows for flexibility when including a mix of uses within a single development plan.

The PUD zoning tool is an effective mechanism for creating mixed use redevelopment that is compatible with the surrounding area. The City should evaluate ways to support more creative PUDs and encourage high-quality mixed use environments.

Additions to the zoning ordinance in recent years have made it easier to implement mixed use redevelopment without the need for a PUD. Nearly all commercial districts now allow residential uses alongside a broad range of commercial activities, expanding flexibility for redevelopment. Parking requirements have also been removed in most commercial districts, enabling redevelopment of small sites, particularly those that can utilize shared parking across different uses along with transit and mobility access to meet their needs.

Examples of additional flexibility that could be implemented to support mixed use nodes and corridors:

- Consider elimination of parking requirements for all commercial districts as discussed in *P11: Parking Requirements*.
- New commercial design standards as discussed in *P34: Urban Design Standards*. Design standards updates would incorporate guidelines to ensure redevelopments are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood context.

Any proposed changes can impact neighborhood quality of life To balance efficiency with transparency, careful consideration should be given to mechanisms that ensure the public remains meaningfully involved in redevelopment decisions.

Primary Mixed Use Redevelopment Nodes and Corridors

Primary Mixed Use Redevelopment Nodes and Corridors provide the opportunity for large-scale infill redevelopment, and the creation of new urban neighborhoods that function as “villages within the city” with a mix of uses and amenities that are accessible through multiple modes of transportation.

Existing Regional Centers, discussed in *E3: Business, Economy, and Workforce*, are identified as Primary Mixed Use Redevelopment Nodes. They present unique opportunities for large-scale mixed-use redevelopment given their size, prominent location, and shared B-5 Planned Regional Business zoning district.

Updates to the B-5 zoning district should be examined to support high-quality redevelopment of Primary Mixed Use Redevelopment nodes. The update would address items such as: density, site layout, building scale, and design standards.

Primary Mixed Use Redevelopment Corridor – O Street

O Street is a Primary Mixed Use Redevelopment Corridor. It is Lincoln's "main street" and a key transportation route that provides connections through the heart of the community. The O Street corridor includes a mix of residential and commercial uses and features prosperous commercial areas alongside underutilized commercial properties that present strong opportunities for redevelopment. The O Street Redevelopment Corridor includes the entire length of O Street from Downtown to the eastern edge of the city. The *West O Redevelopment Plan* discusses redevelopment opportunities for West O Street.

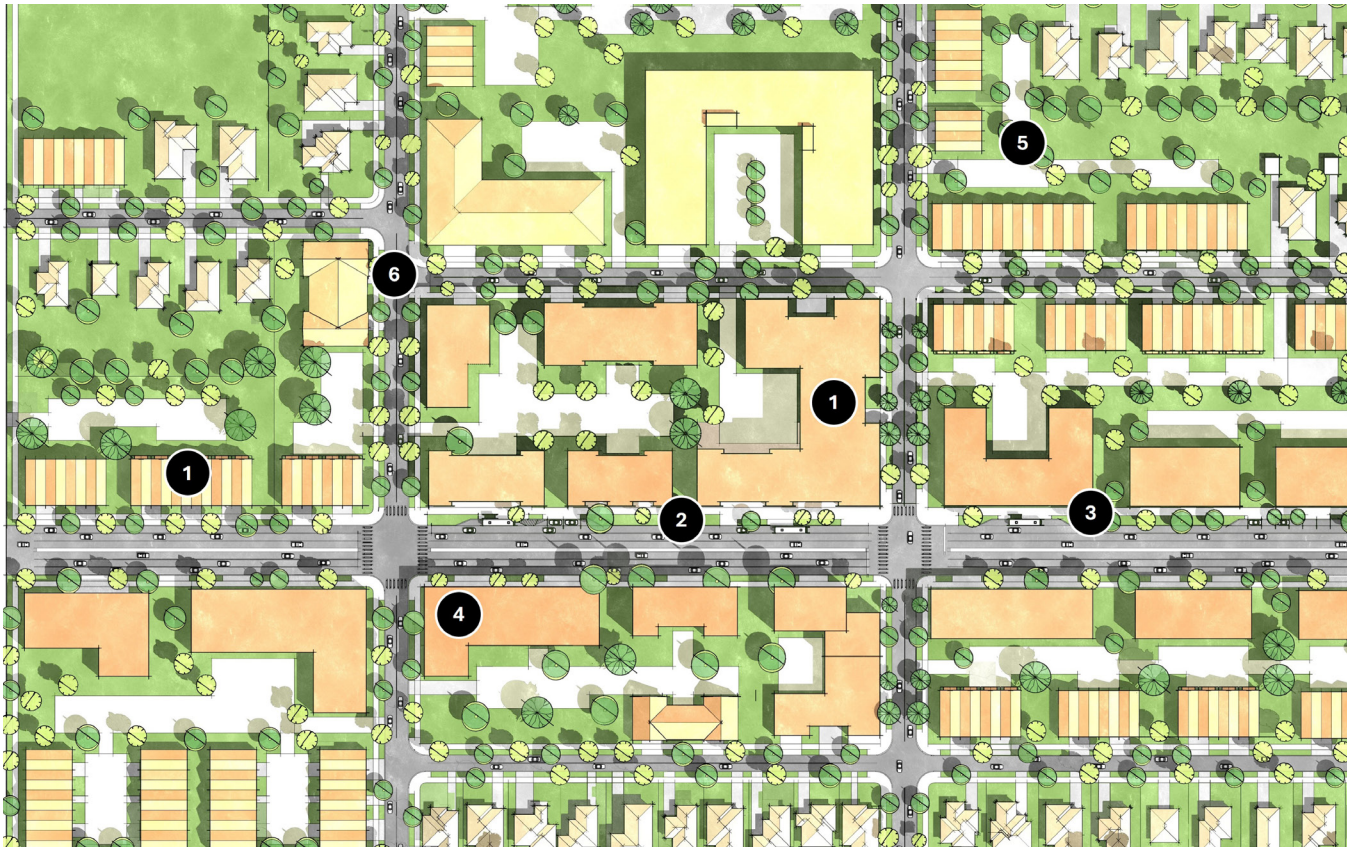
O Street is expected to be Lincoln's first candidate for an enhanced mass transit option, such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Dense concentrations of jobs and housing are necessary for BRT or other enhanced transit options to be effective. Focusing efforts on the O Street corridor, and the nodes along the corridor, will help to extend Lincoln's high-density urban core beyond Downtown.

Benefits of high-quality redevelopment along the O Street corridor include:

- More housing and commercial opportunities in the heart of the city.
- Efficient utilization of existing infrastructure and other benefits of infill development discussed in the Growth Framework section of this Plan.
- Improved walkability to surrounding services and destinations.
- Support for enhanced transit options along the corridor.

Figure E2.c shows an illustrative example of redevelopment along the corridor. This graphic is not tied to a particular location but generally reflects redevelopment opportunities along the corridor east of Antelope Valley Parkway.

Figure E2.c: Design Strategies for O Street Redevelopment Corridor



1. Size and scale of redevelopment varies based on corridor location, with more intense redevelopment at certain commercial nodes like 27th Street, 48th Street, and Gateway Mall.
2. Enhanced walkability to connect nearby destinations. Sidewalks on redeveloped properties should be at least 10 feet from back of curb with street trees planted between the sidewalk and curb.
3. Improved bus stops, potential as part of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system along the corridor.
4. Higher density and mixed use along O Street.
5. Typical residential-scale buildings and density as a transition to existing neighborhoods.
6. Access that has minimal impact on adjacent neighborhood streets.

Figure E2.d: O Street Corridor Illustrative Concept

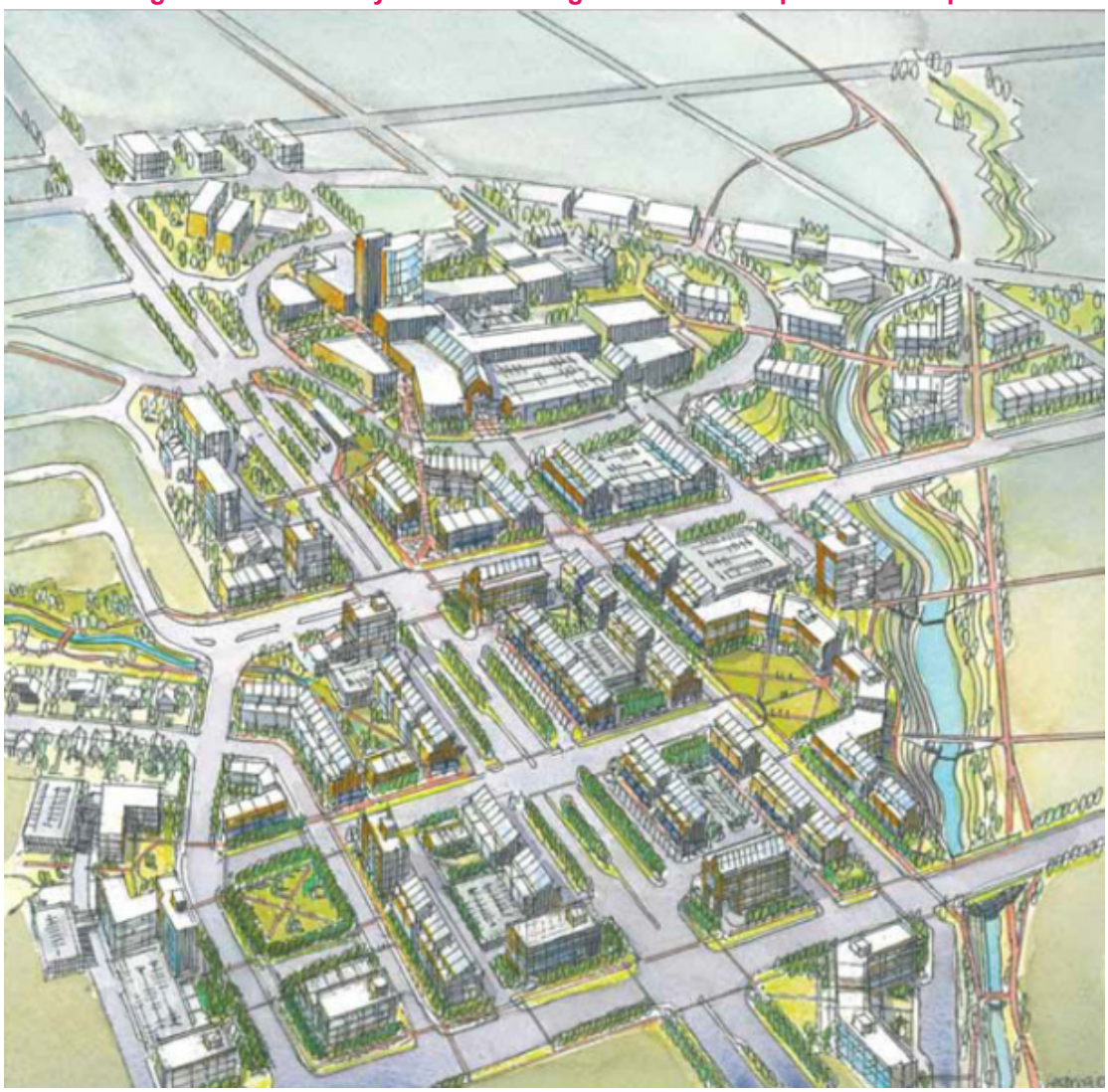


Figure E2.e: Transitional Density Along O Street Corridor



An example of a Primary Mixed Use Redevelopment opportunity is the Gateway Mall area. A long-term implementation of the nodes and corridors concept could transform the area into a mixed-use neighborhood with higher density residential that supports a variety of commercial uses, high-quality transit options, and pedestrian and bicycle connectivity.

Figure E2.f: Gateway Mall Area Long-Term Redevelopment Concept



Strategies for implementing the O Street Redevelopment concept include:

- **Zoning overlay.** The O Street corridor is currently regulated by a mix of zoning districts, with uses ranging from low-density residential to regional commercial development. This patchwork approach makes coordinated corridor-wide planning difficult, and many of the existing zoning districts do not support the type of development envisioned over the next 30 years.

  Establishing a zoning overlay, like a Planned Unit Development (PUD), could encourage high-quality development while allowing flexibility in height, setbacks, and land use across the corridor's varying environments. A PUD could incorporate elements such as a mix of uses that varies across the corridor, minimum site design standards that reinforce appropriate uses and building massing in key locations, Mobility Oriented Development (MOD) strategies as outlined in the Lincoln Mobility Plan, and protections for existing residential neighborhoods. Developing this overlay would require extensive collaboration with the diverse stakeholders along the corridor.

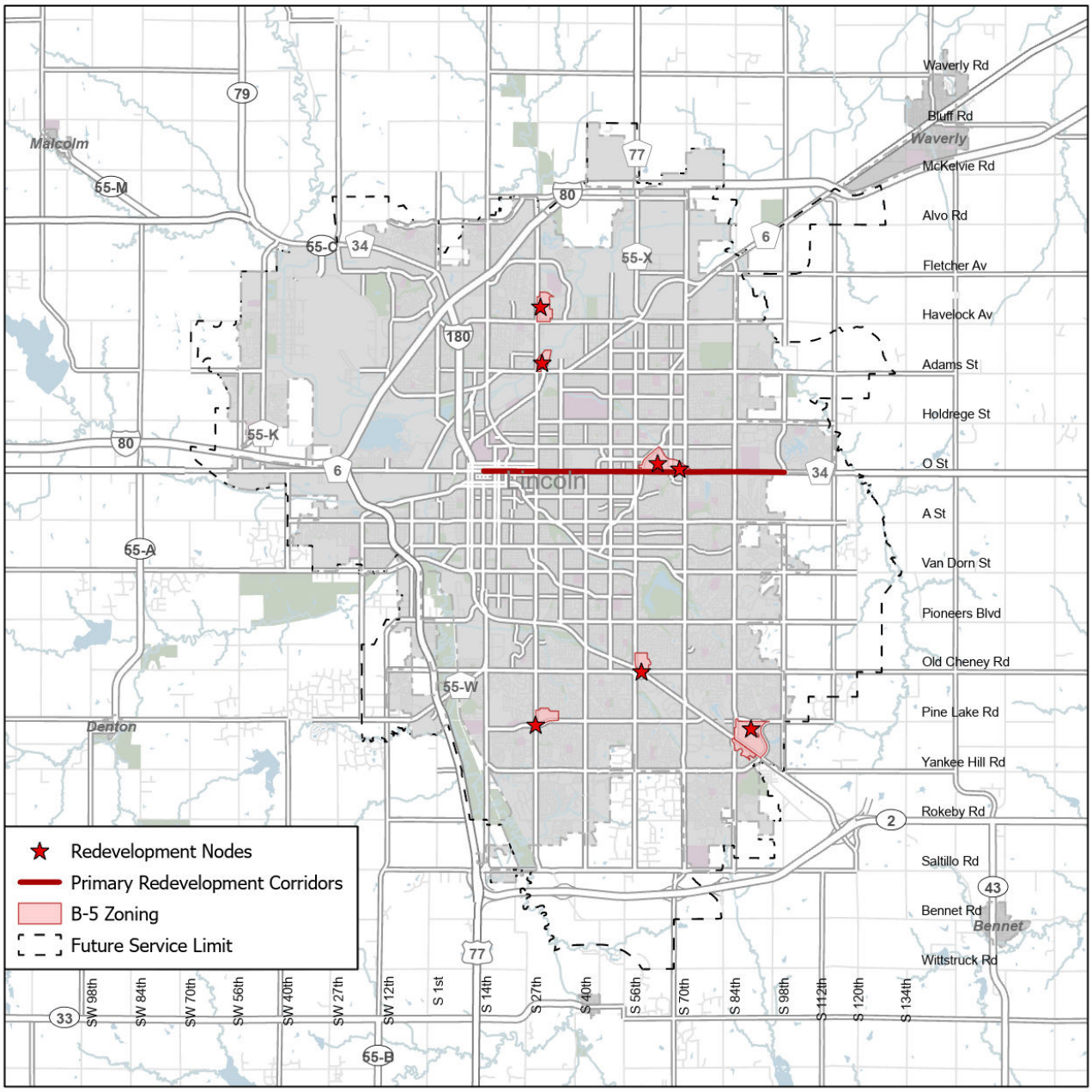
- **Subarea plan.** A subarea plan for the corridor could be useful to coordinate the public input process and generation of concepts prior to creation of a zoning overlay.

- **Design standards.** The corridor currently includes multiple sets of design standards depending on the area: Downtown Design Standards, Historic Preservation Design Standards for landmark properties and districts, Neighborhood Design Standards for residential areas established before 1950, and H-2 District Design Standards. Standards for the H-2 district, located at 48th Street, are the newest addition. Included in the standards is a requirement that all sidewalks be at least 10 feet from back of curb, with street trees to be planted between the sidewalk and the street. Elements to increase walkability along O Street will be an important part of the corridor design standards.

  Unifying these diverse sets of standards along the corridor would allow for an efficient, expeditious review process, while especially focusing on the interface with residential neighborhoods, attractive streetscapes, and safe and comfortable movement of people – whatever their mode of travel.

- **Blight study and redevelopment plan.** A blight study, followed by a redevelopment plan, are requirements if using Tax Increment Financing (TIF) along the corridor. Outside of Ddowntown the corridor includes several individual blighted areas with redevelopment plans, but a unified redevelopment plan could help with the utilization of TIF in a more cohesive manner.

Figure E2.g: Locations of Primary Mixed Use Redevelopment Nodes and Corridors



Neighborhood Edges

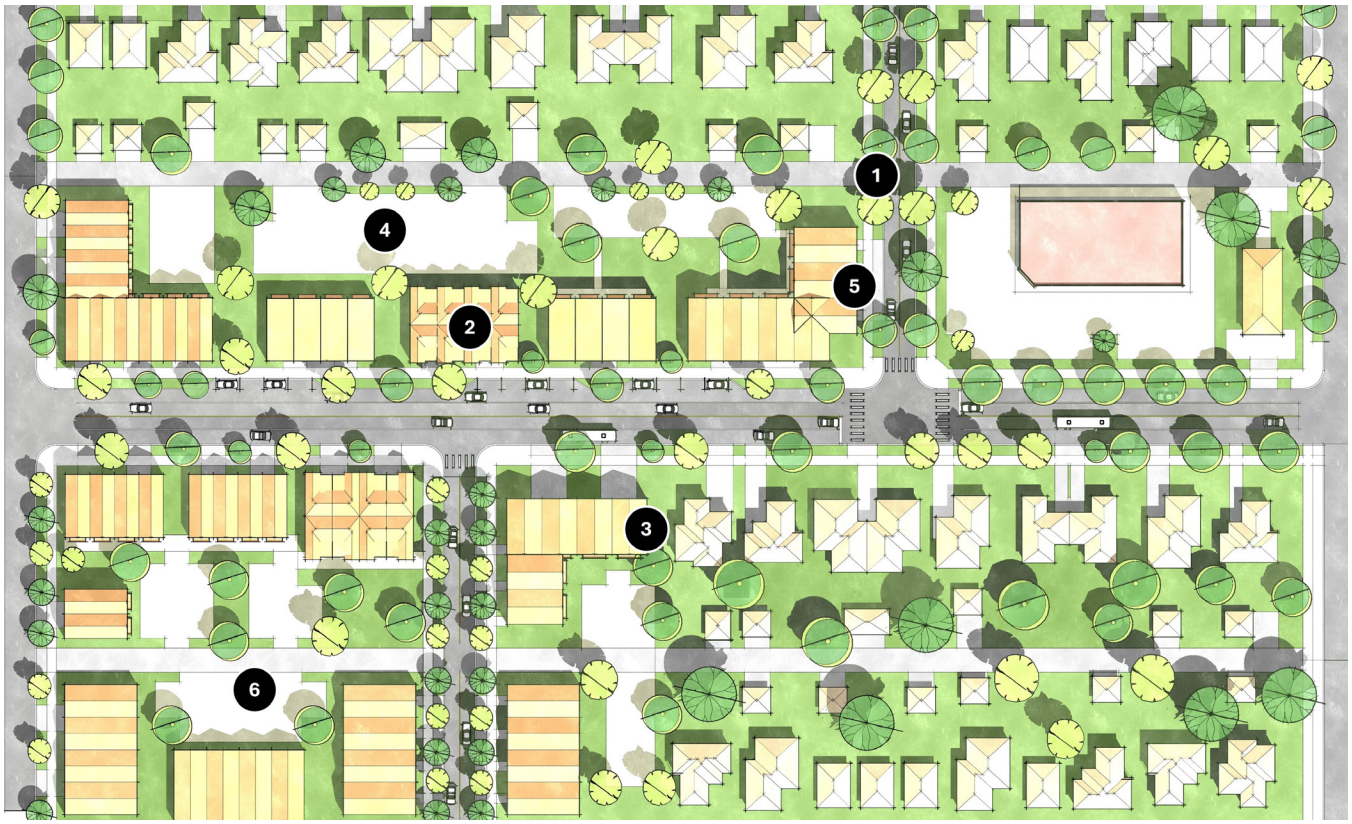
Neighborhood edges present an opportunity for missing middle housing, which can help expand affordable housing options and overall housing choice in the community. Missing middle housing includes “house-scale” buildings that provide typically 3 to 12 units and fit in with the character of single-family neighborhoods. Neighborhood edges exist across the community, both in older and newer neighborhoods. They typically are found adjacent to lower density residential areas and are near or have access to an arterial street. Edges may filter or buffer the neighborhoods from commercial or industrial uses or they may act as a seam to adjoining neighborhoods.

The neighborhood edge strategy responds to concerns raised in some neighborhoods about infill redevelopment. The strategy provides a way to expand housing opportunities within established areas while preserving the

neighborhood's existing character. By focusing new development along neighborhood edges, this approach helps reduce potential impacts such as increased traffic and added demand on limited on-street parking.

The general character of neighborhood edge development is shown and described in Figure E2.h.

Figure E2.h: Neighborhood Edge Design Strategies



1. Access that has minimal impact on adjacent arterial streets. Utilize alleys for access where available.
2. Building height the same as surrounding zoning district (typically 35 feet maximum in residential districts).
3. Design that is compatible with the existing neighborhood.
4. Adequate residential parking (typically 1 to 2 stalls per unit).
5. More density near arterial street or commercial area. General density for an edge area should be 5-14 dwelling units per acre. Higher-density housing along edges could include townhomes and apartment buildings with 3-12 units. A mix of neighborhood-scale non-residential uses may be appropriate in some areas.
6. Edge development targeted to legacy commercial and other sites with vacant, blighted, or underutilized parcels.

Individual zoning requests by a developer or property owner are the primary way that neighborhood edges are implemented within the existing development process. The R-5 and R-6 zoning districts along certain corridors allow for medium density housing that aligns with the missing middle category, including townhouses/rowhouses and small multi-family buildings. Zoning changes proposed along certain corridors should take into careful consideration the existing neighborhood and character of proposed development.

Community Unit Plans (CUPs) are a mechanism to allow flexibility within the zoning regulations, including increased density. The minimum size for a CUP is one acre. Individual CUPs must be approved by Planning Commission and can be appealed to City Council. Careful consideration should be given to the character of the adjacent neighborhood and development when reviewing a proposed CUP.

Neighborhood edge development contributes to multiple elements of PlanForward, including the great neighborhoods concept and the need for a variety of housing types and price points. The City should consider ad hoc zoning requests for proposals that align with the neighborhood edge concept and follow the design strategies outlined in this section.

There are many additional ways that neighborhood edge development could be implemented. Below is a list of potential options that should be considered:

- **Global updates to zoning ordinance**. The zoning ordinance could be updated to allow moderate increases in density along designated corridors or within a set distance of commercial areas. For example, the R5 and R6 districts could be updated so parcels located within 300 feet of an arterial could automatically receive a 20 percent density bonus. This would improve opportunities for missing middle housing by eliminating the need for each individual project to go through the zoning approval process. While a change of this scale offers significant potential benefits, its impacts would need to be carefully evaluated.
- **Overlay corridors**. A more targeted option is to pursue zoning updates along specific corridors. This could be implemented through existing base zoning districts, such as R 5 or R 6, or by using the CUP tool. For instance, a CUP tailored to allow missing middle housing could be applied to a designated corridor, enabling property owners or developers to build these housing types without undergoing an individual zoning approval process. Lincoln has applied a similar approach through the South of Downtown Planned Unit Development (PUD), which provides enhanced zoning flexibility in portions of the Everett and Near South neighborhoods. In this case, the PUD was used because the neighborhoods sought to incorporate certain non residential uses in addition to expanding housing options.
- **Permit ready plans**. In 2026 Lincoln created a series of permit-ready plan sets intended to support neighborhood-scale housing in existing neighborhoods. The plan sets are ready-to-go building plans for single-family homes that match the character of existing neighborhoods. The plans are available at no cost and allow for easier building code and design standard review. Additional permit-ready plan sets should be created for missing middle housing types to support the zoning changes associated with neighborhood edge development.
- **Building code updates**. Consider and discuss changes to the building code to support construction of missing middle housing types. For example, many states have amended their building codes to allow single stair egress designs in residential buildings up to four to six stories, potentially removing costly two-stair requirements.
- **Design standards**. In some cases neighborhood edge development would be subject to Neighborhood Design Standards. These standards apply to land in residential zoning districts that was part of Lincoln prior to 1950. The purpose of the Neighborhood Design Standards is to encourage rehabilitation of existing housing in

such areas, while allowing necessary new construction that is compatible with the surrounding development. Expanding the Neighborhood Design Standards to pre-1970 areas would help ensure new development fits the character of established neighborhoods.

Figure E2.i: Perspective of Neighborhood Edge Example



Existing Neighborhoods

Infill of housing in existing neighborhoods should respect the existing pattern of development. Infill redevelopment should include housing for a variety of incomes and households and should complement the character of the existing neighborhood by including appropriate transitions, scale, and context.

Examples of infill redevelopment in existing neighborhoods includes:

- Replacement of blighted and deteriorating structures.
- Conversion of single-family homes, or vacant single-family parcels, to duplexes or other low-to-moderate density options when allowed by zoning.
- Adding an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) to a single family home.
- Redevelopment of large parcels, including former school sites, church sites, and acreage homes.
- Residential conversion of small-scale legacy commercial uses.
- Neighborhood edge development.

High-Quality Design

High-quality, durable design should be encouraged with all infill redevelopment projects. In many cases redevelopment projects seek to remove blighted conditions and the city should not encourage infill redevelopment with new low-quality structures that will create future blight, especially with projects

utilizing TIF or other public incentives. Infill redevelopment should complement and enhance surrounding neighborhoods.

A key mechanism for supporting high-quality design is design standards. As of 2021, urban design standards generally only cover residential areas inside the 1950 City limits along with the Downtown and Capitol Environs. Most commercial areas of the city are not under any design review and sometimes create rough edges and poor entryways to neighborhoods.

PlanForward includes a recommendation to evaluate several options for new design standards, discussed in *P34: Urban Design Standards*.

Redevelopment Incentives

Facilitating infill and redevelopment in the existing city requires both a nuanced understanding of the challenges associated with redevelopment projects and a well-thought out set of strategies to overcome them. Commonly cited challenges to infill and redevelopment include land cost and assembly, access to financing, and zoning requirements.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF), facilitated by redevelopment plans in blighted areas, has been the city's most common tool for incentivizing infill redevelopment. TIF is authorized by Nebraska Community Development Law and has been utilized by the City of Lincoln since 1982. TIF uses the added property tax revenue or increment created by the redevelopment to finance project-related costs such as land acquisition, site preparation, historic rehabilitation, street and right of way improvements, utility improvements, and other public improvements. Traditionally, the developer takes on the debt of the project, pays their full tax burden, and then is reimbursed the increment to pay down the debt on the TIF-eligible expenses.

TIF Districts can also help incentivize infill redevelopment using the property tax revenue generated from valuation increases over time to repay debt used to make more comprehensive public improvements. Such districts may

improve or extend streets, replace deteriorated underground infrastructure, enhance sidewalks and streetscapes, and other public improvements.

In 2019 the State legislature revised Nebraska Community Development Law to include an “extremely blighted” designation. Redevelopment within extremely blighted areas may qualify for an extended 20-year debt repayment period rather than the standard 15-year repayment period for TIF-financed debt. Areas meeting the criteria of being extremely blighted are eligible for additional Housing Trust Fund dollars and state tax credits for owner-occupied home purchases.

There are other existing redevelopment incentives beyond TIF (i.e. Enhanced Employment Area funds, VIP Historic Tax Abatements, Historic Preservation Tax Credits, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, PACE loans, Opportunity Zone Tax Incentives, New Market Tax Credits, impact fee exclusions). Other states also provide different economic tools that Nebraska has not yet supported, Land Value Tax, other forms of tax abatement, etc. that would need to be passed by the State Legislature. More information can be found in *P7: Redevelopment Incentives*.

Policies Related to this Element

P1: Housing Affordability

P2: Existing Neighborhoods

P3: Downtown

P6: Nodes and Corridors

P7: Redevelopment Incentives

P8: Infill and Redevelopment

P11: Parking Requirements

P14: Commercial Infill

P34: Urban Design Standards

P37: Historic Preservation

Goals Related to this Element

G1: Safe, Affordable and Accessible Housing

G2: Great Neighborhoods

G4: Economic Opportunity

G13: Community Appearance

E3: Business, Economy and Workforce

This element describes PlanForward's support for economic development, workforce development, and additional commercial and industrial activities.



Lancaster County is a growing county with a relatively stable economy. Continued economic growth in Lincoln and Lancaster County is expected over the plan period. In order to ensure that growth and employment occur in an organized fashion that meets the vision of PlanForward, principles and strategies are laid out to guide policies and future development.

Economy and Workforce Development

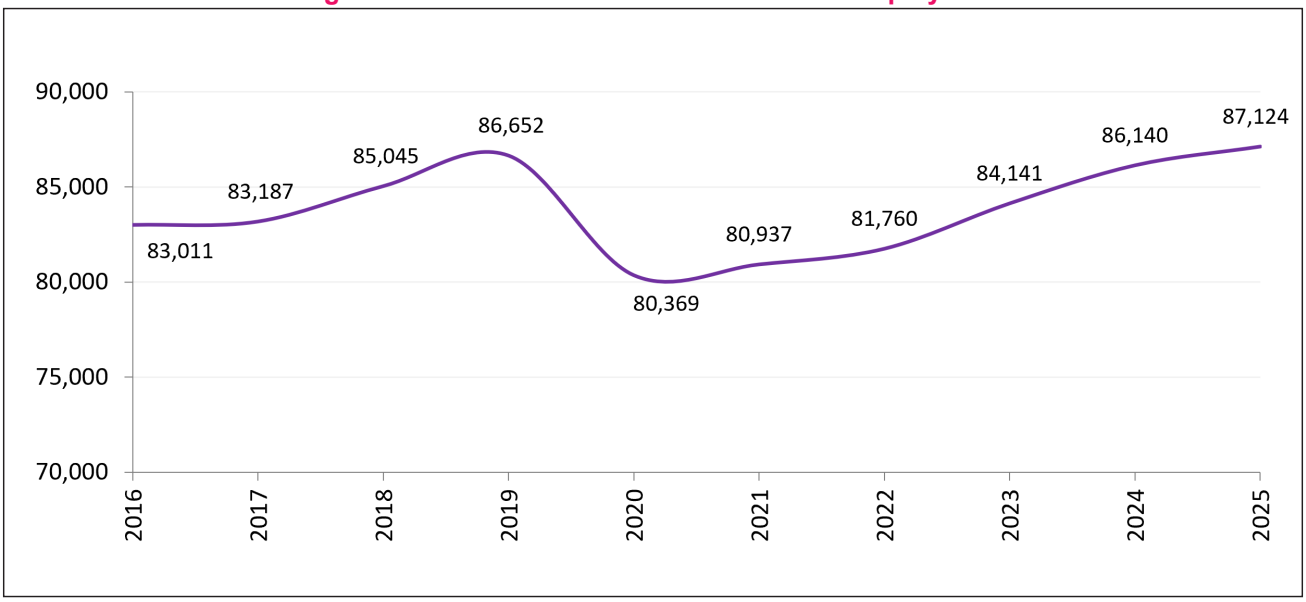
Lancaster County benefits from many quality of life factors that attract both employers and employees. Lancaster County's educational systems are among the best in the country and provide a skilled workforce. Lincoln's neighborhoods provide a good stock of quality housing of many sizes and types. The presence of State government and several college and university campuses creates an attractive economic environment for both employers and employees. Lancaster County provides a wide range of art, entertainment, and recreation opportunities. Public and private investment in Lincoln is evident in the Downtown, Antelope Valley, Innovation Campus, West Haymarket, and Telegraph District projects. All of these assets should be emphasized to encourage economic development.

Economic Sectors

PlanForward divides the economy element into four major sectors: Business and Commerce, Government, Industrial, and Agriculture. Below is a summary of recent trends in each sector. More details can be found in the *Annual Community Indicators Report.*

Business & Commerce: This sector has shown the most robust employment growth over the past decade. It is the largest sector in Lancaster County based on employment and number of establishments. Industries include Professional Services, Leisure and Hospitality, Education and Health, Financial Activities, Information, and Other Services. The decreased employment in 2020 represents impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2025 employment exceeded the pre-COVID levels in 2019 for the first time since the start of the pandemic.

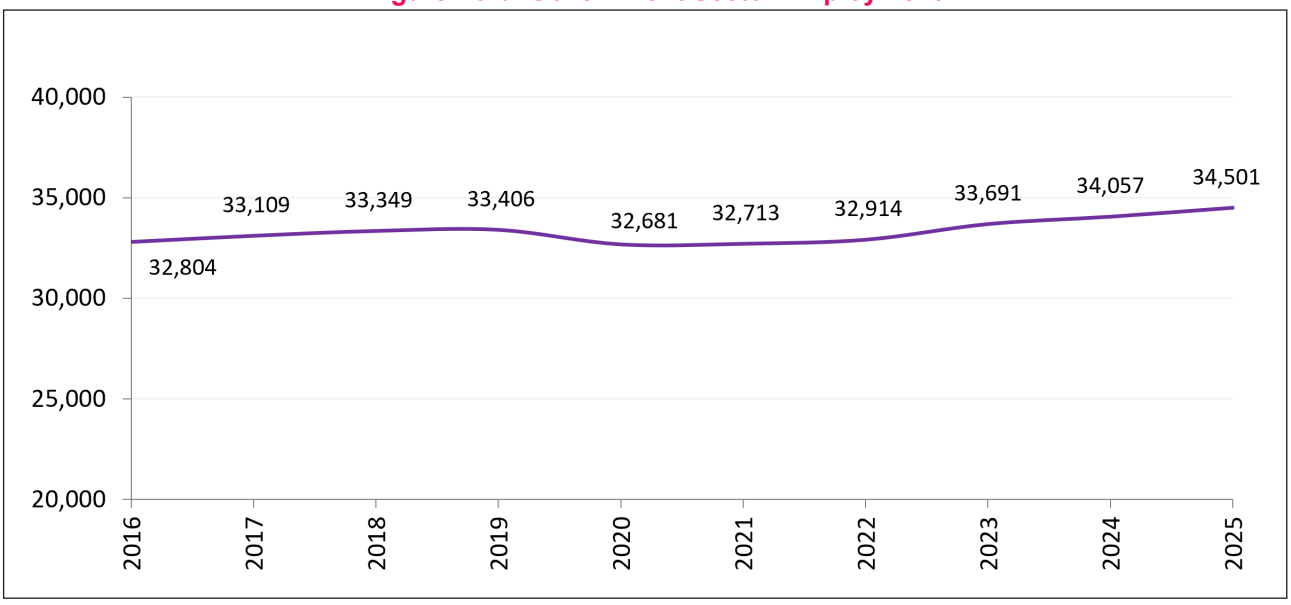
Figure E3.a: Business & Commerce Sector Employment



Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Government: The second largest sector in Lancaster County based on employment. This sector includes Federal, State and Local government. The top three employers in Lancaster County are all in the public sector: Lincoln Public Schools, State of Nebraska, and University of Nebraska.

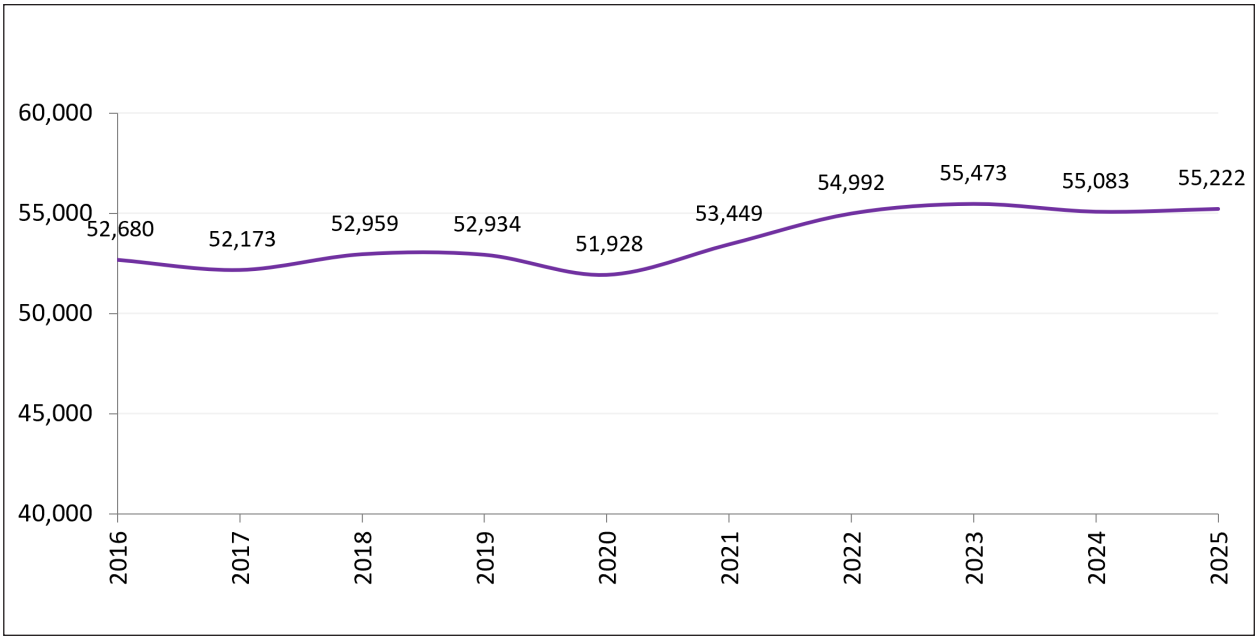
Figure E3.b: Government Sector Employment



Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Industrial: The Industrial sector has experienced steady growth since having a record low number of employees in 2010 during the last recession. Industries in this sector include Manufacturing, Construction, Trade, and Mining. The decreased employment in 2020 represents impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Employment quickly recovered in 2021 has remained above pre-COVID levels.

Figure E3.c: Industrial Sector Employemt



Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Agriculture: Agriculture is a major factor in Lancaster County's economy with over 3/4 of the land area of the county being used for agricultural production. Niche farms have seen strong growth over the past decade and are expected to continue to grow as more local food is demanded by the growing population.

It is expected that employment in Lancaster County will continue to grow across all sectors during the planning period, matching the slow and steady projected population growth discussed in the *Growth Framework section* of the plan.

The Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Area Local Plan

Workforce development activities in Lancaster County are governed by the Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Board (GLWDB). The GLWDB includes leaders from business, economic development, education, organized labor, and community organizations to provide oversight of employment and training programs in Lancaster and Saunders counties. The GLWDB is responsible for planning the use of federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds to positively impact employer and worker prosperity. Board members are appointed by the Mayor of Lincoln.

The *Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Area Local Plan (July1, 2025- June 30, 2029)* developed by the GLWD, coordinates and documents workforce development activities in the county. The Workforce Investment Plan identifies a vision and goals, with detailed strategies and benchmarks coordinated among multiple organizations, for achieving those goals. The primary goal identified in the Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Area Plan

is to improve opportunities for residents by supporting the Nebraska Department of Labor's Nebraska Combined State Plan for Program Years 2024–2027. This includes expanding access to high quality career pathways and strengthening alignment across the state's workforce development system.

The GLWDB prioritizes the development of career pathways in healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and information technology—local sectors offering strong job prospects for residents. In collaboration with employers and education partners, the GLWDB and the American Job Center work to reduce participation barriers for individuals with low incomes, disabilities, limited English proficiency, justice involvement, single parents, long term unemployed individuals, and individuals with low literacy. These efforts are intended to increase equitable access to training, credentials, and employment.

Guided by the state-level Career Pathways Workgroup, the GLWDB supports statewide efforts to identify both employer specific and participant specific barriers, implement strategies such as bundled services and targeted outreach, and expand the availability of short term credentials and work based learning opportunities for underrepresented populations.

To advance system alignment, the GLWDB participates in the state's Alignment Workgroup and implements integrated service strategies locally. These include cross training among core partners, coordinated co enrollment across WIOA Titles I–IV, and collaboration with statewide initiatives. Through this work, the GLWDB strengthens a unified and responsive service delivery system that enhances access to workforce services and improves employment outcomes for residents.

There are a variety of organizations that contribute to the local workforce development system and are included in the Workforce Investment Plan. They include but are not limited to:

- EmployLNK. A collaboration of multiple workforce development agencies that serves as the single point of contact for businesses to interact with the agencies that serve others and to organize job fairs and other employment-focused events.
- Lincoln Literacy. Provides services to adults who want to improve their language skills.
- Lincoln Manufacturing Council. The Lincoln Manufacturing Council's Manufacturing Tech program includes 10 Lincoln manufacturers that are hiring in the community. The council provides training for individuals with no experience in manufacturing and are willing to learn more.
- Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development. The Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development (LPED) is a public-private collaboration charged with fulfilling Lincoln's Economic Development goals.
- New Americans Task Force. NATF (New Americans Task Force) is a network of public and private organizations and community members, dedicated to supporting New Americans in our community.
- A variety of partners in the "One-Stop Delivery System" for workforce assistance including Proteus Inc, National Able Network, Adult Education, Carl Perkins Career & Tech Ed, Wagner-Peyser (Employment Services), Unemployment Insurance Benefits, Jobs for Veterans State Grant, Trade Act Programs, Nebraska VR, Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Community Action Partnership of Lancaster & Saunders Counties, Lincoln Housing Authority – Family Self Sufficiency Program, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult Dislocated Worker and Youth, Ponca Tribe of Nebraska, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).



A key resource to implementing the Workforce Investment Plan is the American Job Center, which houses multiple job training service providers and provides services to both job seekers and businesses seeking employees. American Job Center partners provide on-site and networked career development information, education and training programs, case management, and job placement assistance.

The American Job Center facility that is located in Downtown Lincoln offers free access to a resource room which includes computers with internet, telephones, and fax machines. The resource rooms is open to the public on a self-service basis. Staff are available to assist job seekers with building a resume, general career exploration, and job search. The center provides a full array of employment and training related services for workers, youth and businesses.

American Job Center functions are primarily funded by the federal Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), although the City funds certain staff and administrative functions. Because WIOA funds are targeted to certain populations of adults, dislocated workers and youth, the majority of American Job Center services are also targeted to benefit that part of the workforce.

The WIOA supported through the American Job Center provides a variety of services to support employers, including:

- **Job Postings.** Job openings are posted for free on NEworks, Nebraska's Official Labor Exchange Market.
- **Tax Credits.** Employers can earn tax credits for hiring targeted groups of job seekers.
- **Data.** The American Job Center provides labor market research including economic and demographic data.
- **Hiring Assistance.** The American Job Center has interview space that can be reserved by employers. In addition the American Job Center provides job fairs and hosts resumes on NEworks.
- **Temporary Work & Internships.** Employers may host a qualified employee for up to 500 hours at no cost.
- **Layoff Assistance.** Employers can access resources and support if they are considering laying off employees.
- **Wage Reimbursements & Training Matching.** Employers can receive 50-75% wage reimbursements for qualified new hire and 50-90% matching for potential or incumbent employee training.

The ideas found in the Greater Lincoln Workforce Investment Plan and implemented through WIOA, American Job Center, and other partners align with the PlanForward vision. The policies found in this Comprehensive Plan support the continued efforts of the Workforce Development Board along with the public and private organizations that contribute to a strong local workforce.

Specialized Industries for Economic Development

Lancaster County's workforce, the presence of the University, and the strength of the agricultural economy make it particularly attractive for development of several specialized industries.

- **Biotechnology.** UNL has a strong biotechnology research program. Expansion and retention of start-ups and existing companies, particularly those that build on University research should be a focus.
- **Value Added Agriculture.** Food research at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln (UNL) is vital to attracting and retaining these industries in the Lincoln area. This category could include renewable energy development, such as ethanol plants, though these plants are primarily located outside Lancaster County.
- **Specialty Electronics.** Expanding or using the Foreign Trade Zone in the Airpark area holds promise for this type of use and should be examined with the Airport Authority.

- **Technical Customer Support.** Interest in this category is returning after years of customer support jobs being sent overseas.
- **Insurance and Financial Services.** The success with job expansion of several local insurance companies points out the attractiveness of Lincoln. The State of Nebraska statutes and taxation policies provide a competitive advantage for insurance companies, as witnessed by several out-of-state companies also having located in Nebraska.
- **Entrepreneurship.** Lincoln has benefited from entrepreneurs starting new businesses which have grown rapidly, adding many jobs to the economy. More should be done to encourage entrepreneurs, to utilize technology from UNL in the marketplace, and to promote entrepreneur education at UNL, Southeast Community College and other educational institutions.
- **Health Care.** Lincoln's health care providers serve a larger region than just the city. This is an industry that is growing nationally and is expected to grow locally as well, especially as the population ages. Expansions of existing locations are expected and a wide variety of new facilities will likely come forward over time.

In relation to the strengths and opportunities within the local economy, the Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Area Local Plan identifies four priority areas for career pathways. Goals and strategies within the Workforce Plan relate to further developing the workforce within these industries.

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Agribusiness and Natural Resources (especially positions addressing conservation and energy efficiency)
- Healthcare
- Technology

The Workforce Development topic was not covered in previous Comprehensive Plans. This policy reinforces the importance of a well-trained workforce in our community and identifies key partnerships.



P9. Skilled, Diverse and Trained Workforce: Support development of a skilled, diverse, and trained workforce that enables economic growth and high-quality jobs. Support high-quality community-based, culturally appropriate, and accessible employment training programs that allow employers to hire a more diverse workforce and provide more residents access to living wage jobs; and ensure that workforce development programs and City initiatives emphasize in-demand careers that provide for financial stability.

Downtown

Downtown continues to be the most economically productive area of the county on an acre-for-acre basis. According to the market assessment completed with the 2018 Downtown Master Plan, Downtown Lincoln has approximately 41,000 workers – 22 percent of Lincoln's overall workforce. While the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic changed the makeup and location of employment across the country, including Lincoln, it is expected that Downtown Lincoln will remain the commercial and employment center of southeast Nebraska.

Downtown Lincoln stands as a unique community resource. Downtown is the County's most intensive center of activity, offering a broad mix of retail, office, industrial, residential, and governmental uses. It is home to numerous public facilities — including the Nebraska State Capitol, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's main campus, and the County-City government complex— as well as private endeavors— including finance, insurance, and other business services. Downtown Lincoln has historically served as the community's dominant center of entertainment, and that role is expected to continue over the coming decades.

The *Downtown Lincoln Master Plan* was completed in 2018. The Plan identifies priorities for downtown physical improvements, catalyst developments, and policies to guide the City of Lincoln, the Downtown Lincoln Association, the development community and other Downtown stakeholders, and strengthen Downtown's role as the region's "center of opportunity."

PlanForward supports implementation of the Downtown Master Plan to preserve and enhance Downtown's role as:

- The major office and service employment center
- The center of all levels of government
- The principal cultural, entertainment, and tourism center
- The center for hotels and conventions
- The financial center
- The hub of higher education
- A regional retail center geared toward employees, area residents, visitors, and UNL students and staff
- A major focus for new residential reuse, infill, and redevelopment

An update of the Downtown Master Plan is planned to occur prior to 2030.

Lancaster County, Outside of Lincoln

The majority of new development takes place in the urban area of Lincoln. However, it is important to strengthen existing commercial areas and support new development within all the incorporated communities of Lancaster County. Commercial development in towns also provides opportunities for businesses that support rural residents within the county. Farms are an important part of the history and economy of the region. Agriculture is the dominant land use in Lancaster County, accounting for over 3/4 of all land. While this land is largely considered "undeveloped," it is still an important economic factor in the county's future. Agriculture's impact on the local economy goes beyond the sale at the end of production. Farms of all sizes purchase goods and services throughout the city and county year-round, contributing to the local tax base and supporting continued growth for other businesses in the agricultural industry.

Development within the incorporated towns and their one-mile zoning jurisdiction will be determined by the communities themselves. PlanForward supports these communities and their efforts to maintain and improve their commercial and industrial base.



Commercial and Industrial Development

Lancaster County has experienced significant increases in commercial and industrial development over the last several decades. Numerous new shopping centers, office complexes, and industrial facilities have been built – representing valuable economic resources for the community.

Lincoln remains the county's dominant home to both the commercial and industrial sectors of the local economy. Most of the recent growth in commercial and industrial space has occurred within the city limits of Lincoln, with other incorporated communities experiencing some growth as well. This clustering of commercial and industrial activity in the City of Lincoln has been completed in accordance with the goals of previous comprehensive plans, and PlanForward continues this development pattern.

Commercial and Industrial Centers in Lancaster County should be located:

- Within the City of Lincoln or incorporated villages.
- Outside of saline wetlands, signature habitat areas, native prairie and floodplain areas (except for areas of existing commercial and industrial zoning).
- Where urban services and infrastructure are available or planned for in the near term.
- In sites supported by adequate road capacity — commercial development should be linked to the implementation of the transportation plan.
- In areas of compatible land use and not in conflict with existing or planned residential uses.
- In existing underdeveloped or redeveloping commercial and industrial areas in order to remove blighted conditions and to more efficiently utilize existing infrastructure.
- In areas accessible by various modes of transportation (i.e. automobile, bicycle, transit, and pedestrian).
- So that they enhance entryways or public way corridors, when developing adjacent to these corridors.
- In a manner that supports the creation and maintenance of green space as indicated in the environmental resources section of this Plan.

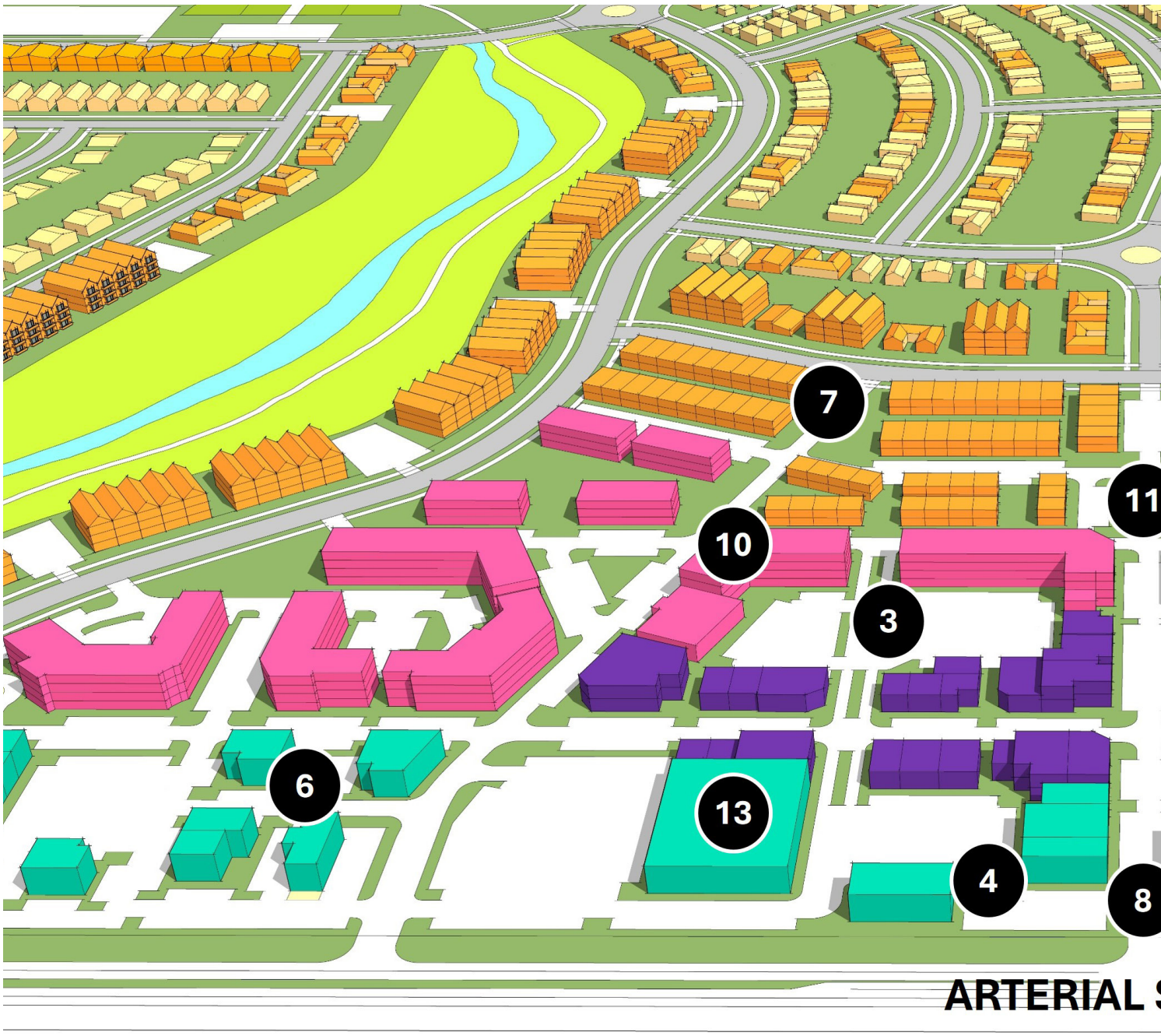
Commercial Centers

Based on the projected population growth rates, the Plan identifies the potential for a total of 74.2 million square feet of occupied retail, office, and service uses by 2050 – an increase of roughly 21 million square feet above the occupied commercial space in 2026. A substantial portion of this future commercial capacity will be accommodated on sites already zoned or approved for commercial development or that have been identified on the Future Land Use map for future commercial land use.

"Commercial Centers" are defined as areas containing a mix of retail, office, service, and residential uses, with some light manufacturing and warehousing in selected circumstances. Other land uses such as child care centers, assisted living facilities, and recreational facilities may be integrated within the center as well. Commercial Centers are distinguished from Industrial Centers by their dominance of commercial uses over industrial uses, and in the types of industrial uses located in them — that is, the uses are less intrusive in terms of lighting, noise, odors, truck and vehicular traffic, and pollutants. Where properly sited, light manufacturing uses may be a part of larger Commercial Centers.

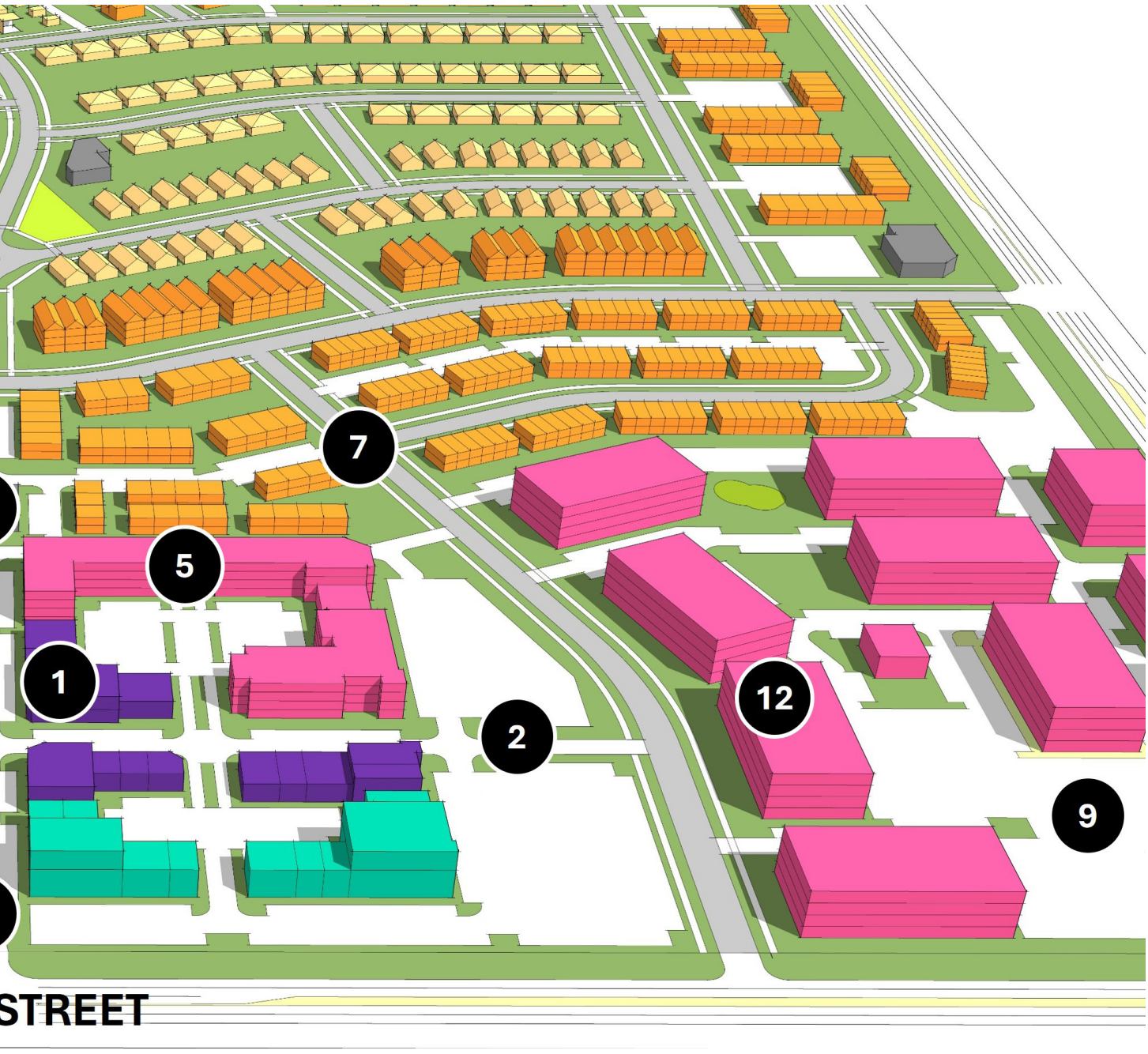
The Commercial Centers concept gives recognition to the evolving role of commercial uses in the life of cities. Commercial Centers encompass a broad range of land uses and are intended to encourage the mixing and integration of compatible land use types. Residential mixed use is encouraged.

Figure E3.d: Commercial Center Design Strategies



- Single-Family/Duplexes/Garages
- Multi-Family/Assisted Living/Rowhouses/Garages
- High-Density Residential
- Residential/Commercial Mixed Use
- Public/Semi-Public Buildings
- Green Space/Natural Resources
- Other Open Space
- Public Right-of-Way (including sidewalks, street trees, parking and street paving)
- Parking Lots/Driveways/Private Alleys
- Arterial Streets

Figure E3.d: Commercial Center Design Strategies



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- Parking Lots/Driveways/Private Alleys
- Arterial Streets

1. Encourage a mix of office, retail, service, and residential uses. The center may include mixed-use buildings with residential or office above a first-floor retail or service use.
2. Discourage auto-oriented strip commercial development. Commercial Centers should not be developed in a linear strip along a roadway or be completely auto-oriented. Design new Commercial Centers in a manner that facilitates future development and intensification of land uses on the site.
3. Develop Commercial Centers as compact clusters or mixed-use nodes with appropriate site design features to accommodate shared parking in the rear of buildings and ease of pedestrian movement to minimize impacts on adjacent areas, and to encourage a unique character.
4. Locate the most intensive commercial uses, such as restaurants, car washes, grocery stores, gas stations/ convenience stores and drive through facilities nearer to the major street or roadway and furthest from the residential area (unless contained within a mixed use center). Lighting, dumpsters, loading docks and other service areas should be screened from residences.
5. Design buildings and land uses at the edge of the center to be an appropriate transition to lower density residential uses. Examples of appropriate edge land uses include apartments, mixed use residential buildings, offices, assisted living facilities, or child care centers. Transitional elements such as greater setbacks and enhanced screening should be required for buildings that are out of character with the adjacent residential district, such as buildings that exceed the maximum allowed height of the adjacent district.
6. Develop smaller stores next to larger anchor stores in centers to encourage small businesses and to provide a variety of goods and services for customers utilizing the centers.
7. Encourage multiple street connections to adjacent residential neighborhoods to allow convenient access for neighboring residences and pedestrians without the use of arterial streets, but exercise care in designing the street network to minimize undesirable traffic impacts.
8. Encourage commercial development at ¼ or ½ mile between major intersections in order to create centers that are centrally-located within each square mile to facilitate easier pedestrian access and also allow for vehicular access points that meet the city's Access Management Policy.
9. Discourage "four corner commercial development" – with commercial uses at all four corners of an intersection – in order to promote walkability and ease of movement within each commercial center and to reduce local traffic congestion at major intersections. Exceptions to this guideline can be made for neighborhood-scale commercial centers intended to provide walkable access to adjacent residential areas.
10. Design streets,public spaces, buildings, and parking areas to enhance pedestrian activity and support multiple modes of transportation, including transit.
11. Provide public amenities such as recreational facilities, plazas, squares and other types of green spaces and meeting areas open to public.
12. Provide for a variety of housing opportunities, including higher-density housing, within and adjacent to the Commercial Center.
13. Elevate building design for centers.

There are many types of Commercial Centers, with different scales and functions. They can include shopping centers or districts (such as neighborhood centers, large scale retail malls, strip centers, and traditional store-front retail settings), residential mixed use centers, office parks, business parks, stand-alone corporate office campuses, research and technology parks, and Downtown Lincoln. Within Lincoln, outside of Downtown, the largest commercial centers are designated as Regional Centers. Regional centers have the greatest potential impact on adjacent land uses and public infrastructure, so it is important that they are sited well in advance of development.

The following section describes the general characteristics of Regional Centers along with their location. Other types of commercial centers are briefly described, and their location is generally in accordance with the Future Land Use map "Commercial" designation. Smaller commercial areas less than five acres in size need not be identified specifically on the Future Land Use map, but should still develop in accordance with the principles of the Plan.

Regional Centers

Regional Centers typically contain one million or more square feet of developed building space. They generally include a unique blend of commercial and other compatible land uses. Within this type of center, one may find retail shopping, restaurants, entertainment complexes, cultural and artistic institutions, offices, personal and business service facilities, public institutions and governmental functions, and the center should include residential uses. The scale of such centers can offer a sense of place with a unique character or cohesive theme. Regional Centers are also identified as Primary Mixed Use Redevelopment Nodes as discussed in more detail in the *E2: Infill and Redevelopment*.

Many Regional Centers are large scale retail centers that include a mall with several department store anchors and numerous small shops, as well as adjacent commercial development with stand-alone restaurants and stores, such as Gateway Mall or SouthPointe Pavilions.

Regional centers are unique in that they have their own zoning district (B-5, Planned Regional Business). Most notably, B-5 is the only zoning district outside of Downtown that allows for large movie theater complexes (up to six screens), with one complex allowed per regional center.

Regional Centers should be geographically well dispersed throughout the Lincoln urban area, roughly four to six miles apart. The locations of existing Regional Centers are shown on the Regional Commercial Centers map and they are shown as "Commercial" on the Future Land Use map. Should any new Regional Centers be proposed during the planning period they should be sited on the map well in advance of development so that their potential impact may be considered as part of the development review process.

Community Centers

Community Centers may vary in size from approximately 250,000 to 600,000 square feet of commercial space. They are intended to be smaller in scale and intensity of uses than Regional Centers and serve a more targeted market and geographic area. Community Centers tend to be dominated by retail and service activities, although they can also serve as campuses for corporate office facilities and should include a mix of residential uses.

Community Centers can have a community-wide appeal but primarily serve a geographic subarea within Lincoln and surrounding areas within the County. They should be located approximately 1 to 1 ½ miles apart, depending upon their size, scale, function, and area population. Community Centers are typically sited in advance of development and shown as "Commercial" on the Future Land Use map.

Neighborhood Centers

Neighborhood Centers typically range in size from 50,000 to 250,000 square feet of commercial space. They provide services and retail goods oriented to the neighborhood level, with significant pedestrian orientation and access. Residential mixed use is encouraged. Neighborhood centers are a key element of the Great Neighborhoods concept discussed in the associated Goal and Element. Well-designed Neighborhood Centers can support local businesses and entrepreneurship, strengthen neighborhood identity, and provide gathering spaces.

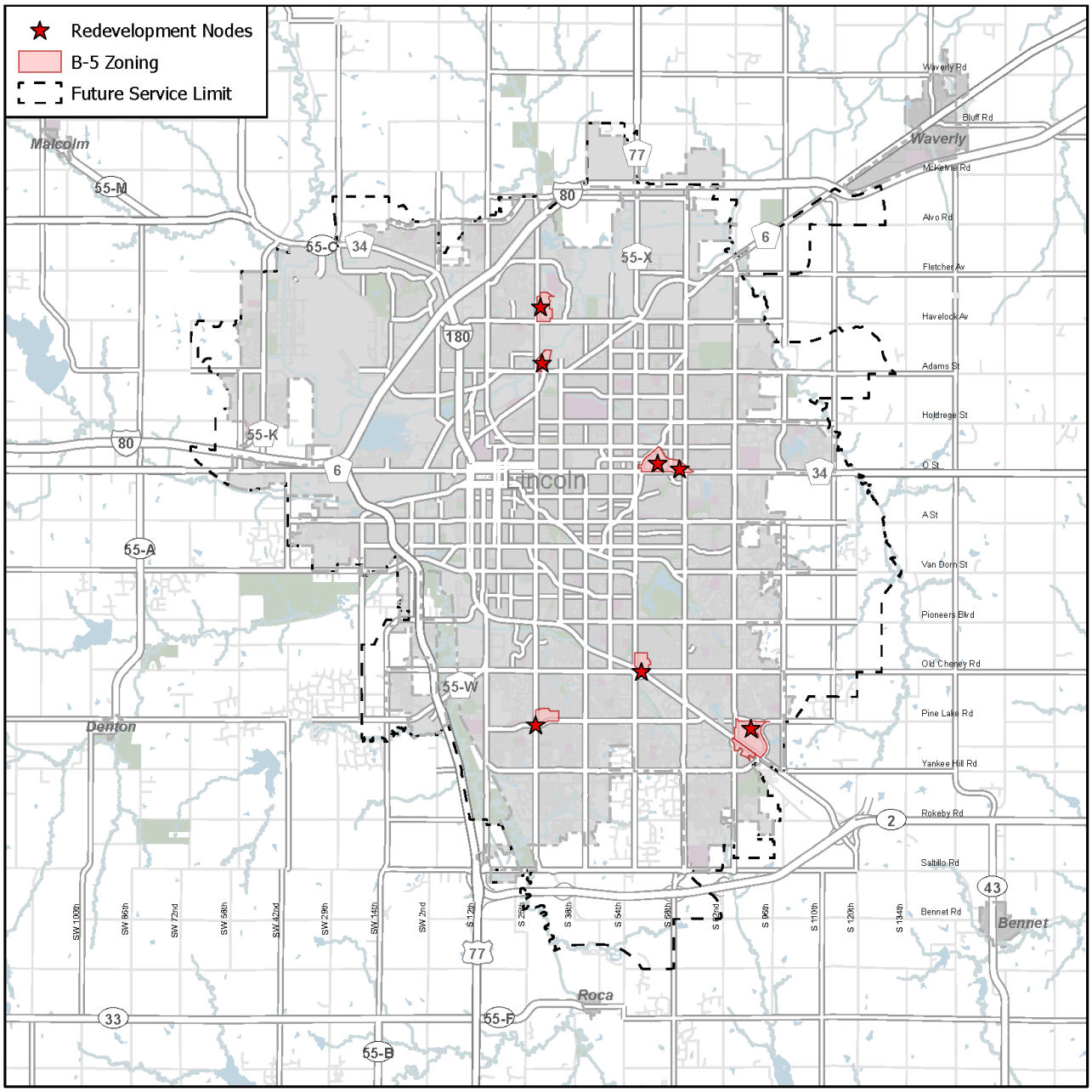
These centers typically serve the neighborhood level and should be easily accessed without the use of a personal vehicle. Neighborhood Centers should be located approximately ½ mile apart, depending upon their size, scale, function and the population of the surrounding area. Future Neighborhood Centers are typically not sited on the Future Land Use map in advance but are identified as development plans are approved.

PlanForward encourages appropriately scaled neighborhood commercial centers that are integrated with surrounding residential areas and connected to parks, schools, trails, transit, and other community destinations. Centers should prioritize walkability, attractive public spaces, pedestrian and bicycle connections, compatible building design, and a diverse mix of neighborhood-serving uses. By balancing economic activity with neighborhood compatibility, commercial centers can serve as important social, economic, and civic anchors that contribute to the long-term livability, resilience, and sense of place of the community.

Other Types of Commercial Centers

Other types of commercial centers in Lincoln include office centers and highway-oriented commercial centers. These should generally be dispersed throughout the community in appropriate locations shown as “Commercial” on the Future Land Use map.

Figure E3.e: Regional Centers

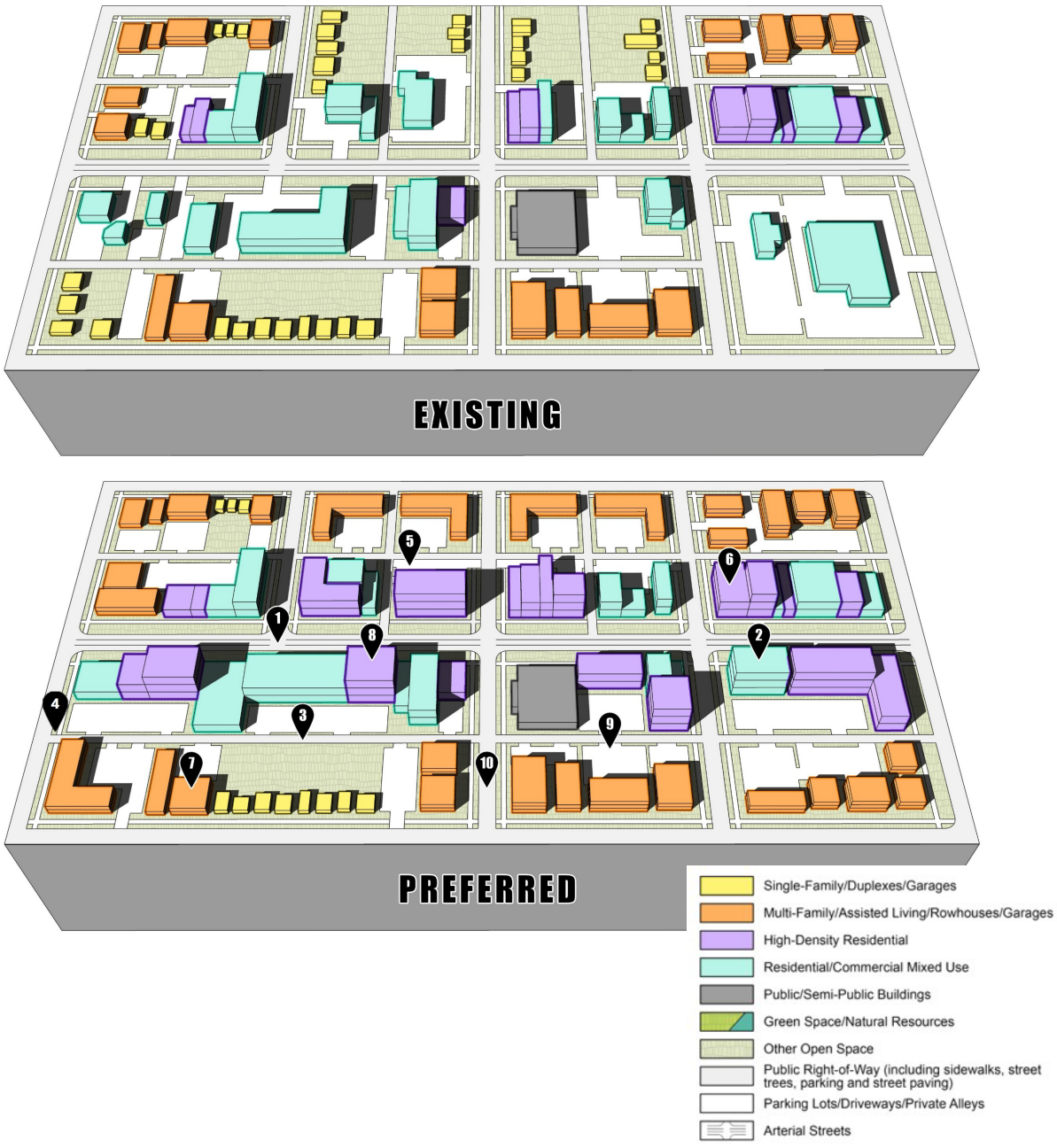


Commercial Infill

A variety of commercial land uses seek infill and redevelopment locations. There are numerous opportunities throughout the community including many existing commercial centers that are not fully occupied or do not fully utilize their site. In 2024, the City removed most of the off-street parking requirements for commercial districts in Lincoln. This change provides for additional infill opportunities as many commercial areas do not need expansive parking areas that were previously required.

The *P14: Commercial Infill* includes general guidelines for commercial infill. The following text and image show how commercial design principles can be utilized to create a high-quality commercial redevelopment project that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Figure E3.f: Commercial Infill Design Strategies



1. Encourage additional vehicular access to an arterial street.
2. Encourage a Floor Area Ratio that exceeds to existing/previous commercial uses on the site.
3. Face existing residential uses with new residential uses rather than the backs of commercial buildings unless existing residential faces the opposite direction such as along an alley.
4. Discourage commercial driveways that interrupt the blockface of a residential street, especially when residences face the street.
5. Encourage shared driveways and interconnected parking lots where possible.
6. Orient buildings to the street, especially corners.
7. Maintain or adaptively reuse existing structures (especially historical structures) where possible.
8. Encourage a vertical mix of residential and commercial use types.
9. Encourage shared parking between land uses with different peak demand periods.
10. Maintain or enhance on-street parking resources, especially in established/historic commercial districts

Industrial Centers

Industrial employment is considered an employment sector with moderate growth potential for the city and county. Based on population projections, PlanForward expects the demand for nearly 1.9 square miles of additional industrial property over the planning period. There are currently nearly nine square miles of undeveloped land designated for Industrial on the Future Land Use map. This existing undeveloped area will absorb most new industrial demand in the planning period. Industrial areas are shown on the Future Land Use map well in advance of development in order to ensure public safety and adequate infrastructure. In addition, since industrial sites often have specific requirements - such as interstate/highway/rail access, utilities, minimal topography and separation from residential uses - it is important to identify sites that meet these criteria and reserve them for future industrial development capacity.

The Future Land Use map includes two types of industrial uses: Industrial and Light Industrial.

Industrial

In general, the Industrial land use category is for a wide range of traditional industrial uses including manufacturing, processing and assembly uses such as Conti Tech, Archer Daniels Midland, and Kawasaki. In the past, large industrial users were often located in isolation from each other; preferably new industries should locate together in planned industrial centers. Many industrial centers also include some warehouse, storage and contractor yard uses with a minor amount of supporting commercial use — but industrial centers should be and usually are over 75% industrial use.

New industrial centers should be distant from existing or planned residential areas. Transitional uses (such as offices or commercial uses) should develop between industrial centers and residential uses. In redeveloping areas, lesser setbacks may be acceptable due to the existing conditions, as long as industrial zoning does not get closer to existing residences. Each planned industrial district should be established only after further consideration of site characteristics, buffering and appropriate zoning.

Light Industrial

The Light Industrial category is for industrial uses that have a minimal impact on surrounding properties. They could include lighter manufacturing uses with some additional office and retail uses located within the center, such as the Horizon Business Center located near 14th & Pine Lake Road south of Lincoln Southwest High School.

Light industrial centers can be located more closely to residential uses than traditional industrial centers, though residential uses should be buffered through landscaping, setbacks, and transitional uses, such as office or open space. In redeveloping areas, smaller setbacks may be acceptable due to the existing conditions, as long as industrial zoning does not get closer to existing residences.

The land use categories are shown on the Future Land Use map in the *Growth Framework section.*

Potential Large Employer Opportunity Areas

When locating large employers all efforts should be made to utilize sites identified on the Future Land Use map for Commercial or Industrial uses. However, in some cases an employer may need to look elsewhere to find a viable site. These "second tier" sites may currently have limited infrastructure, but some employers may find them desirable due to their large size, highway and/or rail accessibility, and remoteness from residential areas. In some cases these sites may even be outside the Future Service Limit. In order to support economic development efforts, these "second tier" sites should be given serious consideration if needed for a large employer.

Listed below are items to consider when looking at sites not currently shown on the Future Land Use map for Commercial or Industrial uses:

- The site must be annexed prior to development.
- City infrastructure and services, such as fire and police, should be available.
- The site should have direct access to an arterial street or highway to limit the impact on adjacent local streets. A traffic impact analysis may be required.
- Development of the site should have minimal impact on surrounding residences and sensitive environmental areas.

Policies Related to this Element

P5: Downtown

P6: Nodes and Corridors

P7: Redevelopment Incentives

P8: Infill and Redevelopment

P9: Skilled, Diverse, and Trained Workforce

P10: Supporting Small Businesses

P11: Parking Requirements

P12: Economic Growth

P13: Commercial and Industrial Centers

P14: Commercial Infill

P15: Infrastructure and Economic Development

P16: Rural Economy

P17: Predictability

P34: Urban Design Standards

P37: Historic Preservation

P68: Transportation and Economic Health

Goals Related to this Element

G3: High-Quality Workforce

G4: Economic Opportunity

G5: Equity and Inclusion

G14: Technology

E4: Environmental Resources



This element includes an outline of the guiding principles for environmental resources, a discussion of environmental resource features and a long range planning and implementation approach with associated strategies, entitled "The Greenprint Challenge."

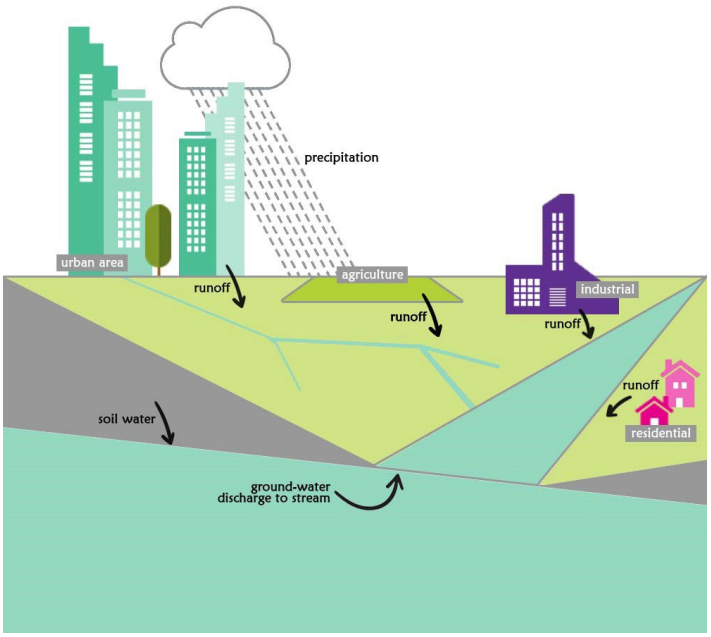
Lancaster County is characterized by flat and rolling plains, sloping toward the east from a high elevation of 1,520 feet in the southwest, to its lowest point of 1,080 feet where Salt Creek exits the northeastern portion of the county. The Salt Creek basin defines most of the County's topography, with portions of the Middle Big Blue (southwest), Big Nemaha (southeast) and Little Nemaha (east) basins also entering the County borders.

Surface water flows in over 400 miles of warm water streams over the gentle slope, contributing to numerous ponds and lakes, including 16 major lakes between 20 and 1,800 acres each, mostly built in the 1960s by the Army Corps of Engineers. These lakes provide recreation and habitat for the people and animals of Lancaster County. Surface water is susceptible to pollution in the form of sedimentation and contamination from runoff. Fertilizers and sediment are the most common water quality problems in the County's streams and lakes. Agriculture, construction, and urban runoff are the primary sources of water pollution. The Watershed Management division of Lincoln Transportation and Utilities and the Lower Platte South Natural Resource District (NRD) partner to design management plans that address both the quantity and quality of surface water.

Ground water seeps into the ground and collects, is stored, and moves slowly through layers of soil. Groundwater is almost exclusively the source of drinking water in Lancaster County. Generally, groundwater quality and quantity are higher in the southern portions of the County. Residential, agricultural, and industrial users outside the urbanized area obtain about 25% of the water used in the Dakota aquifer beneath Lancaster County. High salinity in the northern part of the county makes groundwater more difficult to acquire.

Groundwater contamination includes infiltration of agricultural chemicals into supplies. Small areas of contamination, mostly in the urban area, have also been identified. The Lower Platte South NRD, Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy, and other public and private non-profit entities work together in programs to cap abandoned wells, protect wellhead areas, and educate the public on proper use and disposal of potential contaminants.

Figure E4a: Water Cycle



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A critical element to environmental resource protection is maintaining the natural systems that support wildlife. Wildlife includes white-tailed deer, a wide variety of songbirds, ground birds, small mammals, migrating and resident water fowl, insects, and a variety of fish species. Large mammals include predators such as foxes, coyotes, and bobcats. Many species such as raccoons, squirrels, rabbits, and opossums are commonly seen in both urban and rural areas. Lancaster County is also home to several State and Federal threatened and endangered species which are discussed later in this element. Recent decreases in some pollinator species, drawing national attention, are also a priority for research and habitat restoration.

The soils of Lancaster County are intimately tied to groundwater. Soils are widely varied in the County with the most common being the Sharpsburg, Wymore, Pawnee, Judson, and Kennebec soil series. Generally, soils north of Lincoln show higher infiltration rates, are able to hold more water, and are more likely to be saline. Soils to the south have slower infiltration rates and higher run-off potential. Soil erosion is a primary concern as agricultural production forms a major economic base for Lincoln and Lancaster County. Thirty-one percent of soils in the non-urbanized areas of Lancaster County are classified as Prime Farmland and are located primarily along streams and bottomland.

Air quality in Lancaster County has historically been high. Lancaster County benefits from prevailing westerly winds and an extensive rural landscape between Lincoln and Denver, CO. The level of air pollution as measured against standards set by the US Environmental Protection Agency is low. The Lincoln – Lancaster County Health Department conducts regular air quality monitoring activities and provides up to date information on their website.

Lancaster County boasts a diverse set of environmental resources and landscape types that should be respected and maintained. The *Greenprint Challenge*, developed by the City of Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department, Parks and Recreation, and the Lower Platte South NRD in 2001, provides an approach for sound and sensitive urban and rural development that is interwoven with the community's desire for maintaining and enhancing the ecological and economic benefits of our natural and cultural environment. Although over 20 years old, the resources identified, and the recommended principles for their protection, in the Greenprint Challenge are still applicable today and will continue to be in the future.

Lancaster County's environmental resources reside within a broad range of settings that should be considered as policy and development decisions are made. PlanForward should consider both the local and broader regional and global impacts of actions affecting environmental resources. Both the rural and urban areas should receive equal priority in the planning process as environmental resources are found throughout Lancaster County. Cooperative relationships with public and private partners should be reinforced with the emphasis on environmental resource features rather than patterns of ownership. The community should capitalize on the economic benefits that the preservation of environmental resources can provide. Well managed environmental resources generate and reinforce business opportunities.

Signature landscapes are those areas and natural features that are unique to a region and contribute to the identity of the community. The Lincoln and Lancaster County community's landscape is primarily shaped by Salt Creek and its tributaries and the natural features within the basin including riparian and floodplain areas, freshwater and unique saline wetlands, wooded corridors and urban forests, and rolling hills covered in agricultural crops, pasture, and rare fragments of remnant tallgrass prairie. As open spaces are identified for conservation or inclusion as public parks, the preservation, enhancement and restoration of our environmental resources and signature landscapes should be included in planning.

The maintenance of healthy soil is critical for the long-term survival of both natural habitat and agriculturally productive land. Healthy soil is composed not only of minerals but also of the roots that wind through them, decaying organic matter, and the bacteria, fungus, and invertebrates that feed on them. The region known as the Great Plains once

boasted a thick layer of healthy soil, rich in organic material and supporting one of the most diverse ecoregions on the planet - prairie. Maintaining a diverse range of plants ultimately supports a healthier environment for all plants and animals. Plants are a basic environmental building block. They provide habitat and food for animals, as well as aid in sustaining other vegetation that holds the soil and protects the water. Plants and animals do not exist in isolation. They interact with each other and reside within an integrated habitat. Implementation of PlanForward needs to respect biological connections that exist today and provide responsive means for maintaining those associations. Plants and soil work together as a natural solution for carbon sequestration. Healthy soil and plant communities hold carbon in their organic material and keep it from escaping into the atmosphere. Agricultural and development practices that work to protect soils and maintain healthy plant cover are important for reduction of carbon in the atmosphere.



Although Lincoln and Lancaster County are a part of the tallgrass prairie ecoregion, European settlement, which included the suppression of historic wildfires, led to the proliferation of trees, particularly along waterways. As Lincoln and surrounding villages began to grow, trees were planted to provide shade, firewood, building material, food, and to beautify neighborhoods and common spaces. This Urban Forest represents a significant community investment, both public and private. Although not technically part of the natural environment, the environmental benefits are far-reaching and highly important to the community.

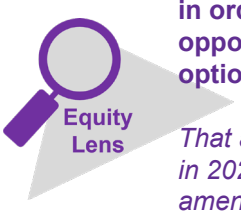
The Urban Forest is composed of privately owned trees and the Community Forest, made up of trees in public right-of-way and on public land, such as parks and open spaces. Many of the trees have been deliberately planted, but some are volunteer trees from native stock or offspring of planted trees. Care for the Community Forest is a public obligation carried out primarily by the Parks and Recreation Department. Comprehensive and adaptive urban forestry management approaches should be applied to sustain the city's urban forest; it is essential that adequate human and financial resources be allocated and specifically dedicated to sustaining our community's expanding public green infrastructure in conjunction with increasing development and population growth.

While planning for future growth is integral to PlanForward, it is equally important that environmental resource features be accorded similar attention. The community should invest planning resources into the early identification of those areas that are most valued as part of the *Greenprint Challenge*. This principle supports the notion of "getting ahead of the game" by knowing what resources are most valued, where they are located, and what actions should be made within the broader planning process to secure their future for the community.

Maintaining a balance between the natural and human built environment is always delicate. The policies of PlanForward should strive to incorporate such uses in the full range of urban and rural landscapes. As cities and villages expand, establishing corridors and districts of green should be part of the growth process. This often requires the advanced delineation of these areas and the means for securing their ongoing protection and maintenance. Securing the long-term permanence of green space is a basic dilemma in natural resources planning. The use of "green space development incentives" (e.g., setting aside non-buildable areas, creating green space preserves, density bonuses) should be a primary consideration in implementing this plan.

Local Food

The local food movement was born of a desire to provide a secure source of nutritious food that has a reduced impact on the environment and increased benefit to the health of consumers. Many urban areas have few sources of fresh produce, meats, and dairy products, and many consumers must rely upon convenience foods and fast food restaurants.



The 2021 version of the Comprehensive Plan included an action step supporting urban gardens throughout the community in order to provide additional opportunities for healthy food options.

That action step was implemented in 2025 through a zoning text amendment that increased the opportunities for locating an urban garden within Lincoln.

Food that is transported over great distances, sometimes from other continents, consumes a great deal of energy in that transport and produces a corresponding amount of greenhouse gases. Production of food closer to the urban center, if not within it, reduces the distance food must be transported, increases the freshness of food available, supports the local agricultural economy, and provides nutritious food to those who might not otherwise be able to obtain it.

Local food may be produced in the rural area of the County, or counties nearby, or it may also be produced within the urban area itself. In any case, the preservation of land for food production both nearby and within the City is integral to local food opportunities. Prime farmland within the County should be preserved for its agricultural value as well as potential for food production.

Within the City, community gardens, bee keeping, chicken coops, farmer's markets, and local cooperative markets are all important links in the local food chain. Building a strong local food network takes the cooperation of both public and private sectors. Local food advocates such as Community Crops, Nebraska Food Cooperative, and the University of Nebraska Extension Service have been at the forefront in the provision of local food program support.

In 2023 the *City of Lincoln Local Food System Plan* was adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan. The Local Food System Plan seeks to strengthen the security of food produced, processed, and consumed in Lincoln, and is organized around four primary goals.

- Goal 1: Increase and ensure access to healthy food for all
- Goal 2: Invest in a thriving local food and farm community to increase local food production and food security
- Goal 3: Promote food production practices that protect soil, water, and air
- Goal 4: Reduce food waste

The Mayor's Committee on Local Food is tasked with coordinating implementation of items in the Local Food Action Plan. The Committee is comprised of a wide-ranging group of Lincoln's local food stakeholders.

Environmental Resources Categories

As a PlanForward land use category, "environmental resources" represent an important part of today's urban and rural landscapes. Such features need to be valued and sustained as part of the overall planning process if they are to remain as vital parts of the natural heritage left for succeeding generations. These features help to define the County's unique sense of place — geographically, culturally, and temporally. The Plan fully recognizes the harmony and connections that exist within and among these features.

Thirteen separate environmental resource features are recognized in the Plan. The *Greenprint Challenge* map displays generalized locations within the county in which these resources categories may be found. For a more detailed map, the Natural Resources Geographic Information System (NRGIS) map can be accessed, and categories can be toggled off and on to view their location.

This section includes a brief description of each of the Plan's environmental resource features and their benefits. Several of these features are viewed through the lens of ecosystem services. Ecosystem services are the various benefits that humans derive from functioning natural ecosystems. Examples of ecosystem service benefits include:

- protecting the quality of air, water, and soil;
- preserving biodiversity, including pollinators that support agricultural food production;
- natural climate solutions, including floodwater management and carbon sequestration and storage; and
- cultural benefits including recreation, wellness associated with people experiencing time in nature, contributing to a unique sense of place for our community.

Native Prairie



Tallgrass prairie, a native landscape dominated by tall growing grasses, once extended from Canada to Texas, and from eastern Nebraska to Indiana. Tallgrass prairie plants develop robust root systems extending up to twenty feet into soil making them durable in a variety of conditions including periodic drought and fire. Over time, these root systems generated rich deep soil which encouraged extensive conversion to agricultural use. Today, tallgrass prairie is one of the rarest ecosystems on Earth with less than 2% to 3% remaining overall, and about 2% remaining in Nebraska. About 1.6% of Lancaster County remains in tallgrass prairie – about 8,600 acres, or 13 square miles. Notable prairie sites in Lancaster County include Nine Mile Prairie, Pioneers Park Nature Center, and Spring Creek Prairie. About 40% of the remaining virgin (unplowed) prairie in Lancaster County is located in the Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch.

The rich soil of tallgrass prairie supports 400 species of grasses, sedges, wildflowers, and occasional shrubs that in turn support a diversity of birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles, and insects. (400 plant species, more than 300 species of resident and migratory birds, 55 mammal species, 53 species of amphibians and reptiles, and 53 butterfly species). An acre of tallgrass prairie can contain 10 million insects in late summer with many of them acting as plant pollinators. Connecting areas of native prairie with reestablished prairie supports preservation of native flora and fauna, and rebuilding of topsoil lost to erosion from water and wind.

The Prairie Corridor on Haines has large areas of conserved native tallgrass prairie on each end - Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center on the west and Pioneers Park Nature Center on the east. The Prairie Corridor also contains unique saline and freshwater wetland habitat, and stream corridors and riparian habitat. The Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan describes biological and physical attributes of a functional prairie ecosystem. (Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 2nd edition, 2018) The Prairie Corridor as a whole has the potential to achieve these attributes of a functional prairie ecosystem indicating its significance for conservation. [Master Plan (for) Salt Valley Greenway and Prairie Corridor, The Flatwater Group, Inc., August 2012].

The biodiversity of native prairies is important for natural pest control, agricultural crop pollination, and preservation of native wildlife habitat – keeping common species common.

Native prairie also presents benefits for natural carbon sequestration and storage. Underground roots and organic matter of tallgrass prairie can be two to four times greater than that above ground. Soil microbial processes generate organic carbon that is stored within the soil. This storage ability is cumulative over time, so prairie soil is able to sequester or store large volumes of carbon underground in a natural, safe, effective, and reliable way. An additional benefit of this “grassland carbon storage system” is that the sequestered/stored carbon is supporting a lush prairie ecosystem above ground supporting other important ecosystem services and public values.

Grassland soil carbon is being recognized as an important natural element of climate action and resilience. A 2024 discussion paper estimates that 34% of the Earth’s terrestrial carbon stock is held in grasslands, primarily in the soils, and that well managed grasslands have the potential to be more stable carbon stores than forests because of their ability to survive drought and fire. (Valuing Grasslands, Critical Ecosystems for Nature, Climate and People, Grasslands, Rangelands, Savannahs and Shrublands (GRASS) Alliance, February 2024) Studies indicate that up to 2/3’s of soil carbon can be lost to agricultural cultivation. Reestablishing tall grass prairie can rebuild soil carbon stocks in former cropland.

Prairies also provide a public recreation and economic development benefit. Nationally and regionally, participation in nature and trail-based outdoor recreation are increasing. Wildlife viewing increased 20% between 2011 and 2016 (National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation from the U.S. Bikers on non-paved trails increased 26% between 2011 and 2016. Trail runners increased 53% between 2011 and 2016 (the Outdoor Recreation Participation Top Line Report 2017, from the Outdoor Foundation).

The Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch provides a significant economic development opportunity for Lincoln and Lancaster County. It is projected that upon completion, the Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch will result in more than 29,000 annual visits with an annual economic impact on Lancaster County of $4.3 million and 53 full-time equivalent jobs. (The Annual Economic Impact of the Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch Project, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bureau of Business Research, July 2018).

Freshwater Wetlands



This feature refers to areas that have hydric (i.e., water-bearing) soils, are frequently if not regularly moist, and are home to water tolerant plants. These types of wetlands are distinguished from “saline wetlands” by the lack of salt in the water that keep them wet. Freshwater wetlands are more prevalent in the county than are saline wetlands; however, they provide important water quality and habitat functions. The use of many freshwater and saline wetlands are regulated under Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act.

Saline Wetlands



Nebraska’s Eastern Saline Wetlands are a rare and unique landscape that once covered more than 20,000 acres in the Salt Creek Basin. Salt deposits on the soils of saline wetlands attracted wildlife, was a source of salt for Indigenous People, and served as an early industry supporting the establishment and development of the city of Lincoln. Today less than 4,000 acres remain, mostly in small fragments less than 20 acres in size. A majority of remaining Eastern Saline Wetlands are located along Little Salt Creek and Rock Creek in Lancaster and Saunders County.

Over the past 20 years, the Saline Wetlands Conservation Partnership has acquired from willing sellers about 1,600 acres of land containing saline wetlands, ranging in size from 7 acres to 220 acres. An additional 800 acres containing saline wetlands are protected with conservation easements. The Partnership is also coordinating saline wetland restoration projects and improving public access.

Wetlands are among the most productive and biologically diverse habitats on earth. Nebraska Eastern Saline Wetlands are rich in invertebrate life and frequented by a variety of migratory shore birds, other bird species, and wildlife. Nebraska Eastern Saline Wetlands support more than 230 species of migratory and resident birds, and have been identified as an Audubon Important Bird Area critical to maintaining healthy bird populations. In addition to many unique invertebrate, bird, and plant species, the Eastern Saline Wetlands are also home to familiar native mammal, fish, and reptile species (672 insect species identified through the Salt Marsh Inventory of Insects, 1992-2010, University of Nebraska-Lincoln).

Three plant species found growing in saline wetlands are rare in Nebraska. The Salt Creek Tiger Beetle, one of the rarest creatures on earth, is only found in Eastern Saline Wetlands and is on the Federal listing of endangered species.

This biodiversity is important for preservation of unique native wildlife habitat, including rare and endangered species, and for preservation of unique and rare saline wetlands that are part of the natural and cultural heritage of Lincoln and Lancaster County.

Both freshwater and saline wetlands are important for natural water management. Freshwater and saline wetlands are the “kidneys” of the landscape filtering water of pollutants. Freshwater and saline wetlands control flooding by slowing down, conveying, and collecting stormwater runoff, and recharge local water tables and aquifers by allowing water to absorb back into the soil.

Threatened and Endangered Species



This feature refers to those plant and animal species whose continued existence have been identified by Federal and/ or State officials as being threatened or endangered. Threatened and endangered species in Lancaster County include the Salt Creek tiger beetle (State and Federal Endangered), Western Prairie Fringed Orchid (State and Federal Threatened), Saltwort or Western Glasswort (State Endangered), and the Northern Long-Eared Bat (State and Federal Threatened).

Basins and Streams



This feature refers to the region’s watersheds and the waterways they produce. These areas are demarcated by ridge lines that define the top of each basin. The majority of the county falls within the Salt Creek Basin with its numerous tributaries to Salt Creek forming smaller watersheds or sub-basins. A portion of the county in the extreme southeast also drains to the Nemaha River Basin. The Watershed Management section of the *E8: Energy & Utilities* further describes the Salt Creek and associated sub-basins and the management plans being created for them.

Floodplains



This feature refers to land that is susceptible to flooding or that has flood prone soils. Approximately 13.8% of Lancaster County is covered by floodplains. Floodplains provide multiple benefits to both the natural (flood storage, habitat, water quality) and built (recreation, public health and safety, economic) environments. The overriding policy for the floodplain is a "No Adverse Impact" policy for the City and County, which means that the community has a goal of insuring that the action of one property owner does not adversely impact the flooding risk for other properties. Further discussion of floodplain and stormwater management considerations and strategies can be found in the Watershed Management section of the *E8: Energy & Utilities.*

Riparian Areas

This feature is closely associated with the Basins and Streams, Floodplains, and Wetlands features. Streams and riparian areas associated with Salt Creek and its tributaries provide aquatic and terrestrial habitat. Wetlands are often located in riparian corridors. These linear corridors offer cover and natural connections for wildlife movement. Low-lying areas near streams are often floodplains that collect, convey, and store stormwater. Floodplain soils are typically high-quality organic soils that support abundant vegetation, including native woodlands.



Wilderness Park is a protected 1,475-acre area of riparian floodplain along Salt Creek along the southwest side of Lincoln. Acquisition of land for Wilderness Park was part of a comprehensive stormwater management plan for Lincoln developed and implemented in the mid-20th century. Wilderness Park is an excellent example of stream and riparian corridor conservation with multiple benefits to the community including stormwater management, wildlife habitat, and public recreation.

Connected and continuous riparian areas provide a sheltered environment for many species of wildlife to feed, drink, rest, and reproduce, and serve as movement corridors between larger habitats.

Riparian areas are used by birds for breeding, nesting, and other life stages.

Riparian and wetland areas are used by amphibian and reptile species for foraging, overwintering/hibernating, breeding, and refuge.

Riparian areas are also important for natural water management. Riparian areas provide buffers that to help to improve the quality of water (water temperature moderation, removal of pollutants and sediment) before it enters a stream or watercourse. Tree roots and leaf litter from woody organic plants are effective in nitrate removal. Riparian areas can reduce sediment transported in stormwater run-off, and reduce phosphorus entering streams and water bodies.

Riparian floodplains control flooding by slowing down, conveying and collecting stormwater runoff, and recharging local water tables and aquifers by allowing water to absorb back into the soil.

Another benefit of riparian areas is recreation and alternative transportation. Connected and continuous riparian areas provide natural corridors for trail development serving alternative transportation modes and outdoor recreation opportunities. The trail plan for Lincoln and Lancaster County overlays much of the Salt Valley Greenway.

Agricultural Lands

This feature refers to land — about 90.3 percent of the county — utilized for growing crops, raising livestock, or producing other agricultural products. Though agricultural activity is identified as a separate land use category in PlanForward, agricultural land does constitute a distinctive natural resource feature as well. These lands are an integral element in the natural landscape providing habitat as well as being a basic element of the County's historic signature landscape.



Cultural and Historic Landscapes



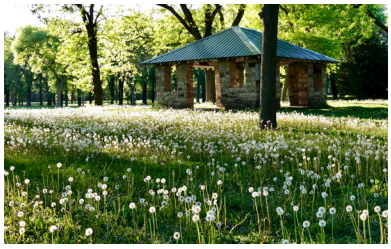
This feature refers to places that are significant because of their unique character, because significant activities or events occurred at those sites, or because persons who have had a significant impact on culture are associated with the sites. Cultural and historic landscapes are also considered in the Placemaking element, because they individually and collectively add value to the community's sense of place and hold an important place in affirming memorable images of the County's heritage. Further discussion of cultural and historic resources can be found in *E6: Placemaking*.

Views and Vistas

This feature refers to important or unique natural resources, places, structures, and landmarks. The views of these features can be from nearby or afar. Vistas refer to areas that afford significant views. Views and vistas, such as those to the State Capitol, provide key points of reference and help create the County's signature landscape. The Capitol View Corridors are also more thoroughly described in *E6: Placemaking*.



Parks, Trail Corridors, and Other Recreational Areas



While PlanForward recognizes parks, trails, and recreational areas as a separate, distinctive land use category, they are an important part of the overall county's natural resource base. They include a diverse collection of sites and facilities owned, managed, and maintained by public entities and accessible to the general community. They accommodate a variety of recreational uses including passive and active recreation, hunting, fishing, and boating. For continued discussion on other parks and recreation facilities, see *E5: Parks, Recreation & Open Space*.

Urban Forest

This feature refers to the trees and other woody plants that have been planted or grow naturally within the communities in Lancaster County. Though many may not consider the urban forest to be part of the natural environment, it represents a significant community investment — exemplified in Lincoln being a "Tree City" — with its elimination or neglect having substantially detrimental consequences. The urban forest is more thoroughly discussed in *E5: Parks, Recreation & Open Space*.

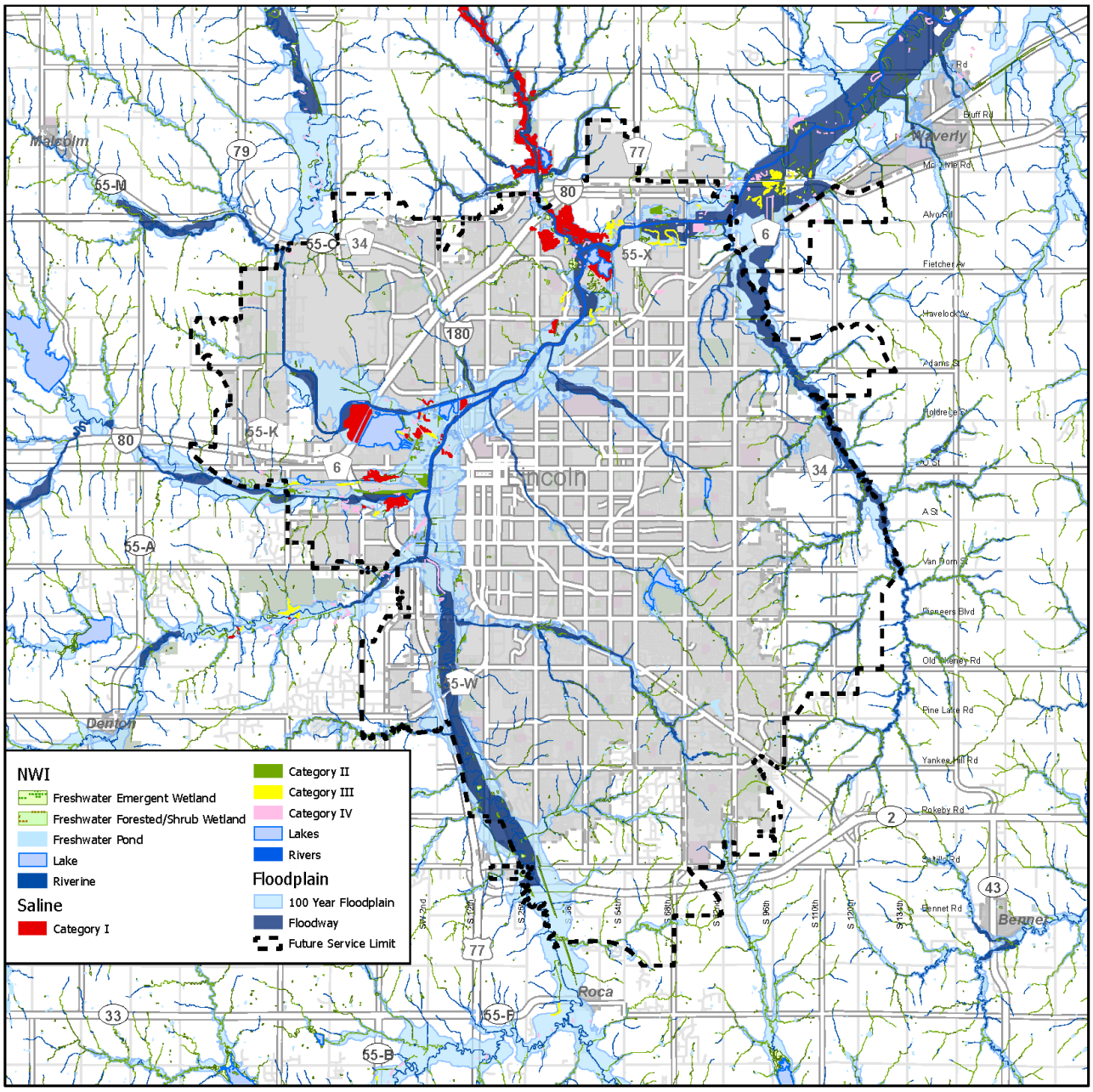


Woodlands



This feature refers to the County's natural wooded areas, especially those exhibiting bur oak/hickory associations. Woodlands in this context exclude the numerous stands of trees dominated by elm species, red cedar, mulberry, etc. This feature is also distinct from the riparian areas discussed earlier in this element.

Figure E4.b: Environmental Resources



Conservation Design

Conservation design is a type of development where buildings are grouped together on part of the site while permanently protecting the remainder of the site from development. This type of development provides great flexibility of design to fit site-specific resource protection needs.

Conservation design best practices are described in Figure E4.c with further explanation of best practices and action steps in *P18: Conservation Design*.

Figure E4.c: Conservation Design



1. Connected riparian corridors for flood storage, habitat, local food production, and recreation.
2. Areas of higher residential density to provide at least four units per acre including open space.
3. Expanded buffers around riparian areas and other critical features.
4. Certain percentage of site required to be open space, with a focus on preserving riparian corridors and areas of sensitive natural habitat and cultural resources.
5. Mix of housing types and price points.
6. Green building techniques like green roofs and solar panels.
7. Dark skies streetlight design and homeowner lighting standards that reduce light pollution.
8. Areas for growing local food.

Policies Related to this Element

P18: Conservation Design

P19: Native Prairie

P20: Ecology and Habitat

P21: Floodplains and Riparian Areas

P22: Local Food

P23: Salt Valley Greenway and Connecting Green Corridors Concept Implementation

P24: Environmental Resource Protection

P25: Open Space with Development

P26: Community Forestry Management

P55: Watershed PlanningGoals Related to this Element

Goals Related to this Element

G7: Environmental Stewardship

G8: Community Resiliency

G11: Rural Environment

E5: Parks, Recreation and Open Space

This element describes principles and strategies for acquiring and managing parks, recreation and activity centers, open space, greenways, and other recreational facilities in the community.



The Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department is the primary public sector provider of recreational services to city residents. The Department manages 176 different sites on 7,741 acres of parks and open space land. These sites include Traditional Parks (i.e. Regional, Community, and Neighborhood Parks) as well as other land or facilities that are owned and maintained by the City, detailed in the following table.

Table E5.a: Sites Managed by the Parks and Recreation Department

Site Type	Count	Acres
Traditional Parks	113	2,385
Trails**/Trailheads*	3 (trailheads)	3.9
Gardens/Plazas/Boulevards	11	27
Pools*/Golf Courses/Dog Runs*	8	822.5
Conservancy/Undeveloped	38	4,501.1
Other	3	1.5
Total	176	7,741

** Data reflects facilities not counted as part of another park.*
*** Includes ROW park units at 10th & Charleston and F Street Community Center*
**** Trail acres (520 ac) were previously included in this table. Current practice measures trails by distance in miles. Although Parks and Recreation still manage the city trail system, this data is now included in the Transportation Element.*

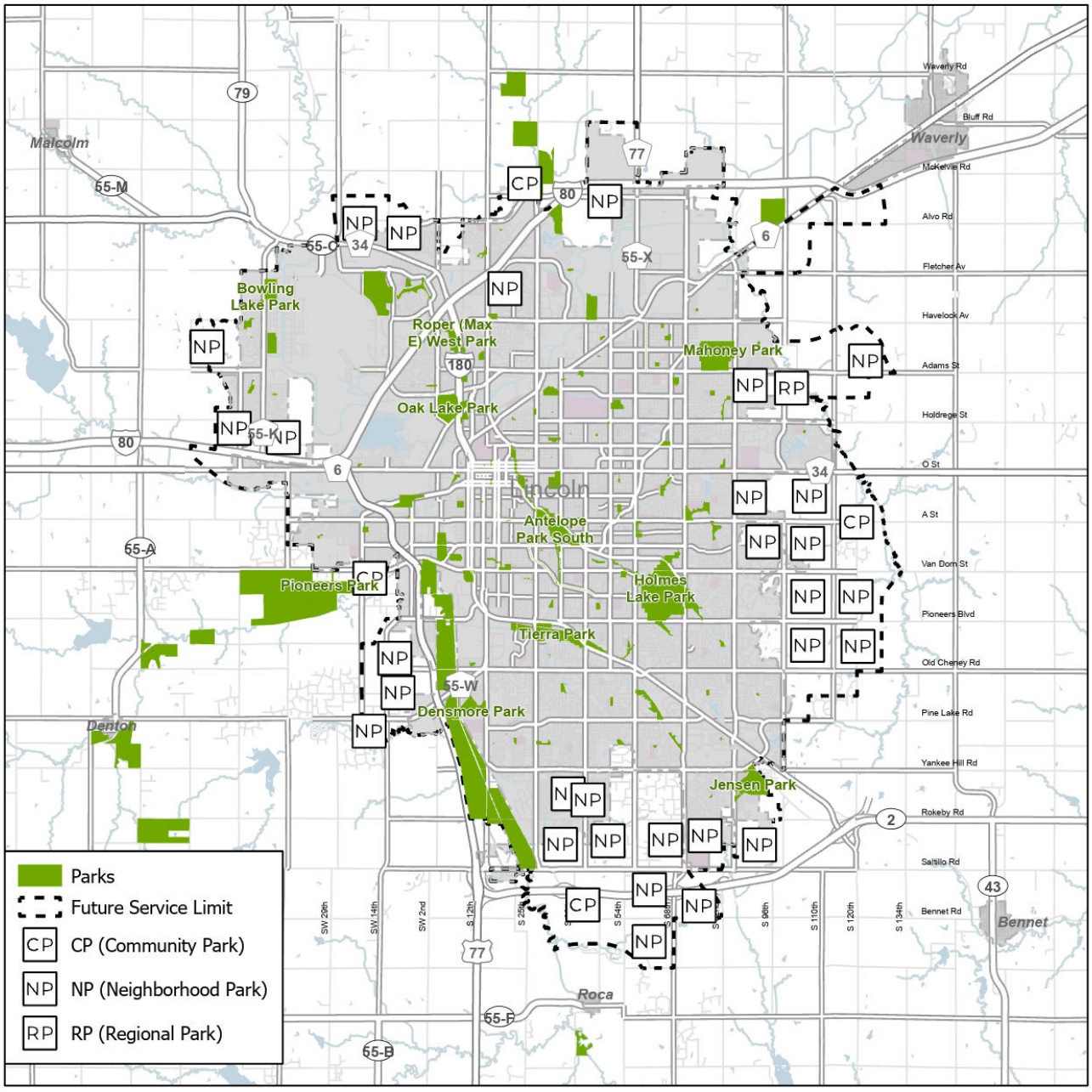
Parks and open space enhance the quality of life of the community's residents and are central to the community's economic development strategy—the community's ability to attract and retain viable businesses, industries, and employees is directly linked to quality of life issues, including indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities.

Lincoln and Lancaster County's parks, open spaces, and natural features form a defining part of the community's identity, requiring careful stewardship as the region grows. Protecting signature landscapes, expanding parkland in step with development, sustaining a healthy urban forest, and coordinating transitions in land management all depend on proactive planning and shared responsibility.

Signature landscapes are defined as those areas and natural features that are unique to Lincoln and Lancaster County and contribute to the identity of the community; acquisition and development of parks and open space areas should conserve and enhance these areas and features.

It is important that the community continue to acquire parkland and conserve open space areas commensurate with expanding development and population growth, and in accordance with the Parks Department's *10-Year Facilities Plan*, with the responsibilities for acquisition and development of parkland and conservation of open space shared among many cooperating partner agencies and organizations. In addition, it is important to anticipate the transition of sites from management by the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District to the City as surrounding areas urbanize.

Figure E5.a: Existing and Future Park Sites



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Comprehensive and adaptive urban forestry management approaches should be applied to sustain the city's urban forest; it is essential that adequate human and financial resources be allocated and specifically dedicated to sustaining our community's expanding public green infrastructure in conjunction with increasing development and population growth.



Public and private partnerships are important in the development of recreational opportunities and the preservation of environmental resources that bring a high quality of life to the City and County.

Regional Parks and Tournament Facilities

Regional Parks are tracts of land that encompass special or unique facilities and features that are of interest to diverse groups throughout the community. Regional Parks primarily provide opportunities for day use activities that may include community festival/ gathering spaces, picnicking, hiking, sports, fishing, canoeing, boating, and environmental interpretation/appreciation. Tournament Sport Facilities may exist within Regional Parks, Community Parks or as stand-alone facilities. Fields and courts for organized sports activities may be secondary or primary uses or when part of a larger park.

The current citywide Level of Service (LOS) is 2.8 acres of Regional Park land per 1,000 Lincoln residents. No set LOS goal is stated in the Plan since the size may vary depending on the feature or facility. The LOS is calculated by dividing the total acres in such parks by the city's total population in thousands. In addition, Regional Parks may attract visitors from outside the immediate area and thus do not have a defined service area.

Community Parks

Community Parks are typically 30 to 50 acre sites that are readily accessible from arterial streets and the commuter/ recreational trail system. Community Parks may include play fields and play courts for organized sports, a playground with an accessible fall surface, facilities for day use activities including a picnic shelter and restroom, seating, walking paths, and off-street parking. They may also include a swimming pool and/or a recreation center. Community Parks often include areas left in a natural state with meadows, prairies, forest, wetlands and other natural features as part of Parks and Recreation's effort to include native plants in natural and landscaped areas. Community Parks often include activity areas consistent with those located in neighborhood parks and as a result, Community Parks may serve as the Neighborhood Park for surrounding residential areas. PlanForward recognizes the need for about 150 acres of new Community Park land. Three new Community Park sites are anticipated within the plan period.

The level of service (LOS) goal for Community Parks is based on both the financial resources anticipated to be available for park development and programmatic objectives. It is anticipated that development of future Community Parks will be financed primarily through voter-approved methods including general obligation bonds and local option sales tax. There are currently 26 Community Parks both developed and undeveloped, encompassing roughly 1,388 acres, with an average size of 53.4 acres. The current citywide LOS is 4.62 acres of Community Park land per 1,000 Lincoln residents. This LOS is calculated by dividing the total acres in such parks by the city's total population in thousands. PlanForward establishes an LOS goal of 1.3 acres per 1,000 new Lincoln residents in new growth areas and a service area radius of approximately 2 miles in the urban area. Given the new Community Parks developed in growth areas, the city-wide measure by the end of the plan period, 2050, is projected to be 2.4 acres of Community Park land per 1,000 Lincoln residents. While this goal is lower than the current citywide LOS of 4.62 acres per person, it recognizes the financial resources projected to be available, and plans for the development of three

50-acre sites during the planning period of a size that will meet the programmatic objectives for Community Parks. There are currently three undeveloped Community Park sites in three quadrants of the City. Two of these sites are expected to be developed by 2050.

Figure E5.b: Community Park Diagram



Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are centrally located within areas of residential development and intended to be accessible by no more than a ten-minute walk from residences within the neighborhood. Typical activity areas include playground equipment, open lawn areas for informal games and activities or play courts with a single basketball goal for informal games, shaded seating, and walking paths. When possible, neighborhood parks are co-located with elementary schools, a concept referred to as “Sparks”. Neighborhood parks that are associated with schools are typically 2 acres in size and located so that they can be accessed by students during the day and still easily accessible to the neighborhood when school is not in session. When parks are not located with schools, an area of about 4 acres is desirable to provide some of the open play area which is provided by school playfields in a “Spark”. In some cases, Neighborhood Park services are provided within larger Community Parks.

The level of service (LOS) goal for Neighborhood Parks is based on both the financial resources anticipated to be available for park development and on programmatic objectives. It is anticipated that development of Neighborhood Parks will be financed primarily through impact fees. It is important to note that while the cost for land and development of park facilities have grown since impact fees were first instituted, these fees have not increased to match inflation, creating a backlog of Neighborhood Park development.

There are currently 65 Neighborhood Parks, both developed and undeveloped, encompassing roughly 406 acres, with an average size of 6.25 acres. The current citywide LOS is 1.4 acres of Neighborhood Park land per 1,000 Lincoln residents. This LOS is calculated by dividing the total acres in such parks by the city's total population in thousands. The Plan establishes a LOS goal of one acre per 1,000 new Lincoln residents in new growth areas. Neighborhood Parks should generally be located within the center of each mile section and be located within a ten-minute walk of each residence. Given the new Neighborhood Parks developed in growth areas, the city-wide measure by the end of the plan period, 2050, is projected to be 1.3 acres of Neighborhood Park land per 1,000 Lincoln residents. While this goal is slightly lower than the current LOS, it recognizes the financial resources projected to be available. Projected funding is based upon the current level of impact fees for Neighborhood Parks, which supports the acquisition and development of about four acres of Neighborhood Park land per square mile of residential development. Four acres are adequate to accommodate the programmatic objectives for a Neighborhood Park.

The following action step has been included in PlanForward to equitably provide for neighborhood park spaces across our community:

Equity Lens

Identify opportunities to acquire and develop Neighborhood Parks in established neighborhoods that are deficient in Neighborhood Park resources, particularly in those neighborhoods where indicators of vulnerability are higher.

Figure E5.c: Neighborhood Park Diagram



Figure E5.d: Joint School and Park Site ("Sparks") Diagram



Recreation/Community Centers and/Community Learning Centers

The Parks and Recreation Department operates six neighborhood recreation and community centers offering youth development (before and after school programs, summer day camps), recreation, leisure interest, fitness and human services programs. Three of the facilities are co-located with schools (Belmont, Calvert, and Irving), and three are freestanding buildings (Air Park, Easterday, and F Street). With the exception of the Air Park Community Center (completed in 2023), the City facilities were constructed between the 1970's and early 2000's. Therapeutic and adaptive recreation programs are a primary emphasis of programming at Easterday Recreation Center. The new Air Park Recreation Center is co-located with the Williams Branch Library and adjacent to Arnold Elementary School. A major update and expansion of the Easterday Recreation Center is also planned.

The programs and facilities offered by Parks and Recreation are part of a network of recreation and human service programs offered in the community. There are many other privately operated commercial fitness facilities, and facilities operated by non-profit organizations that offer a combination of fitness, recreation and human services programs (e.g., Lincoln YMCA facilities, Malone Community Center, Good Neighbor Center, Salvation Army, City Impact, El Centro de las Americas, Asian Community Center, Willard Community Center, Northeast Community Center, Lighthouse). Private fitness and wellness centers continue to develop and therefore no new recreation centers with an emphasis on fitness and wellness are anticipated in the planning period.

Community Learning Centers (CLCs) emerged in Lincoln in the early 1990's and are a model for school facility-based delivery of neighborhood services that support youth development, strengthen families, and improve neighborhoods. CLCs are operated by community partners in elementary, middle and high schools with high need student populations coordinated by the Lincoln Community Learning Centers initiative overseen by Lincoln Public

Schools. The Parks and Recreation Department operates four CLC's (Belmont, Calvert, McPhee and Everett), and provides core youth services at Arnold CLC that is operated by the Lincoln Housing Authority. The City of Lincoln entered into an interlocal agreement with Lincoln Public Schools in 2018 to support and sustain CLC's as a best practice model of delivering neighborhood-based services at school facilities. It is anticipated that the CLC initiative will continue to expand over time to include additional schools and neighborhoods in the future. The City should work with Lincoln Public Schools to explore the addition of "activity area" space in new elementary and middle schools to support CLC programming.

Aquatic Facilities

Aquatic Facilities are developed to provide opportunities for water recreation activities. The City of Lincoln owns and manages ten Aquatic Facilities: nine outdoor public pools, and one free-standing sprayground in Trago Park. The most recently constructed outdoor swimming pools (Highlands Pool and University Place Pool) are designed as "pool in a park" facilities. These pools feature zero depth entry, interactive water features, and a deep well for diving activities. Four of these facilities are classified as Community Pools (Highlands, Star City Shores, University Place, and Woods) and five are classified as Neighborhood Pools (Air Park, Ballard, Belmont, Eden, and Irvingdale). The City should maintain its commitment to outdoor water recreation activities; New Aquatic Facilities should be located and designed to serve quadrant areas of the community and should be readily accessible by pedestrians and bicyclists.

The current citywide LOS is 3.2 outdoor public pools per 100,000 Lincoln residents. The range of LOS for benchmark cities is 1.1 to 6.0 outdoor public pools per 100,000 residents, with an average LOS of 3.7 outdoor public pools per 100,000 residents. The City will continue to provide opportunities for aquatic recreation as described in the action steps found under the Aquatic Facilities policy.

Other Recreational Facilities and Activities

Within Lancaster County, a wide variety of recreational opportunities are presented by both public and private sectors. Lincoln Parks and Recreation has facilities ranging from golf courses to wilderness trails, from horseshoe pits to skate parks, and from public gardens to dog runs. These park facilities serve a wide range of interests, ages, cultures and activity levels. Park facilities strive to reflect the ever-changing demographics of the community they serve. Parks also serve an important economic development role and can play a large part in the decisions made by businesses and individuals as they select a future home. As the community continues to grow and diversify, it is critical that the Parks and Recreation Department continue to work with various agencies, organizations and the community to evaluate recreational needs and desires and to partner with others to make sure the quality and variety of Lincoln and Lancaster County's recreational facilities remains at the high level we currently enjoy.

The following is a summary of public and private recreational facilities in Lincoln and the surrounding area.

Parks and Recreation Facilities:

- The Parks and Recreation Department operates five public golf courses, including Ager Junior, Highlands, Holmes, Mahoney and Pioneers. This Plan assumes continued operation of five public golf courses, but no additional courses are proposed.
- Public gardens provide a rich variety of display gardens, landscape styles and plant materials for the enjoyment and education of residents and visitors. They also provide the opportunity to learn about the significant historical, cultural, and ecological roles such landscapes play in the community, i.e. Sunken Gardens.

- The City has been part of an ongoing conversation to explore the potential for establishing an indoor plant conservatory as a year-round attraction for visitors and local residents. A plant conservatory could include a variety of species ranging from local to exotic and could serve a dual function as research/educational facility.

Equity Lens

Continue to monitor local and national trends in recreation in order to provide recreational opportunities that reflect the needs and desires of the Lincoln community.

- The Parks and Recreation Department currently owns and manages five dog run facilities – Rickman's Run in southeast Lincoln, Roper Dog Run and Bowling Lake Park Dog Run in the northwest, Mahoney Dog Run in the northeast, and Stransky Dog Run in the southwest. In 2026 a sixth dog run will open at Canopy Yard in South Haymarket. The Parks and Recreation Department developed a Dog Use Facilities Master Plan in 2016, which identifies the need to continue planning for dog runs as the City grows.
- The Pioneers Park Nature Center, an interpretive facility for native prairie, plants, animals and landscapes, is owned and operated by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Facilities on Parks and Recreation land owned and/or operated by others:

- The City owns two special purpose facilities, Wood Tennis Center in Woods Park and the Hyde Observatory, that are operated by others.
- The Parks and Recreation Department leases land to several non-profits which operate special facilities on Park and Department-managed property. This includes the Lincoln Children's Museum in downtown Lincoln, the Lincoln Children's Zoo in Antelope Park, and a recreational shooting sports complex at Boosalis Park in cooperation with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, which operates the facility. The Lincoln Children's Zoo has recently undergone a major expansion of their zoo facilities and parking. All three of these facilities have both a recreational and educational mission and are open to the public on a fee basis.
- Additional license agreements with private organizations include a BMX track at Oak Lake Park, mountain bike trail at Van Dorn Park, Disk Golf courses at Tierra, Bethany and Roper Parks and Beal Slough Greenway, dedicated pickleball courts at Petersen, Eden, Ballard, and Densmore Parks and youth football fields at Sawyer Snell park.

Facilities developed as part of a City partnership:

- In collaboration with the University of Nebraska, the City participated in the development of the Breslow Ice Center in the West Haymarket area as part of a concentration of sporting facilities near downtown Lincoln and the University of Nebraska City Campus. The Breslow Ice Center is operated by UNL and includes a single ice surface, with the opportunity to add a second ice surface in the future. The facility should be operated in cooperation and coordination with the Ice Box. The Ice Box is operated by a private organization in a building



on Innovation Campus through a long-term lease agreement with UNL that expires during the Plan period. Opportunities for the integration of functions associated with the Ice Box should be explored and may include the addition of spectator seating.

- In collaboration with the University of Nebraska and Lincoln Pro Baseball, the City of Lincoln participated in the development of Haymarket Park adjacent to Downtown's historic Haymarket District. The complex includes a 4,500-seat baseball stadium operated by the Lincoln Saltdogs and a 750 seat softball stadium operated by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.
- In collaboration with the University of Nebraska, the City of Lincoln participated in the development of the Pinnacle Bank Arena adjacent to Downtown's historic Haymarket District. The facility includes a 16,000-seat indoor arena and adjacent plaza and public gathering areas.
- The Sandhills Global Youth Complex, an 8-field youth softball and baseball tournament facility located northeast of Oak Lake Park, began hosting events in April of 2025. The City of Lincoln and West Haymarket Joint Public Agency assisted in the planning and development of this project, representing another successful public-private partnership.

Other publicly owned facilities:

- Lancaster County accommodates many other outdoor activities including hunting, nature viewing, fishing, boating, swimming, picnicking, camping, and hiking. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission manages seven State Recreation Area lakes (Bluestem, Branched Oak, Conestoga, Olive Creek, Pawnee, Stagecoach, and Wagon Train) and seven Wildlife Management Areas (Jack Sinn, Little Salt Creek West, Little Salt Creek, Yankee Hill, Killdeer, Teal Lake, and Hedgefield) and one public access area (Helmuth Marsh). In addition, the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District manages five public lakes (Cottontail, Merganser, Tanglewood, Wild Plum, and Wildwood), two wildlife management areas (Little Salt Fork Marsh Preserve and Little Salt Springs) and three community wetlands with public access (Lincoln Saline Wetland Nature Center, Marsh Wren and Whitehead Saline Wetland. Other cities and villages in the county maintain their own public parks, recreation centers, and camping areas.
- Lincoln Public Schools, various private and parochial schools, and other school districts in Lancaster County play a key role in the overall system of recreational facilities and services. Schools are focal points for surrounding neighborhoods. School playgrounds and facilities may be the most significant recreation resource at the neighborhood level.
- Local colleges and universities also provide a wide range of participant activities and spectator sports available to both students and the community. Major sports, music, and entertainment programs often are held in facilities owned by colleges and universities.

Private sector facilities:

- There is a diverse range of facilities and programs available to community residents from privately operated fitness facilities to community centers offering human service programs operated by non-profit organizations. Programs and activities range from food distribution and adaptive recreation programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities to weight rooms and aerobics classes.
- The YMCA, and other private organizations sponsor programs in swimming, athletics, arts and crafts, camping, and various club activities, and provide facilities for more casual recreational activities.

- Some examples of private sector recreation facilities include bowling alleys, sport courts, soccer complexes, gyms, athletic clubs and fitness facilities and privately owned golf and miniature golf courses.
- It is likely that there will be a generational shift in recreation interests and activities due in part to increasing experience with technology as a recreational activity. It is also likely that as Lincoln continues to diversify new recreational interests will be introduced to the community. The Parks and Recreation Department should monitor and be responsive to emerging interests and seek opportunities for partnerships and collaborations with user groups to support activities and to develop facilities. Current examples of emerging recreation activities include: Skate Parks, BMX Cycling, Cyclo-Cross, Mountain Biking, Geocaching, Adventure Racing, Pickleball, Foot Golf, Flying Disk Golf and Bike Parks.



While PlanForward recognizes parks, trails, and recreational areas as a separate, distinctive land use category, they are an important part of the overall county's natural resource base. They include a diverse collection of sites and facilities owned, managed, and maintained by public entities and accessible to the general community. They accommodate a variety of recreational uses including passive and active recreation, hunting, fishing, and boating. Further discussion of specific greenways and corridors follows in this element.

Trails

The community has an existing system of multi-use trails that currently provides a trail within one mile of 95% of dwelling units in the City. The system serves users such as bicyclists, pedestrians, rollerbladers, and parents with strollers and wagons. The present system serves both commuter bicyclists and pedestrians who use the trails daily for work and shopping trips and tend to travel from point to point, and recreational bicyclists and pedestrians who tend to use the trails on a more occasional basis, seeking attractive and safe routes.

Much of the current trail system is built in the right-of-way of abandoned railroad corridors. Others are built along streams in the floodplain, along one side of major arterial streets, or as part of residential development. Maintenance of the system includes litter pick-up, mowing, trail clearing, and signage. The Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department, Lincoln Transportation and Utilities Department, and the Lower Platte South Natural Resource District are primarily responsible for trail development in Lancaster County. Lincoln Parks and Recreation, along with Lincoln Transportation & Utilities, maintain trails in the City and all of Wilderness Park while the Lower Platte South NRD maintains County trails. Volunteer organizations also assist in maintenance as well as donating significant funds for trail development.



As the community continues to grow and diversify, it is critical that the Parks and Recreation Department continue to work with various agencies, organizations and the community to evaluate recreational needs and desires and to partner with others to make sure the quality and variety of Lincoln and Lancaster County's recreational facilities remains at the high level we currently enjoy.

Most of the existing trail system has been built over the last 40 years and some of the oldest trails are beginning to require rehabilitation, either because of declining pavement condition or because use has risen to a level that a wider trail is required.



Salt Valley Greenway and Connecting Corridors

Since the first City/County Comprehensive Plan in 1961, the Salt Creek watershed has influenced planning for open space, greenways, recreation, and environmental resources in Lincoln and Lancaster County. The Salt Valley Greenway wraps around the City of Lincoln and is fed by tributaries that radiate out into the surrounding rolling hills. The effect is that of a large loop, primarily made of Salt Creek and Stevens Creek, with connecting green corridors linking urban and rural areas. Corridors which generally follow Salt Creek and its tributaries provide multiple benefits; creating connections between urban and rural areas, providing connections to the County's Salt Valley Lakes, creating green partitions which help to prevent a "wall-to-wall" urban feel, connecting habitat for the movement of wildlife, protecting floodplain, and many others. Implementation of the Salt Valley Greenway and connecting corridor concept will provide an environmental framework upon which a thriving economy can be built.

The Salt Valley Greenway includes the previously identified "Crescent Green" linear greenway along Salt Creek beginning on the north and then proceeding along Salt Creek on the west, including Wilderness Park. At 1,472 acres, Wilderness Park, located in southwest Lincoln, is the City's largest park. As its name implies, the park is a natural area that straddles the Salt Creek floodplain and stretches from Van Dorn Street on the north to Saltillo Road on the South. The Park was established to serve as flood storage for Salt Creek and as a unique park experience for residents and visitors to Lincoln. The Park also serves as a conservation area and is home to many species of plants and animals. The Greenway follows the Salt Creek floodplain south of Wilderness Park, connecting with the community of Roca and continuing south to the city of Hickman. From Hickman, the corridor proceeds east to Wagon Train Lake tributary before turning north along the Stevens Creek floodplain. An additional Greenway connection in this area follows a Salt Creek tributary near Rokeby Road. At the north end, the Greenway connects back in with Salt Creek including saline wetlands, Salt Creek tiger beetle habitat and the Crescent Green Corridor on the north, forming a continuous open space system.

The Salt Valley Greenway is important for recreation, transportation, environmental resource preservation, education, and economic development among other benefits. The opportunity to tie together multiple environmental and recreational resources would create a facility that is unique in the region and could be a platform for multiple community events attracting visitors from all over the region.

The Salt Valley Greenway would provide connectivity with current and future green corridors that extend out from Lincoln such as the MoPac Trail corridor, Murdock Trail corridor, Antelope Valley, Dietrich Bikeway, and Billy Wolff Trail Corridor. It would provide a destination for additional trails as Lincoln continues to grow. The Greenway would

also provide access to green corridors that then would extend out into the county to State Recreation Areas (SRA) and natural resource areas and beyond including the following:

- Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch corridor to Conestoga SRA and Spring Creek Prairie
- Cardwell Branch corridor to Yankee Hill SRA
- Middle Creek corridor to Pawnee SRA
- Salt Creek corridor to Killdeer and Bluestem SRA
- Oak Creek corridor to Branched Oak Lake and Nine Mile Prairie
- Salt Creek corridor east and up the Little Salt Creek and Rock Creek corridor

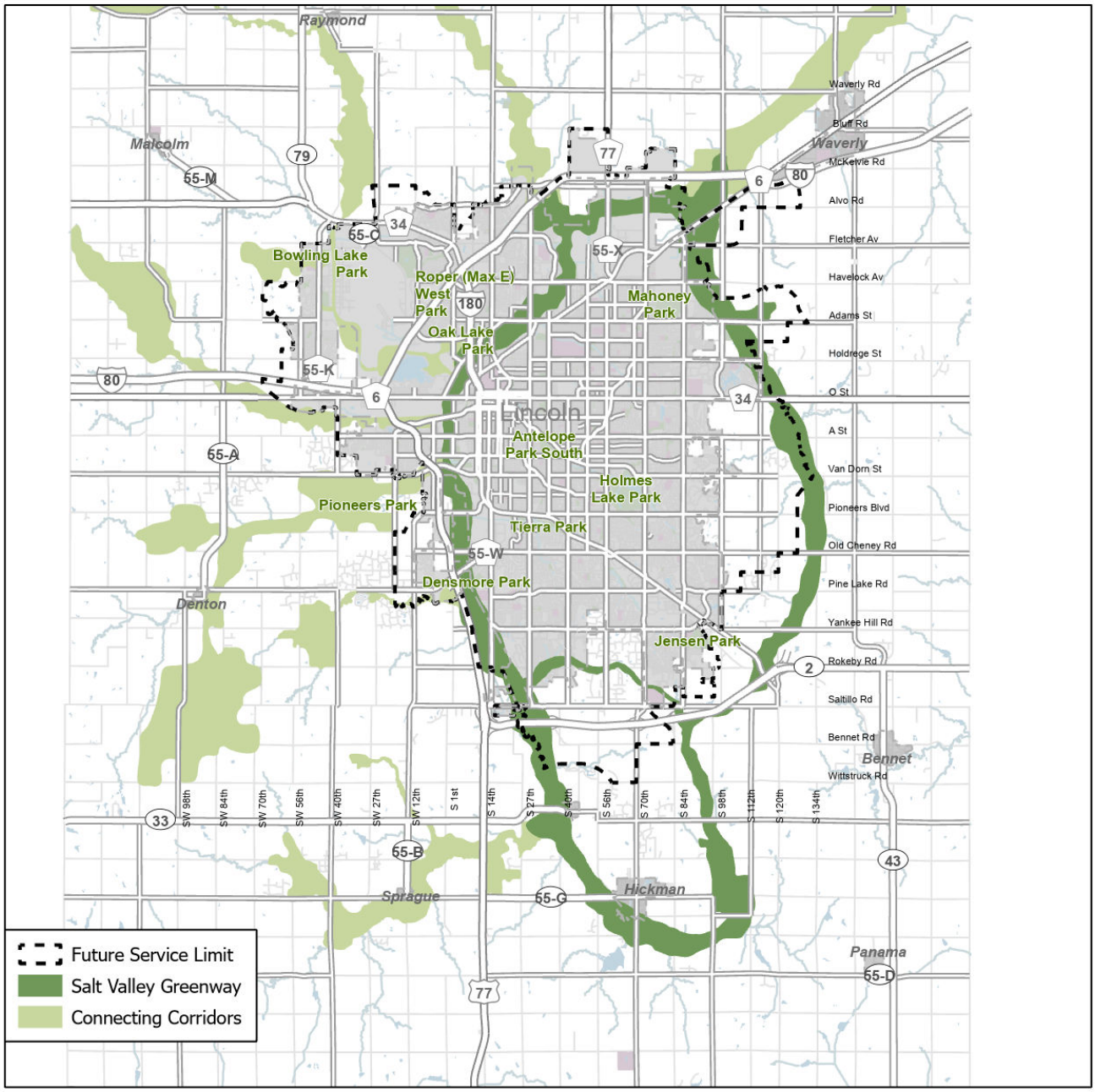
The Salt Valley Greenway would provide connectivity with the Homestead Trail that goes to Beatrice and south to Kansas. It would connect with additional rail lines that are acquired for trails in the future.

Figure E5.e: Greenway Linkages



1. Multi-Use Trail
2. Neighborhood Park Connection
3. Stream
4. Open Space Outlot

Figure E5.f: Salt Valley Greenway and Connecting Corridors



Community Forestry Management

Although Lincoln and Lancaster County are a part of the tallgrass prairie ecoregion, European settlement, which included the suppression of historic wildfires, led to the proliferation of trees, particularly along waterways. As Lincoln and surrounding villages began to grow, trees were planted to provide shade, firewood, building material, food, and to beautify neighborhoods and common spaces. This Urban Forest represents a significant community investment, both public and private. Although not technically part of the natural environment, the environmental benefits are far-reaching and highly important to the community.

The Urban Forest is composed of privately owned trees and the Community Forest, made up of trees in public right-of-way and on public land, such as parks and open spaces. Many of the trees have been deliberately planted, but some are volunteer trees from native stock or offspring of planted trees. Care for the Community Forest is a public obligation carried out primarily by the Parks and Recreation Department. Comprehensive and adaptive urban forestry management approaches should be applied to sustain the city's urban forest; it is essential that adequate human and financial resources be allocated and specifically dedicated to sustaining our community's expanding public green infrastructure in conjunction with increasing development and population growth.



A new action step was added that reflects the importance of street trees in all areas of our community:

Replacement of a damaged street tree is at the request of the property owner. Assess street tree coverage and provide assistance as needed to ensure consistent street tree canopies across all neighborhoods.

Partnerships

The Parks and Recreation Department has a long history of partnerships with Lancaster County, the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District, Lincoln Public Schools, and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission to protect natural resources and provide recreational opportunities. In the past several decades, partnerships with private organizations such as the Lincoln Parks Foundation; and the Audubon Society have developed to great community advantage. Additional partnerships focus on particular activities or events, such as the Lincoln Flying Disk Club, Friends of Wilderness Park, and Great Plains Trails Network.

The Solidago Conservancy, a new nonprofit land trust affiliated with Lincoln Parks Foundation has been established to collaborate with the City of Lincoln, the Lower Platte South NRD and other public and private partners to assist with acquisition of land and easements, outreach to landowners, fund development, and the consolidation of funding from grants and donations. The Solidago Conservancy plays a key role in the conservation and enhancement of natural resources and the implementation of the Salt Valley Greenway and connecting green corridors. The Parks and Recreation Department meets regularly with Lincoln Public Schools, Lincoln Libraries, the Lincoln YMCA, Lincoln and Lancaster County Planning Department, and Lincoln Transportation and Utilities to discuss opportunities for cooperative projects and ensure the timing of critical infrastructure projects is coordinated. In 1999, Community Learning Centers (CLCs) were formed through a partnership between the City, Lincoln Public Schools, and other agencies and organizations interested in promoting community-based learning outside the normal school day. This partnership was reaffirmed via an interlocal agreement between the City and Lincoln Public Schools in 2018.

Some of these partnerships are formalized through short- or long-term agreements while others are less formal and more limited in scope. These partnerships broaden the resources available for important public projects and result in a better outcome. Partnerships can also foster a sense of community ownership and assure a more equitable outcome. Community partnerships are critical to developing a park, recreation, and open space system that fully serve the people of Lincoln and Lancaster County.

Policies Related to this Element

P26: Community Forestry Management

P27: Regional Parks and Tournament Facilities

P28: Community Parks

P29: Neighborhood Parks

P30: Recreation Centers / Community Learning Centers

P31: Aquatic Facilities

P32: Other Recreational Facilities and Activities

P33: Parks and Recreation Partnerships

Goals Related to this Element

G2: Complete Neighborhoods

G6: Healthy, Active, and Connected People

E6: Placemaking



This element describes principles and strategies intended to preserve and enhance the community's unique character — its sense of place — through preservation of cultural and historic resources and focused attention to the quality of public and private development.

The people of Lincoln and Lancaster County have transformed a rolling prairie into a fertile agricultural landscape, with significant tracts of native prairie and a dozen villages, towns, and small cities, surrounding a highly livable urban place. The jewel in this fine setting is the Nebraska State Capitol, one of America's great buildings, which was designed and constructed to be seen and enjoyed from throughout the city and county. Together, the urban and the rural landscapes produce a distinctive place, offering a sense of identity to visitors and especially to residents. It is worthwhile to plan for, protect, and strengthen this character as the community grows and matures. All parts of PlanForward contribute to the attainment of this vision, but urban design and one of its components, historic preservation, relate most directly to guarding and enhancing the community's physical image.

Urban design is the concept and practice of studying people's experience of their physical environment—both visual and functional—then consciously striving to improve that experience. It is essential both to preserve and enhance key existing elements and to create improvements that mesh with and strengthen a distinctive and enjoyable place. When successful, urban design and historic preservation make a community more enjoyable for residents, more attractive to visitors, and more competitive in drawing new businesses and retaining existing ones. A truly sustainable community recognizes and builds on its heritage by fostering good urban design, creating a sense of place and uniqueness that supports a strong economy, values environmental assets, and promotes social engagement and interaction. Successful urban design requires cooperation of public and private sectors.

The Setting

Enhancing a community's environment begins with understanding it. Before all else, Lancaster County was and is the land—rolling prairie, crisscrossed by streams, enriched by wetlands, green in the spring and summer, golden, tan, and russet in the fall and winter. We and our ancestors have largely transformed this prairie land through agriculture and city-building, but the seasonal cycle still strongly shapes us. Past policies and practices discouraging urban sprawl, maintaining a clear edge between urban and rural land uses, and preserving natural features and prime agricultural land have done much to establish the distinctive and attractive built environment of our community.

The City

Upon the prairie, the original designers and developers of Lincoln laid out a grid of streets, alleys, and blocks, from A Street on the south to U Street on the north, and from 1st Street on the west to 17th Street on the east. The gently rolling terrain accommodated this grid, creating a framework for a city which was readily comprehensible and expandable. The suburban towns founded east of the city in the 1880s and '90s aligned their grids with Lincoln, facilitating their integration into Lincoln a few decades later. Much of the Original Plat remains evident, giving form to the center of the city through such major features as the Capitol location, the core of University of Nebraska Lincoln's downtown campus, the County/City Building location, three sites used by Lincoln Public Schools, and Cooper Park. Especially wide rights of-way provide vistas to the Capitol and campus. Throughout Downtown and

the Haymarket, the range of possibilities within the ample, “ordinary” 100-foot rights-of-way is demonstrated by the loading docks, sidewalk cafes, public art, landscaping, and Farmers Market, along with vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation.

Most of Lincoln’s early expansion simply extended the grid. By the early 20th century, the best developments were more varied in their response to the topography, developing curving streets and boulevards while maintaining ample, comprehensible connections to the grid of arterial streets.

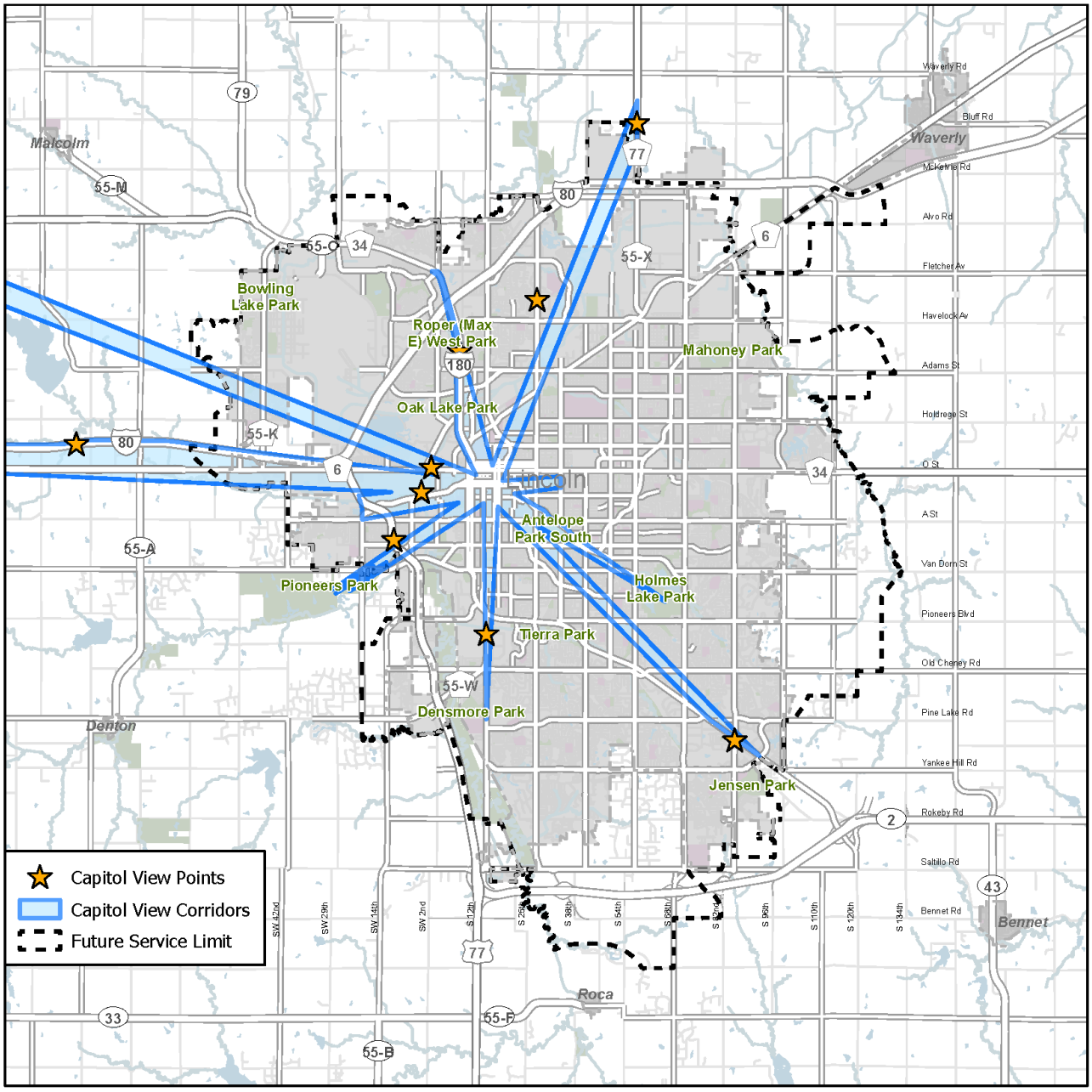
The Capitol

A unique urban design asset of Lincoln and Lancaster County, providing orientation and identity throughout the community, is our remarkable State Capitol. The 400-foot tower was planned and built as the key historic, architectural, and geographic landmark of the city and surrounding countryside, in recognition of which, the Capitol was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1976. From distant vistas along Interstate 80 to intimate glimpses from core neighborhoods, views of the Capitol enrich and unify this place. Many of the best elements of Lincoln’s built environment are based on Capitol views—the Malls, the tree-framed vistas from Pioneers Park, and the homeowners’ park in Woodsshire Historic District. Protecting key vistas that provide important public views to the Capitol, along with identification and enhancement of new view corridors as the community grows, are important urban design strategies of this plan.



The Capitol View Corridors, as illustrated in Figure E6.a, represent key view corridors within Lancaster County where extra attention should be paid during the planning and design process to ensure that views to the Capitol are being preserved and enhanced as development and redevelopment occurs.

Figure E6.a: Capitol View Corridors



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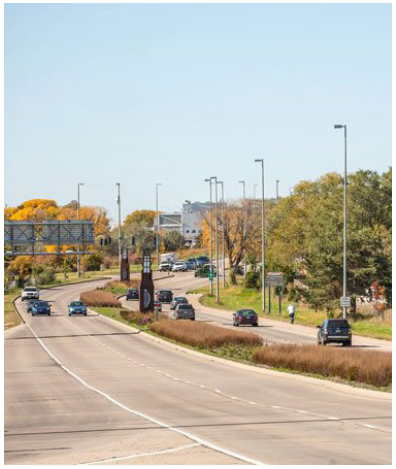
Corridors



Other important resources for providing community identity and orientation are entryway corridors, parks, trails, and open spaces. Key entryways provide indelible “first impressions” of a community. The community’s strong network of trails offers recreation and transportation alternatives, knitting together established and new neighborhoods. Parks provide neighborhood centers and community gathering places, and along with public street trees are major components of our urban forest, providing shade, beauty, and habitat.

Lincoln and Lancaster County’s Entryway Corridors, as shown in Figure E6.b, have been categorized as primary and secondary entryways. The primary entryways are the corridors identified on this map that are most responsible for managing traffic into Lincoln. As such, their functionality and visual aesthetics go a long way in defining visitors’ impression of the community. The secondary entryways carry less traffic but are still vital to perceptions and should be treated as such. For both the primary and secondary entryway corridors, there are key points along their routes where views toward the Capitol are particularly strong and should be preserved. Those view points are identified on Figure E6.b with a star.

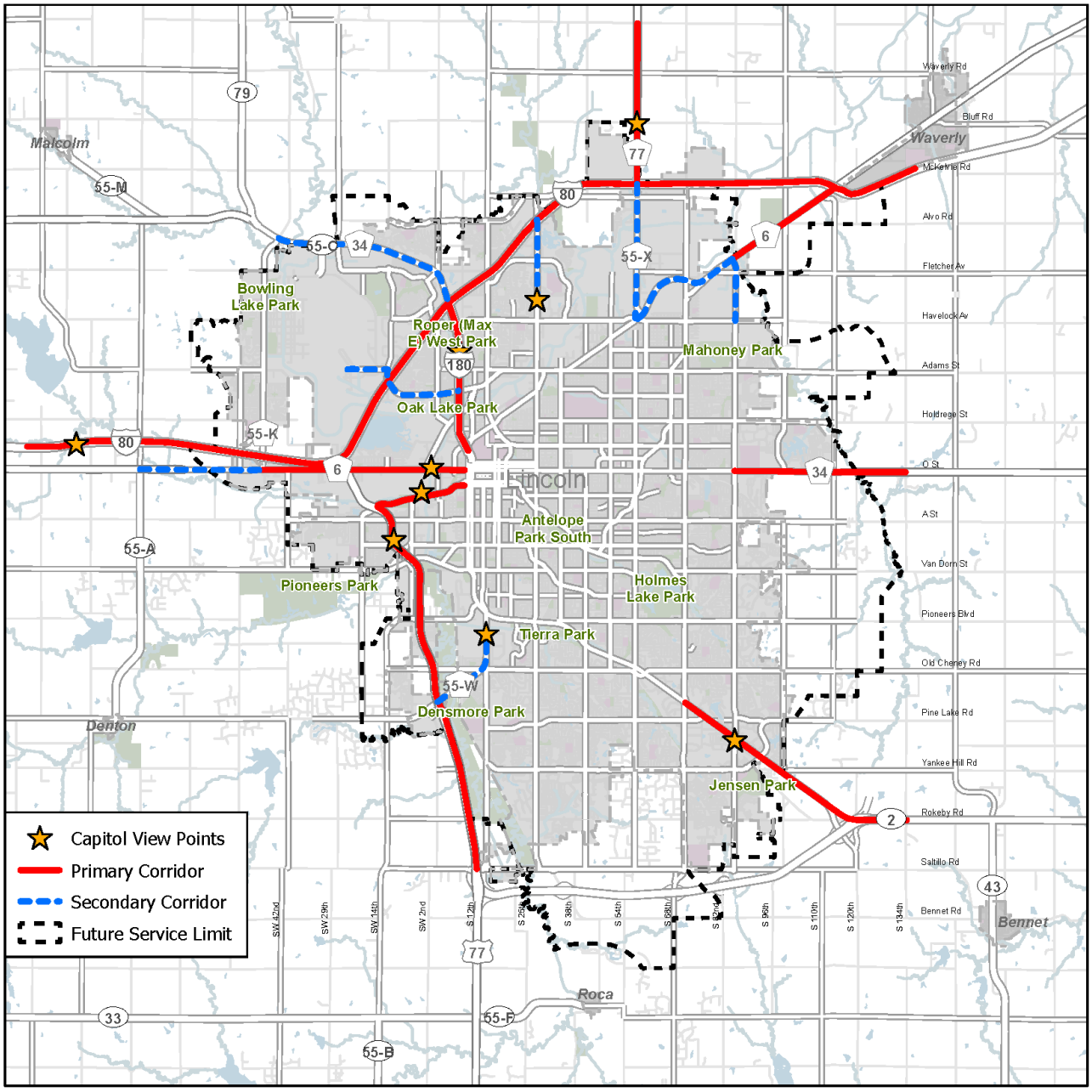
Lincoln can enhance development along key transportation corridors by treating them as important gateways and public spaces, not simply routes for moving vehicles. Planning and design should promote attractive, pedestrian-friendly, and multimodal environments through coordinated building placement, high-quality architecture, landscaping, signage, lighting, and streetscape improvements. Lincoln should continue encouraging compact and mixed-use development at strategic nodes, manage driveway access and parking, provide safe pedestrian and bicycle connections, and integrate transit where appropriate. Landscaping and green infrastructure can improve aesthetics and stormwater management, while gateway features and consistent design standards can strengthen community identity.

Well-designed transportation corridors can also become defining features of the community and sources of civic pride. Distinctive architecture, landscaping, public art, gateway treatments, local materials, and coordinated streetscape elements can reflect the community's character and create a stronger sense of arrival and belonging. Investing in the appearance and functionality of these highly visible areas demonstrates community pride, encourages quality development, and creates places that residents and visitors recognize as unique to the community.

Views of the Nebraska State Capitol should be recognized as an important community asset and incorporated into corridor planning and design. At key locations, development, landscaping, signage, and infrastructure should be coordinated to preserve significant sightlines toward the Capitol and, where appropriate, frame and highlight these views. Strategic overlooks, view corridors, gateway treatments, and public spaces can provide opportunities for residents and visitors to experience the Capitol as a defining visual landmark. Protecting these views will help reinforce the community's connection to Nebraska's Capitol, strengthen local identity, and create memorable points of arrival and orientation throughout the community.

Together, these strategies can transform key corridors into attractive, memorable, and welcoming places that reinforce community identity, celebrate important landmarks, and support long-term economic vitality and quality of life.

Figure E6.b: Entryway Corridors



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Current Practices

The public and private sectors, often working in direct partnership, are both essential to an attractive, livable, competitive built environment. Lincoln's Original Plat of 1867, designed by state officials, established a framework for a successful city. Attractive public and private buildings, city purchases and private donations of park land and of public art, street trees and private gardens, all contribute to urban character.

Many of the principles of this section already are expressed in the community's practices. The Historic Preservation Commission and the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission advocate for and protect key resources of our heritage, in cooperation with property owners, the community's design professionals, and other interested citizens.

The Historic Preservation Commission works with neighborhood groups, preservation advocates, property owners, and the Nebraska State Historical Society to discover, protect, and share the community's heritage. The zoning code provides protection for designated historic property and incentives for creative uses that maintain the vitality of historic places. The Commission has a key role in providing on-going guidance in the revitalization of areas such as Haymarket, residential historic districts, and Havelock Avenue.

The Capitol Environs Commission is a unique board combining membership appointed by the City and by the State, empowered to protect and to advocate for improvements to the setting of the beautiful Nebraska State Capitol. All public and private property within the Capitol Environs District receives the Commission's design oversight, along with key view corridors to the Capitol which enhance the whole community.

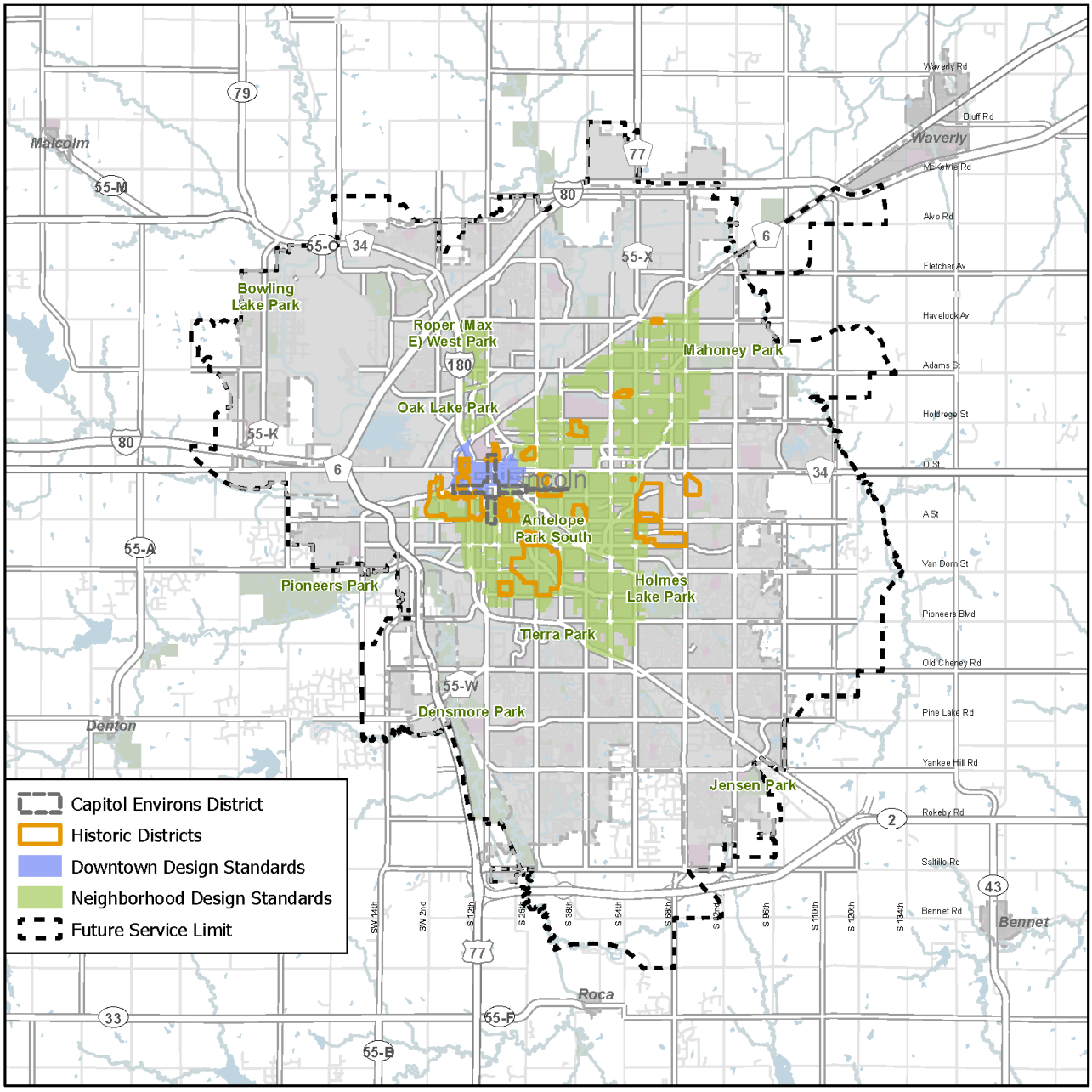
The Urban Design Committee (UDC) provides advisory services to city government on the design of city-owned buildings and other public or publicly-assisted projects, major public/private developments, and any private projects constructed on city right-of-way or other city property. The Committee's intent is to make sure that new public facilities are exemplary – that they provide functional and aesthetically pleasing facilities for the public, and model good design for the private sector. The benefits of this guidance would be strengthened by including all public projects under UDC review, just as the Environs Commission reviews projects of all local and state governmental units. The Committee also works to publicize and reward good design, private as well as public, through an annual awards program. Certain high-impact projects may involve historic properties and public property or public assistance, and the expertise and advice of more than one design board may be valuable. At the discretion of the City, joint meetings may occasionally be scheduled so that the boards, the project, and ultimately the community may benefit by a thorough yet efficient discussion.

All three of these design boards assist in the process of siting wireless communication antennae and towers within their various jurisdictions. The community values efficient and effective telecommunications while also desiring to minimize adverse impacts of this rapidly evolving infrastructure on our rural and urban environments. Capitol view corridors, historic landmarks and districts, environmentally sensitive areas, and predominantly residential neighborhoods are not preferred locations. Unobtrusive locations on public property; co-locations on existing towers, buildings, and structures; and commercial and industrial areas with minimal impact on residences are preferred.

The City has adopted zoning provisions to state the community's preferences. Combined with guidance from the design review boards, community residents and the telecommunications industry can be well-served.

The community has also expressed its interest in good urban design through the Neighborhood Design Standards for infill development in older residential neighborhoods and the Lincoln Downtown Design Standards for the community's center. However, the appearance of other commercial areas and new residential areas is guided by few public design standards, although private design covenants in some areas are far more stringent than any public requirements. Good urban design includes an attractive streetscape, pedestrian access and comfort, and

Figure E6.c: Historic & Capitol Environs District



orientation of buildings, yards, and parking to create a pleasant transition between public and private space. Over the planning period, additional design standards should be developed to address the gaps in coverage that exist and to fulfill these principles of good urban design.

When developments ignore these elements, our community is weakened. The Complete Neighborhoods & Housing Element describes the community's expectations for new residential development. The emphasis in PlanForward on mixed-use redevelopment in established commercial centers and corridors necessitates adoption of clear design standards and a predictable process to protect existing and new investors—commercial and residential—in those areas. The *E2: Infill and Redevelopment element* discusses how mixed use redevelopment, including residences, can meet important community needs as Lincoln grows and ages.

Policies Related to this Element

P5: Downtown

P34: Urban Design Standards

P35: Entry Corridors

P36: Public Art

P37: Historic Preservation

P38: State Capitol

P39: Community Space

Goals Related to this Element

G12: History and Culture

G13: Community Appearance

E7: Community Facilities

This element reviews the projected status of community facilities during the planning period, including libraries, fire services, law enforcement, health care, schools, and public buildings.



This element reviews the projected status of community facilities during the planning period, including libraries, fire services, law enforcement, health care, schools, and public buildings.

The availability and service levels of community facilities affect the quality of life in the City and County, and as the community grows, community facilities should be prepared to adapt to change. This element and associated policies take into consideration an increasing population, changing demographics, and evolving technology in planning high-quality and efficient delivery of services. The importance of collaboration and sharing resources among agencies to realize the greatest benefit to the community is also emphasized.

Equity Lens

During development of PlanForward, an Equity Subcommittee convened to review existing and proposed policies to address any potential inequities. The subcommittee encouraged additional community resources be devoted for those at risk and/ or marginalized communities. Some recommended items led to broad agreement and are included in PlanForward; however, other community visioning items require further public input and community discussion before being adopted as goals or policies. See the Equity Subcommittee summary document in Appendix B for more information.

Overall, community facilities should:

- Promote a functional balance between community facilities and growth.
- Encourage adequate facilities and services which provide diverse educational, cultural, environmental, and social opportunities.
- Provide adequate facilities and services to assure the health, safety and welfare of all citizens.
- Promote cooperation and coordination among both the public and private sectors in the development and maintenance of community facilities.
- Increase energy efficiency and water conservation as well as promote the use of renewable energy sources.

Libraries



Lincoln City Libraries currently operates nine facilities. Bennett Martin Library downtown serves as the headquarters. Larger quadrant libraries are Victor E. Anderson, Charles H. Gere, Loren Corey Eiseley, and Bess D. Walt. Neighborhood Libraries include Bethany, South, and Dan A Williams. A bookmobile serves outreach sites in Lincoln and county towns. The Library is a City department that provides service to Lancaster County residents outside the City through a contractual arrangement.

Library services, similar to many other public services, must be provided regardless of how the community grows. The library is initiating the planning process for additional branches. The library will be exploring potential sites for new facilities in southeast and northeast Lincoln to meet the growing population in these areas.

A new 80,000 sq. ft. Central Library is set to open in 2028 in the former Centrum Mall/Southeast Community College location at 12th and O Streets. The Downtown Master Plan has identified the importance of maintaining this presence downtown. Downtown is the heart of our community, and multifaceted uses are essential to maintaining its vitality.

As public libraries in Lincoln and nationally update their services, certain trends have emerged. With increased use of downloadable books, libraries designate less space for books and create more space for uses such as Maker Spaces, technology, family library use, and general conference spaces that support everything from quiet study to large training sessions. Most libraries have a variety of collaborative partners, engaging in projects to ensure internet access, encouraging people to read aloud to young children, and assisting people with technology in its varied uses. Libraries are often described as community centers based on learning, literature, and literacy.

Fire and Rescue

Lincoln Fire and Rescue

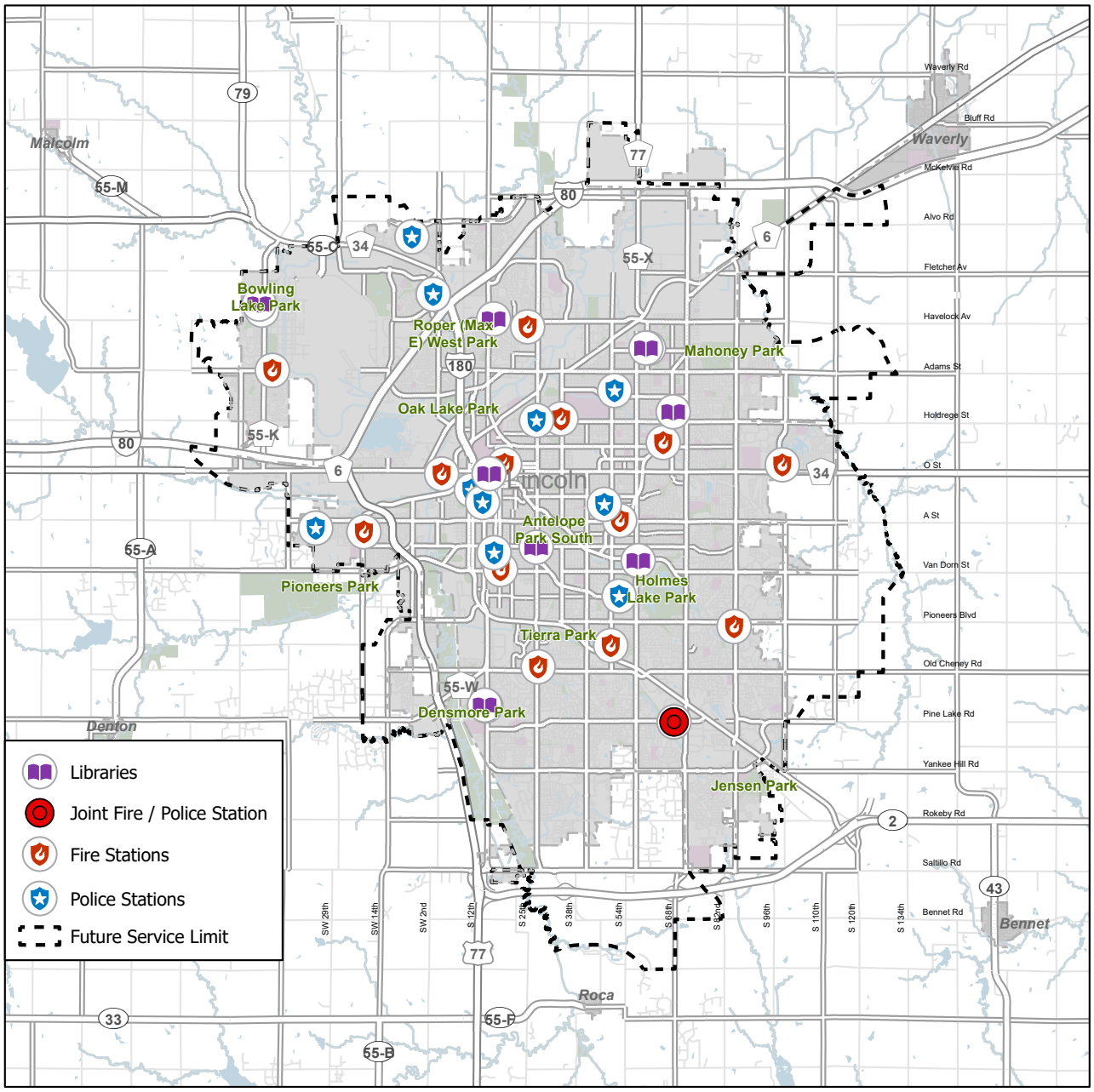
Lincoln Fire and Rescue anticipates the reconstruction (and possible relocation) of fire stations and the need for additional fire stations to serve the City's projected expansion during the 30-year planning period. Lincoln Fire and Rescue routinely monitors response times, population growth, city growth, and call volumes in evaluating possible relocation and building new fire facilities. Changing development patterns, financial concerns, service expectations, availability of resources, environmental issues, traffic flow, or other conditions will warrant changes to provide effective emergency response. The utmost priority of Lincoln Fire and Rescue is the ability to provide the highest level of emergency service within the shortest period of time.

Lincoln Fire and Rescue currently operates from 16 stations located throughout the City. These stations are geographically located in the community to be able to meet the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA-1770) Standards concerning response times. To address needs associated with continued city growth, Lincoln Fire and Rescue routinely reviews the strategic deployment of apparatus from existing stations and potential new stations in growth areas of the City. Fire Stations 17 and 18 are planned in southwest Lincoln and east Lincoln, two primary growth areas. Mutual aid requests for Lincoln Fire and Rescue service occur on occasion for incidents outside Lincoln.

Lincoln Fire and Rescue's equipment is designed for use with a public water supply capable of generating 1,500 gallons of water per minute at a residual pressure of 50 pounds per square inch. Lincoln Fire and Rescue also operates two tanker trunks that can be utilized in areas along the edge of the city where fire hydrants may not be readily available.

Lincoln Fire and Rescue provides emergency ambulance transport services in the City of Lincoln and most areas of Lancaster County. Most interfacility (hospital-to-hospital) non-emergency services are provided by the private sector.

Figure E7.a: Existing Community Facilities

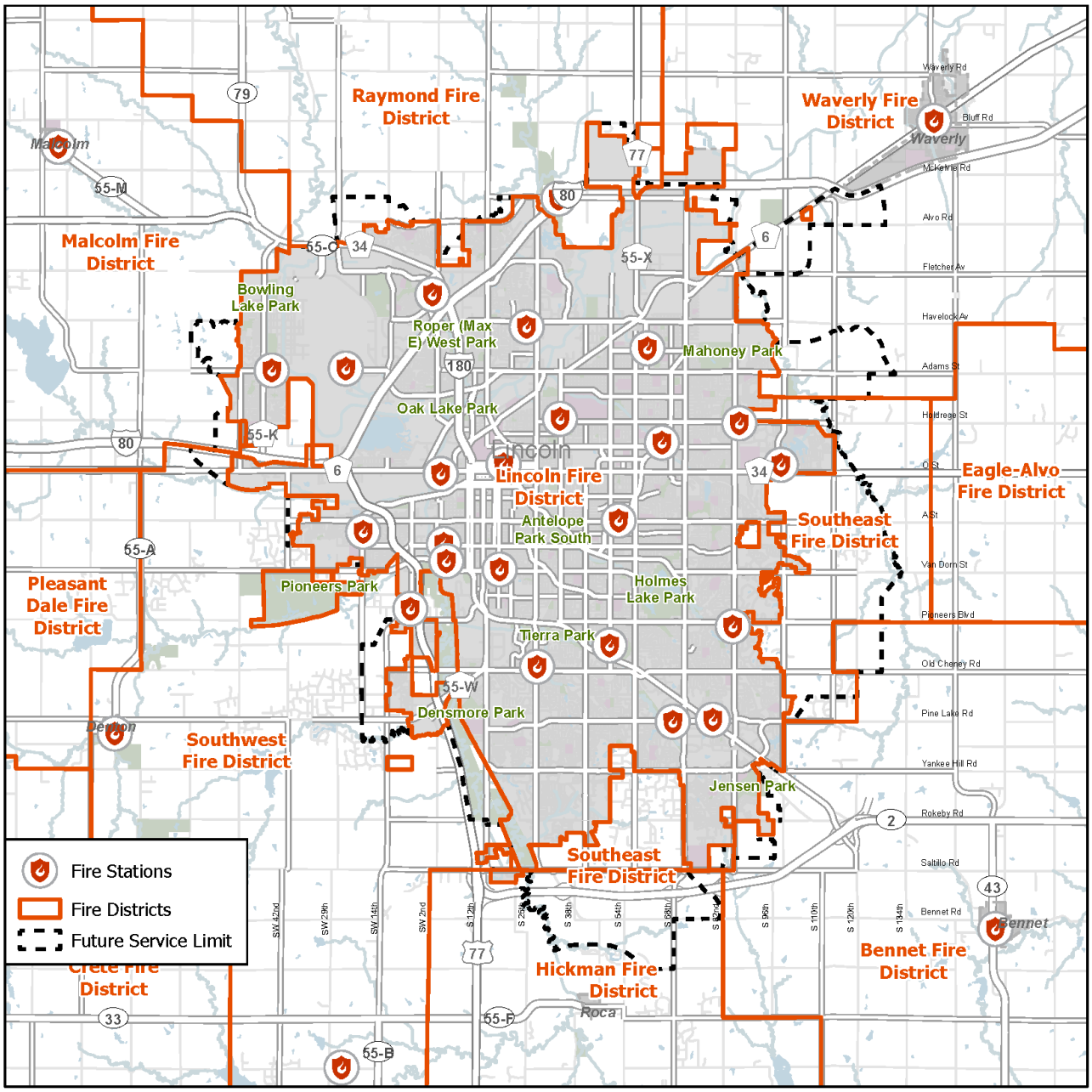


Rural Fire Districts

The 17 rural volunteer fire departments will continue to see increasing challenges with City growth and diminishing service area. All rural fire district personnel are volunteers. Rural fire districts can provide fire protection, rescue, and emergency ambulance transport. Fire departments are distributed throughout most of the towns and villages, while some are located in the unincorporated areas of the county. Mutual aid requests between fire districts are common for incidents outside Lincoln. Each rural fire district has unique challenges, including response times and water availability.

A growing population in the small towns, villages, and rural areas, as well as increased traffic, will continue to create demands for fire and emergency services. The physical growth of the City of Lincoln will cause changes to the character of some areas and to the tax base of many districts.

Figure E7.b: Existing Fire Districts



Law Enforcement

The Lincoln Police Department and Lancaster County Sheriff's Office are anticipated to remain as the sole providers of law enforcement services to the City and County during the planning period. The Sheriff's Office will continue to provide contract law enforcement support to the various incorporated towns of the county. The overall increase in population in the City and County will increase the demand for police and sheriff services in the urban, small town, and rural areas.

The Hall of Justice and Law Enforcement Center accommodates both the operations of the Lincoln Police Department and the Lancaster County Sheriff within a single facility. This facility is an example of the cooperation exhibited by the City and County in furthering the efficient delivery of governmental services to the community. Another example of cooperation includes the joint station with Lincoln Fire and Rescue funded through a ¼ cent sales tax. A radio system upgrade was also previously funded with a ¼ cent sales tax.

Police services within the Lincoln Police Department are delivered by 371 officers largely assigned to Investigations and the four community based policing teams. These teams are commanded by a captain and a lieutenant, and staffed by sergeants and officers.

The Southeast Team Station is situated near S. 70th & Pine Lake Road, the Northwest Team Station can be found on the corner of N. 27th & Holdrege and the Northeast Team Station is located at N. 52nd and R Streets.

The Southwest Team operates out of police headquarters with smaller substations outfitted within their team area to increase productivity and response times.

In addition to the Lincoln Police Department and Lancaster County Sheriff's Office, the City of Lincoln also has police presence by the University of Nebraska Police on the UNL campus as well as the State Patrol. The Capitol Security Division of the State Patrol Division monitors 48 buildings and eight parking facilities in the greater Lincoln area.



Health Care Facilities

Hospitals represent one of the highest and most important community service land uses. Lincoln has a growing number of medical campuses such as Bryan Health Systems, CHI St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center, Madonna Rehabilitation hospital, Veterans Medical Center, Lincoln Surgical Hospital and the CHI Nebraska Heart Institute. Urgent care services are also provided at several private facilities dispersed throughout the community. A number of private non-profit organizations provide targeted health services such as surgical centers, skilled care nursing long-term care, rehabilitation facilities, dental health, and specialized clinics to residents throughout Lincoln and Lancaster County.

Multiple public and private service sites around Lincoln serve mental health needs of persons in Lancaster County. Continued population increases in Lancaster County and southeast Nebraska have meant increased demand for mental health services.

Services operated by the Health Department include preventive, routine and emergency dental services for children and adults, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) clinics. STD clinic, refugee clinic, and targeted coordinating of back-to-school vaccinations.

New medical facilities have been constructed in many areas of the city. A recent example is Clinic with a Heart, a no-cost clinic of for uninsured and underinsured patients located at 13th & D Streets. The trend of new clinics is likely to continue into the immediate future as the demand for health care services increases as a result of the community's growing and aging population.

The Federally Qualified Health Center has located services in two Medically Underserved Areas and improved access to primary care, dental health care services and behavioral health care.

Education

Lincoln Public Schools

The Lincoln Public School (LPS) district provides pre-kindergarten through 12th grade education to roughly 40,000 students within the City of Lincoln and surrounding area. The district operates 40 elementary schools, 12 middle schools, eight high schools, an alternative education center for high school students, three grade-level centers for students with behavioral disabilities, a center for expelled students, the Bay High Focus Program at The Bay, a Science Focus Program at Folsom Children's Zoo, an Arts and Humanities Focus Program at the Bottlers Building, and a career education center at the Southeast Community College Lincoln campus. In addition to schools, LPS facilities include administrative, special education, food service, operations maintenance, athletic and activities facilities, and transportation centers.

The past twenty years have seen changes in the students enrolled at LPS. In 2000, about 14 percent of students were racial or ethnic minorities; in 2020 this rose to over 35 percent, with students representing 50 different countries of origin. The diversity of LPS has continued to grow, with 40 percent of students identifying as racial or ethnic minorities for the 2025/2026 school year.

Economic changes are also affecting the school system. In 2000, 26 percent of students received free or reduced price lunches. That figure has risen to nearly 46 percent for the 2025/2026 school year. Since 2000 LPS has seen an increase from 31,000 to over 41,000 students overall.

Lincoln Public Schools has made a substantial investment in renovating and improving existing schools throughout the Lincoln area. A $290 million school bond issue passed in 2020 resulting in construction of two new high schools, a new elementary school, and enhancements to several existing facilities.

Lincoln Public Schools and the City of Lincoln actively coordinate planning activities. Projected growth of residential development is crucial information used to identify future school sites. As PlanForward's growth framework was developed, LPS was consulted and informed at each step. This relationship is ongoing and expected to continue into the future. The Superintendents Facility Advisory Committee (SFAC) & the LPS 10-Year Facilities & Infrastructure Plan can be viewed on the LPS website at *lps.org*.

One relationship between city government and LPS that has particular potential for improving future efficiencies is the relationship between LPS and the Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department. In some locations, such as Lefler Middle School and Piedmont Park, Humann Elementary and Cripple Creek Park, Fredstrom Elementary and Highlands Park, and Adams Elementary and Folsom Park, park and school facilities are already located on adjoining properties. Schoo Middle School, which also has an adjoining YMCA, is the site of a planned neighborhood park. Wysong Elementary, located between S. 56th and S. 70th Streets, north of Yankee Hill Road, includes a neighborhood

park. Moore MIddle School is adjacent to Jensen Park and also includes a YMCA. There are opportunities to reduce costs for both parks, schools and the YMCA by sharing playgrounds, playfields and even using picnic shelters as outdoor classrooms. This relationship shows great potential benefit for all organizations. There are currently over 20 school sites with adjacent parks.

Figure E7.c: Joint School and Park Site



Rural School Districts

There are nine public rural school districts serving residents of Lancaster County. Several school facilities are located outside of Lancaster County. All of the remaining public school facilities are located within incorporated and unincorporated communities, except for the Norris Public School and Raymond Central Public School (Junior and Senior High).

Several school districts, most notably Waverly and Norris School districts, will be impacted by expansion of the Lincoln city limits. The City, LPS and each school district impacted will need to coordinate efforts in the future.

Rural school districts also need to plan to accommodate areas designated for acreage residential development. Acreage residential areas provide additional tax revenue, but also create the need for more financial resources in order to provide additional transportation services and educational facilities. Grouping acreage residential areas in pre-designated locations allows rural school districts to plan for adequate transportation and educational services in advance of development.

Private and Parochial Schools

There are approximately 25 private and parochial schools in Lincoln, serving over 6,000 students. There are four private and parochial high schools: Lincoln Christian, Lincoln Lutheran, Parkview Christian, and Pius X.

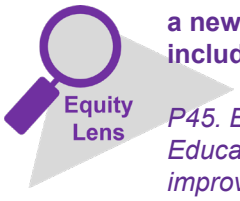
Additional private and parochial schools are anticipated during the planning period. The City should work with private entities to coordinate development and infrastructure plans around new school sites.

Community Colleges, Trade Schools, and Universities

Lincoln is home to a community college and several technical and trade schools providing a comprehensive array of higher education and vocational opportunities. These public and private facilities are dispersed throughout the community.

Lincoln has multiple institutions of higher learning, with campuses located throughout the city. These include the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL campuses: Downtown and East), Nebraska Wesleyan University, Union Adventist University, Southeast Community College, and a satellite campus for Doane University.

These colleges and universities are actively involved with surrounding neighborhoods and business districts. UNL has been a major partner in the Antelope Valley Project, the West Haymarket Arena development, and the Innovation Campus project on the former State Fair Park site. Wesleyan University was part of the University Place Subarea Plan approved in 2025. Union Adventist University took a lead role in efforts to increase mobility and improve streetscapes in the South 48th Street College View neighborhood in 2007. These institutions and others should be actively engaged in future planning efforts.



Previous comprehensive plans did not include a section on early childhood care and education, so a new policy was developed and included in PlanForward.

P45. Early Childhood Care and Education: Evaluate methods to improve access to and quality of early childhood care and education experiences.

Other Public Buildings and Facilities

Lancaster Event Center

The Lancaster Event Center is a multi-use community center located in northeast Lincoln. It is perhaps best known for hosting the Lancaster County Super Fair each summer, but it is home to a wide variety of indoor and outdoor events throughout the year. The Event Center attracts roughly 600,000 visitor days each year with over 300 events annually.

The Event Center facility includes several large indoor exhibit spaces along with outdoor arenas and a campground. The next phase of the facility master plan includes construction of a fixed-seat agricultural coliseum to seat approximately 6,000 people, along with a new multi-use pavilion.

The Event Center is managed by the Lancaster County Agricultural Society, which is a publicly-elected, county-level political subdivision that has been operating in Lancaster County for over 150 years. Their mission under State law is to provide agricultural education, engagement, tourism, and business opportunities for the community.

Other Considerations

As general purpose governments, the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County own, operate and manage numerous buildings, structures, and facilities.

During the time period covered by this Plan, there will likely be a need to construct, renovate, or abandon certain public buildings and facilities not already discussed in this document. At such time as these events may occur, care should be taken by public officials making decisions that the vision of this Plan is recognized and respected. This may apply to the siting of a new facility, the abandonment of an existing one, the way renovations are undertaken, the manner of financing used to complete the work, the arrangements made for the facility's operation, the process followed in making the decision, and the timing of the action.

Of particular note to local government operations is the Lincoln-Lancaster County Public Building Commission. The Public Building Commission is responsible for facilities jointly used by City and County agencies, such as the County-City Building. This entity was established in 1991 to oversee any buildings, structures, or facilities used jointly by the City and County for a public purpose.

The new Municipal Service Center (MSC) is an example of consolidating City services to find efficiencies. The MSC houses several divisions of Lincoln Transportation and Utilities along with the administrative offices of Lincoln Fire and Rescue, and it has the potential to accommodate divisions or operations of other departments.

Policies Related to this Element

P40: Libraries

P41: Fire and Rescue

P42: Law Enforcement

P43: Health Care Access

P44: Education

P46: Public Buildings

Goals Related to this Element

G10: Effective Government

E8: Energy and Utilities

This element examines energy and individual utilities including water, wastewater, watershed management, solid waste, electric services, information technology, and natural gas service.



Energy use, supply and conservation are topics of global as well as local concern. This element includes an assessment of energy use, evaluates the utilization of renewable energy sources, and describes efforts to conserve energy in the community. The relationship between land use patterns and energy consumption has been widely researched and is a topic of national conversation. As Lincoln and Lancaster County continue to plan for the future, the need to consider the impacts of energy supply and demand is increasing in importance.

The provision of other basic services (such as water, wastewater, and electricity) is also discussed in this element. The need to plan for the extension of these services to new growth areas is one of the primary reasons for comprehensive planning. Lincoln has a history and policy of providing utilities only to those areas that have been annexed into the City. Lincoln wastewater collection systems operate on a gravity flow principle and so are planned to extend along the natural drainage of the land, or drainage basins. These growth policies have served Lincoln well in that it has retained a clear differentiation between urban and rural areas and has been able to resist sprawl to a greater degree than many other communities. The efficient extension of utilities will continue to be a major factor in land use planning.

Energy

How the Community Approaches Energy

Residents depend on energy every day to heat and cool their homes, run their businesses and keep the community moving. In Lincoln, three partners generate or deliver most of that energy: Lincoln Electric System (LES) provides electricity, Black Hills Energy provides natural gas, and District Energy Corporation provides thermal heating and cooling. The City plans alongside these providers, leads by example in its own buildings, and offers programs that help residents save energy and money.

Public Power in Lincoln and Lancaster County

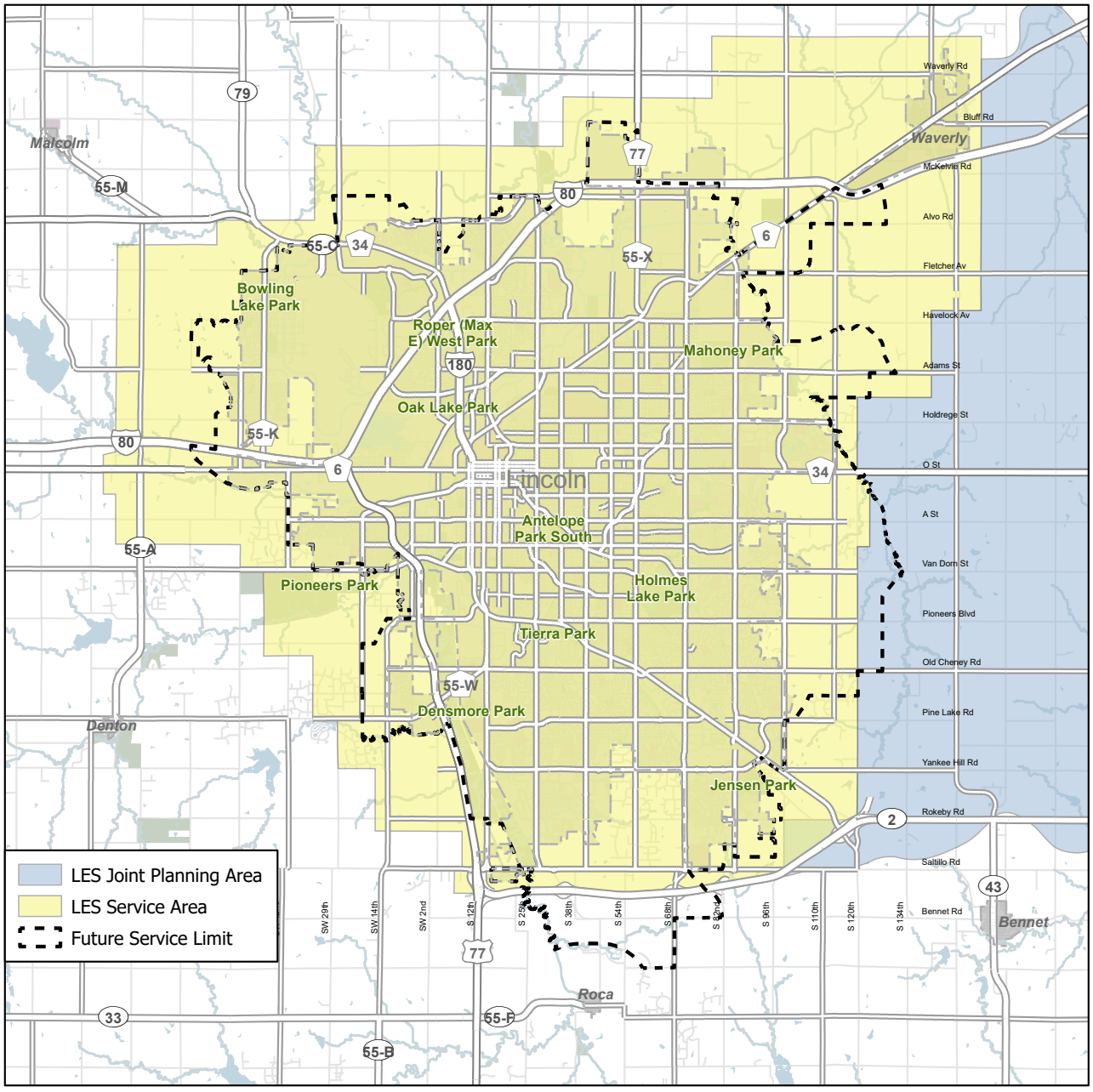
LES is a municipal electric utility. Since LES is a part of municipal government, Lincoln residents are both customers and owners of their utility. Nebraska is the only state where all electric service comes from public power. The Mayor appoints the nine members of the LES board, and City Council ratifies each appointment. The City and LES coordinate on shared priorities to best serve the needs of the Lincoln community.

LES provides electric service to the City of Lincoln and much of the surrounding area within Lincoln's three-mile planning jurisdiction. The LES service area includes the City of Waverly and the unincorporated villages of Cheney, Walton, Prairie Home, and Emerald.

The balance of Lancaster County, including cities and villages, is served by the Norris Public Power District.

Norris Public Power District (Norris) and Lincoln Electric System (LES) have a formal Joint Planning and Service Area Adjustment Agreement. This agreement establishes a "Joint Use Area" which is primarily east and southeast of Lincoln. LES provides all electrical generating capacity and energy, but both LES and Norris, own distribution facilities in the area. LES and Norris may amend this joint area in the future.

Figure E8.a: LES Service Area and LES/Norris Joint Planning Area

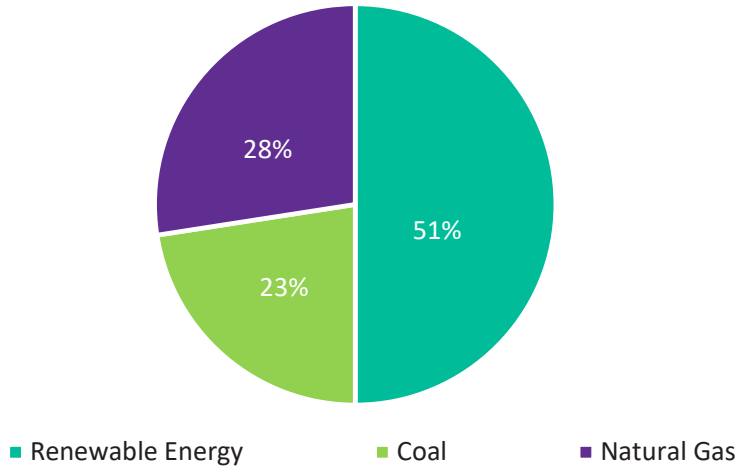


Moving Toward Cleaner Electricity

LES has set a goal to reach net zero carbon dioxide production from its generation portfolio by 2040. LES has already reduced carbon dioxide emissions from its generation fleet 50% between 2010 and 2024. This goal aligns with the City's goal to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050. Electricity is one part of that effort. Transportation, buildings and other sources also contribute to community emissions.

Renewable resources make up 51% of the nameplate capacity of the LES generation fleet. Those resources include wind, hydropower, solar, landfill gas, and battery storage. Natural gas makes up 26% of capacity and coal makes up 23%.

Figure E8.b: LES Generation Fleet



Energy Use

In 2010, the Nebraska Legislature passed legislation requiring cities and counties in Nebraska to assess, evaluate, and promote renewable energy sources and energy conservation measures as part of their Comprehensive Plan updates. Energy affects many aspects of land use, and as the population continues to increase over the next 30 years, so will energy consumption and the need for renewable resources.

Like many other communities, it is a challenge for the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County to obtain data that can be put into a meaningful model to use in setting goals and comparing our community with others. During development of PlanForward, the City has assessed energy infrastructure and energy use by sector, including residential, commercial, and industrial sectors at the local level (government is included within the commercial sector). The data does not include lifecycle consumption, or energy that is used to generate the end use energy product. Thus, the following data provides a snapshot of energy being consumed at the point of use and does not factor in energy such as coal that is used to produce the electricity that powers our homes and businesses.

State level data is published in an *Annual State Energy Report* by the State of Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy that identifies energy trends and needs by sector. The 2025 report notes that Nebraska's total energy consumption in 2023 was 840 trillion British thermal units (Btu), a decrease of 8 trillion Btu – or 0.5% - from 2022 to 2023. For reference, Nebraska's total energy consumption in 2013 was 872 trillion British thermal units (Btus). Five types of energy sources comprised the energy that Nebraska consumed in 2023, and Nebraska's energy use by sector in 2023 are shown in the following charts.

Nebraska's energy use by type can be compared to the LES generation fleet in the previous chart.

Figure E8.c: Nebraska's Energy Use by Type

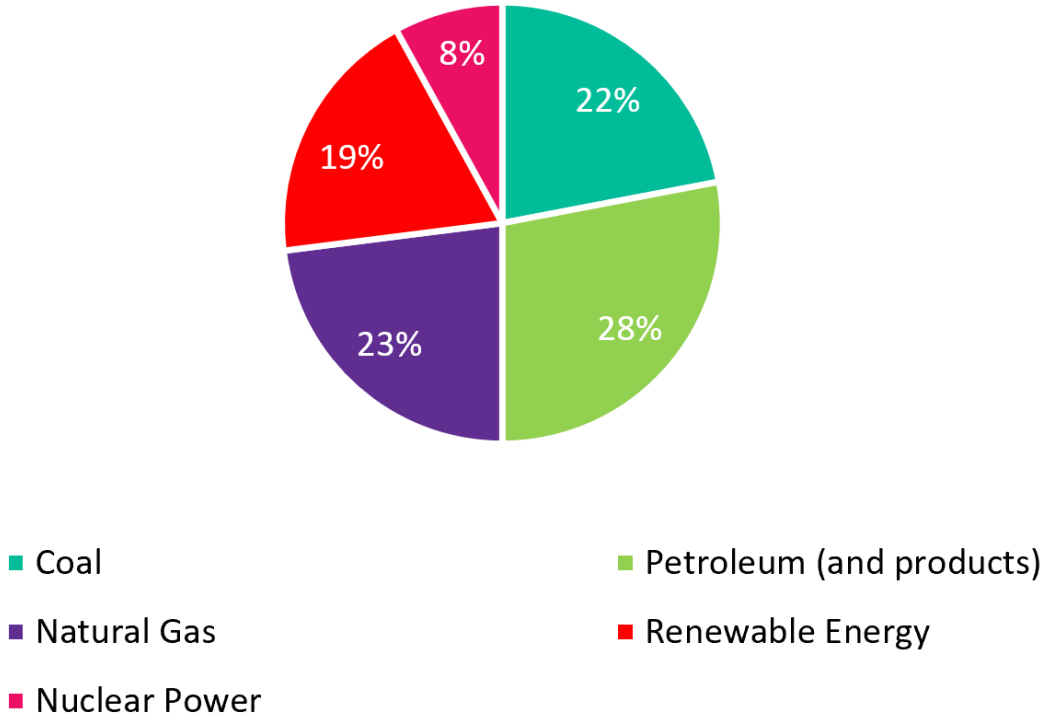
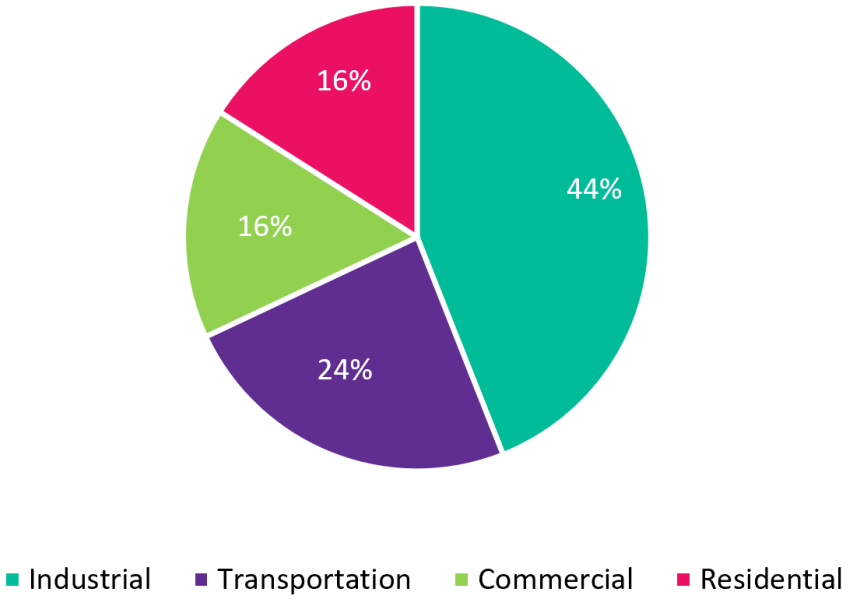
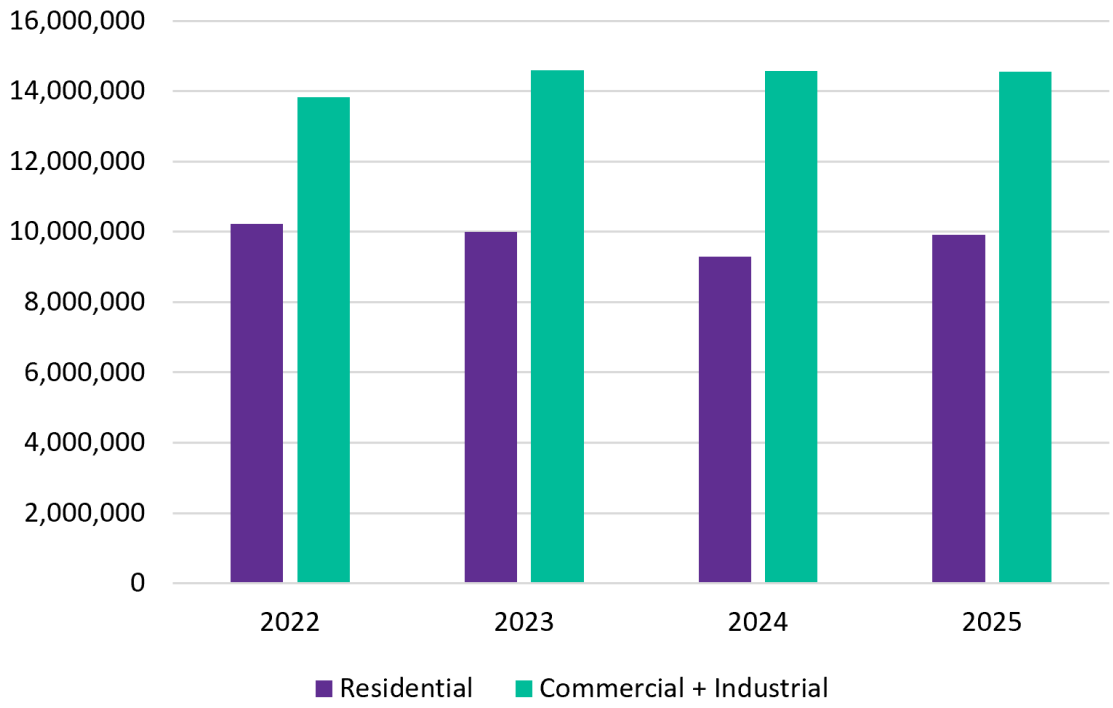


Figure E8.d: Nebraska's Energy Use by Sector



The energy use totals that follow reflect a combination of Black Hills Energy gas use and LES electrical use (converted from kWh to MMBtu) for the City of Lincoln only. Energy use fluctuates year over year based on heating and cooling needs, community growth, and more efficient systems.

Figure E8.e: Lincoln's Energy Use by Sector



Helping Residents Use Energy Wisely

The most affordable energy is the energy residents never need to buy. LES offers several incentive programs through its Sustainable Energy Program to help residents use electricity more efficiently. LES also educates homeowners, builders and businesses about conservation through publications, presentations and on-site assessments. Through its Peak Rewards demand response program, customers can help reduce demand during summer peak periods without sacrificing comfort.

The City funds the Heat Pump Incentive Program, which LES administers. Residents can combine the City incentive with the LES incentive offered through the Sustainable Energy Program. Heat pumps heat and cool a home with electricity and can use less energy than a traditional furnace and air conditioner, which can lower energy bills.

LES also includes minimizing energy burden, the share of household income spent on energy, among its customer goals.

Planning for Growth and Reliability

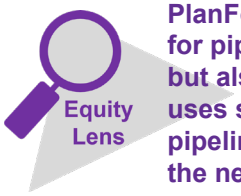
Energy use is growing nationwide and in Lincoln. New homes and businesses, electric vehicles, electrified buildings and large energy users all add demand. LES must plan for that growth while keeping electric service reliable and affordable. Reliability matters most during extreme heat, cold and severe storms, when residents depend on power the most.

LES adopted a new strategic plan in August 2025 to guide this work. The plan asks LES to balance three priorities: affordable service, reliable and resilient service, and sustainability. LES reports that its reliability and affordability rank among the top 10% of utilities. The plan includes initiatives to invest in the grid, reduce peak demand through customer programs and pursue the 2040 goal.

Natural Gas

Blacks Hills Energy owns and operates natural gas and distribution systems in Lincoln and eight other incorporated and unincorporated communities in Lancaster County. The company serves about 100,600 residential, commercial and industrial customers in Lincoln and about another 3,000 in Waverly, Walton, Cheney, Bennet, Firth, Panama, Hickman, and Holland.

Natural gas reaches Lincoln through two interstate pipelines. Northern Natural Gas and Natural Gas Pipelines of America own and operate them. The pipelines deliver gas to Black Hills Energy at a town border station, and Black Hills Energy distributes it to customers. Propane is the other major heating fuel in Lancaster County, and several distributors serve urban and rural customers throughout the county. Natural gas also helps produce electricity. It makes up 26% of the nameplate capacity of the LES generation fleet.



PlanForward recognizes the need for pipelines in the community but also notes that certain land uses should not be located near pipelines. This new policy reinforces the need to separate residential uses and buildings with vulnerable populations from pipelines.

P61. Industrial Zoning and Pipelines: Discourage residential land uses and buildings with vulnerable populations from locating near high-pressure pipelines and industrial zoning districts. Provide adequate separation between vulnerable populations and hazardous materials to protect and promote the public's health.

Black Hills Energy offers its own efficiency program for customers. The Nebraska HEAT program gives rebates to residential and commercial customers who replace a gas furnace or water heater with a qualifying new unit. Rebate funding is limited and available first come, first served. Residents who plan to replace a heating system can compare these rebates with the incentives available through the Heat Pump Incentive Program and the LES Sustainable Energy Program.

As Lincoln and Lancaster County grow, energy needs increase and the system will need additional pipeline facilities. Pipeline operators have traditionally placed key energy infrastructure outside city limits. As development moves closer to these facilities, operators must make added safety and security investments under federal pipeline safety regulations.

City Progress

The City has made progress in its own operations and in programs for residents. The City adopted the *Municipal Buildings Energy Management Plan* in 2025 to guide how City departments manage energy use in City facilities. The City also tracks energy use in municipal buildings, which shows staff where energy goes and where to improve.

Looking Ahead

Lincoln will need to meet growing energy demand while LES works toward net zero carbon dioxide production by 2040 and the community works toward the City's goal of an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The LES strategic plan points to several tools: renewable energy, energy storage, customer programs that reduce peak demand and support for technologies such as electric vehicles and distributed solar. The City and LES coordinate on shared energy priorities, and both aim to give residents reliable, affordable and cleaner energy.

District Energy Service

District energy is a system that produces steam or hot water for heating, or chilled water for cooling, at a central plant and delivers it to nearby buildings through underground pipes. Buildings connected to the system do not need their own boilers or chillers.

District Energy Corporation (DEC) is a nonprofit, interlocal agency that provides efficient, low-cost utility services to facilities in Lincoln. The City and Lancaster County formed DEC in 1989, and LES staff manage its systems. DEC provides thermal heating and cooling to large campuses, government buildings and neighborhoods.

Shared central plants can use energy more efficiently than separate systems in each building. They can also lower operating costs and improve reliability. A master plan for DEC identified opportunities to offer district energy to new developments, which could help developers avoid up-front capital costs.

Water Services

Lincoln Water System and County Water Resources



Potable water is provided to Lincoln residents and businesses by the Lincoln Water System (LWS). The System is owned by the City of Lincoln and managed by the City's Transportation and Utilities Department under the direction of the Mayor and City Council. It is a revenue producing and self-supporting enterprise fund system (i.e., no tax funds are used by the system).

Lincoln's source of water is groundwater recharged from the Platte River northeast of Lincoln. Lincoln has 44 wells that pump this groundwater to two water treatment plants. Lincoln Water System processes the groundwater prior to its transmission to Lincoln for distribution.

The distribution system is divided into six pressure zones. Each zone has a system of storage facilities and pumping stations that keep operating pressures in the 35-100 pounds per square inch (PSI) range. Because pressure for the system relies upon elevation, reservoirs and pump stations are often located outside the respective service area, and in some cases outside of the City.

The existing water system is made up of more than 1,300 miles of water distribution mains. Pipes providing service to customers range in size from 4" to 16" in diameter and total 1,200 miles. There are also 150 miles of transmission and transfer mains which range from 24" to 60" in diameter.

The water distribution system contains approximately 30,000 valves for the isolation of water main breaks to minimize the number of customers out of service. Approximately 13,000 public hydrants in the distribution system provide for the fire protection needs of the City.

Lincoln Transportation and Utilities Department completed the current update to the Lincoln Water System Facilities Master Plan in 2020. The plan is a guide for short term and long term improvements to the infrastructure of the Lincoln Water System during the planning period.

The projected maximum day water demand for year 2040 is 115 million gallons per day (MGD), and for 2060 is 143 MGD based on the assumed population growth rate. Maximum day water demands include adjustments for increased industrial water use. The 2020 Facilities Master Plan update also adjusted future seasonal peak water

demands to account for predicted climate changes that are expected to increase summer water use through the planning period. Additional supply, treatment, and transmission improvements will be necessary to meet these growing demands.

The well fields currently owned by the Lincoln Water System have a projected maximum capacity approximately equal to the projected need by 2040 to 2050. An additional source of water that could include an interconnection with Metropolitan Utility District of Omaha or developing a new source of supply will need to be acquired in the planning period to meet these demands and a financial plan adopted to fund such a project. These options are outlined in the Water Facilites Master Plan.

During 2022 and 2023 various alternatives were evaluated by the Mayor's Water Source Advisory Council which provided a recommended alternative for Lincoln's second water source. The preferred alternative is to develop a water source using wells located near the Missouri River and treating water at a location near the wellfield and transporting potable water supply from that location to Lincoln. The Missouri River source is currently being further evaluated with respect to capacity and location of facilities. The estimated cost for this alternative is nearly $1.0 billion (2022 dollars) when constructed and operational in approximately 2048.

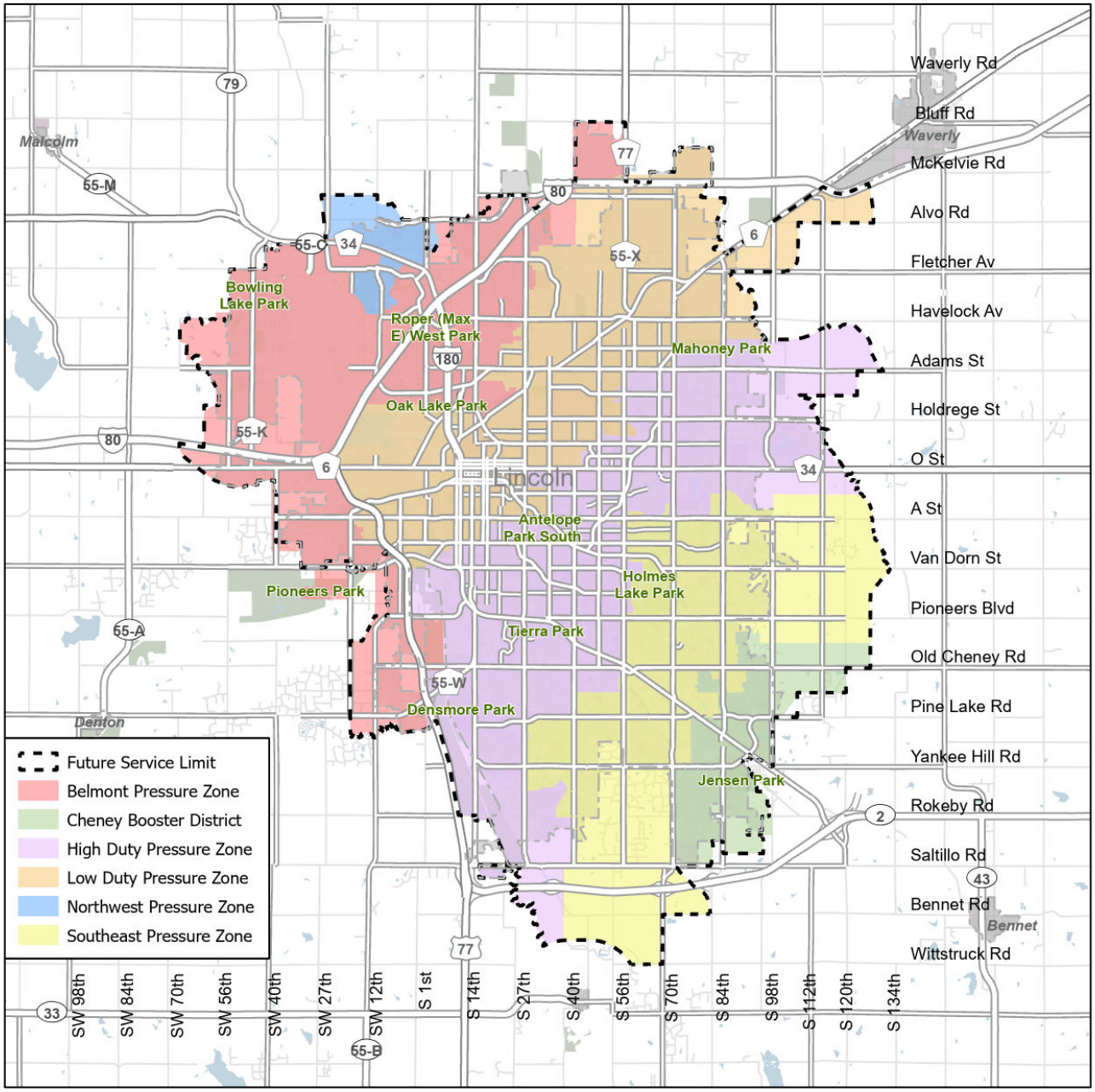
Developing a strategy for securing a second source of water supply is also part of Lincoln’s Climate Action Plan. As with demand projections, the 2020 Facilities Master Plan update also adjusted available water supply to account for climate change by using reduced summer streamflows in the later years of the planning period.

Lincoln’s drinking water currently meets all of the State and Federal regulations regarding water quality. As new drinking water regulations are implemented, additional treatment may be required. LWS strives for environmental stewardship in all aspects of its operations.

LWS actively promotes water conservation to customers and works to conserve energy in system operations. Operators continually work toward the best balance between system energy needs and the variable rate schedules provided by both Lincoln Electric System and Omaha Public Power District.

Residential water bills are determined by an increasing block structure. The more water the resident uses, the higher the price per unit of water. Traditionally, residential water use has been a major cause of fluctuations between low winter and high summer use. The price structure’s intent is to encourage water conservation and the water rates are competitive with local and regional cities. In the event that water restrictions are necessary whether from drought or natural disasters, the Water Management Plan is used to guide and govern restrictions that include implementing Water Shortage Rates.

Figure E8.f: Existing and Future City of Lincoln Water Pressure Zones



Rural and Town Water Services

Water service to rural Lancaster County residents is obtained through private water systems (i.e., private wells), rural water districts, or Sanitary Improvement Districts (SIDs). The Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department enforces standards on wells within the city limits and three-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction. In addition, the Property Transfer Code enforces standards on wells throughout the county which serve private residences. These standards are applied when ownership changes through the sale of property. The Lower Platte South Natural Resources District is maintaining a Groundwater Management Plan for the County to ensure the protection of this resource.

Two rural water districts supply potable water to Lancaster County residents; Lancaster Rural Water District No. 1 and Cass County Rural Water District No. 2. These rural associations include property owners adjacent to the City limits. There are three SID's providing water services to area residents: Emerald, Holland, and Walton.

Cities and villages in Lancaster County collect water from municipally owned wells. Some communities are provided water via contract from rural water districts. Limited well source and poor water quality in some areas contribute to reliance on rural water districts.

Groundwater Management Plan

In April 1995, the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (LPSNRD) adopted a Groundwater Management Plan. This Plan describes steps for managing the area's groundwater to protect its future quality and quantity and has led to the designation by the LPSNRD of a Groundwater Management Area. This designation provides the District with the authority to regulate nonpoint sources in the urban and rural areas that might affect groundwater quality and quantity. The LPSNRD conducts an annual review assessing the District's actions, activities, and effectiveness under the Rules and Regulations for implementation of the Ground Water Management Plan.

Wastewater Services

The City of Lincoln Wastewater System is a publicly owned and operated system. The system is a revenue producing and self-supporting, enterprise fund system (i.e., no tax funds are used). The Department of Transportation and Utilities Wastewater Division manages the operation of the system.

Collection System

In general, the wastewater collection system is a gravity flow system that is designed to accommodate urbanization of drainage basins. The existing system includes 15 lift stations to assist in pumping and conveying the wastewater in the collection system. The collection system currently serves 11 major drainage basins, with more than 1,162 miles of sanitary sewer pipes ranging in size from 8" to 90" in diameter. This system encourages orderly growth within the natural drainage basin boundaries.

Water Resource Recovery Facilities

There are two water resource recovery facilities (WRRF) in operation: The Theresa Street and Northeast Wastewater Facilities serve different areas of the City.

The Theresa Street facility is located at 2400 Theresa St., near N. 27th Street and Cornhusker Highway, and currently serves approximately 75% of the City. The Northeast facility is located at 7000 N. 70th Street, near N. 70th and Salt Creek and serves the remaining 25% of the City. By the year 2040, because of strong growth projected to the south and east, the Northeast Facility will have increased to about 40-45% of the service and the Theresa Street Facility will serve the remaining 55-60% of the City. The Theresa St. facility also receives liquid wastes from liquid waste haulers providing services to Lincoln and Lancaster County businesses and residents. Treated effluent from

both facilities is discharged into Salt Creek. Prior to being discharged into Salt Creek, the effluent from the Theresa Street Facility is used in an innovative process to heat and cool buildings located at the Nebraska Innovation Campus (NIC). Treated effluent is pumped from a pump station at the recovery facility to a heat exchanger building located on the NIC. The effluent is the thermal energy source for the Central Renewable Energy System (CRES). The thermal property is transferred between the two systems and CRES water is pumped to each tenant building on the NIC. The two systems do not mix, and the effluent is then returned to the treatment facility discharge point into Salt Creek.



Wastewater solids that have been biologically treated and stabilized are called biosolids. Following treatment and processing, biosolids become a nutrient rich organic material that can be recycled and applied as a fertilizer to improve and maintain productive solids and stimulate plant growth. All biosolids produced from the two water resource recovery facilities meet Federal and State regulatory standards and are beneficially applied on cropland through a farm cooperator program operated by the City's Wastewater System Biosolids Coordinator.

Biogas, consisting of methane and carbon dioxide, is a byproduct of the wastewater solids stabilization or anaerobic digestion process. At the Theresa Street Facility, biogas is recovered and processed as renewable natural gas (RNG). Once processed, the RNG is marketed and distributed as a transportation fuel qualifying as an advanced biofuel under the EPA Federal Renewable Fuels (RFS) and California's Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) programs. Revenue is generated from the sale of environmental and monetary attributes through both programs.

Lincoln Transportation and Utilities completed the Lincoln Wastewater Facilities Master Plan in 2015. The plan is a guide for short-term and long-term improvements to the infrastructure of the Lincoln Wastewater System during the planning period, as well as potential service extensions beyond Lincoln's anticipated future service limits.

Rural and Town Wastewater Services

Residents in unincorporated areas employ on-site septic and/or lagoon treatment systems. Lancaster County has adopted standards for on-site wastewater treatment systems that are enforced by the Lincoln – Lancaster County Health Department.

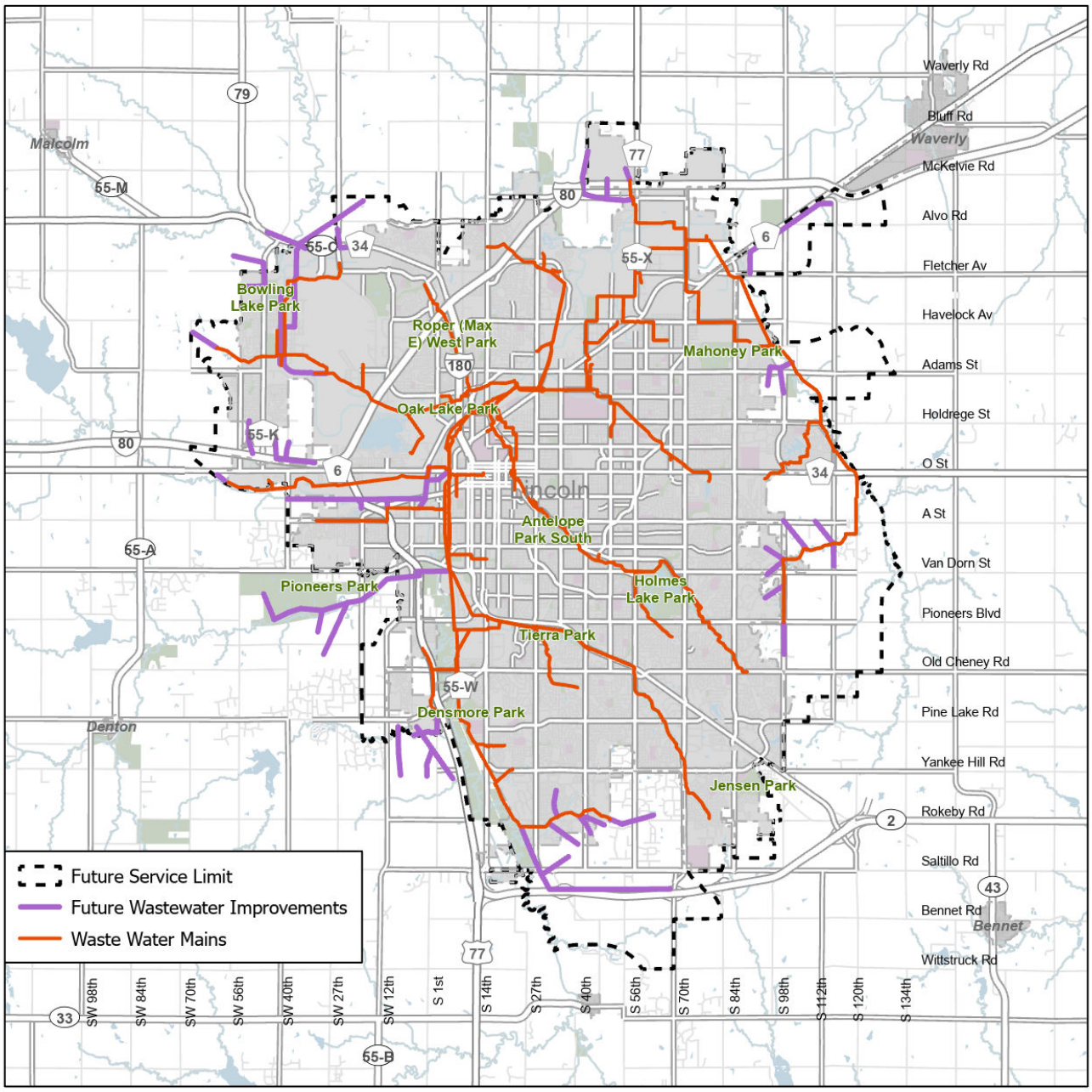
Each incorporated city and village in the county operates a municipally-owned wastewater collection and treatment facility. In addition, on-site septic treatment systems are permitted within their planning and zoning jurisdictions.

There are a number of subdivision developments in Lancaster County that utilize shared infrastructure systems. These systems are typically for sewer collection and treatment within the development and provide no connections or services to outside development or communities.

Three Sanitary Improvement Districts provide sanitary sewer to local residents: Cheney (lagoon), Holland (lagoon), Emerald (lagoon).

These larger point-source and community systems (towns, subdivision systems and SIDs) are reviewed and approved by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality.

Figure E8.g: Existing and Future City of Lincoln Wastewater Improvements



DRAFT

Watershed Management

As discussed in the Environmental Resources Element, Lancaster County is primarily within the Salt Creek watershed. When it rains in Lincoln, stormwater flows into drainage inlets, gutters, and underground pipes before reaching Salt Creek, which drains into the Platte River. Rain that falls on hard surfaces like rooftops, parking lots and other surfaces can carry pollutants into our streams and lakes. Lincoln occasionally gets more rain than the storm drain system or streams can adequately convey, which can lead to flooding.

Floodplain and Stormwater Management

Local floodplain and stormwater management responsibility is shared by the City of Lincoln, which assumes care of the tributaries and storm drain system, and the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (LPSNRD), which maintains the main stream channels. Both the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County participate in the National Flood Insurance Program administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Water quality from stormwater is managed under the Federal Clean Water Act. The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program addresses non-agricultural sources of stormwater discharge. This program is administered in the State by the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE). The City of Lincoln in coordination with the LPSNRD developed a Clean Water Program to identify the actions needed to improve the quality of stormwater runoff from developed (post-construction) areas to meet, at minimum, state standards.

Comprehensive Watershed Management



The City of Lincoln Watershed Management program combines previously separate floodplain and stormwater management initiatives. This approach recognizes that floodplains, tributaries, and upland areas are all part of a comprehensive, integrated watershed system. A comprehensive approach to watershed planning is crucial as development expands into new basins around the Lincoln city limits and as redevelopment occurs within the existing urban area. A comprehensive watershed management program needs to incorporate a range of strategies including land use planning, conservation design for new subdivisions, conservation efforts, appropriate standards for floodplains and stormwater, flood warning system development/expansion, stream stabilization, stormwater storage basins, and other structural flood control efforts.

As part of the overall watershed management program, the City, in cooperation with the LPSNRD, has developed a unified master watershed management plan. This plan is a compendium of previously approved Watershed Master Plan Studies and is to be used as a planning tool to be referenced in conjunction with proposed developments and as a guide in the preparation of future capital improvement projects. The Comprehensive Watershed Master Plan evaluates and proposes projects to address a wide range of water resources, and is formulated in cooperation with other local, state and federal agencies.

Watershed planning and the performance and adequacy of stormwater storage basins and other measures to prevent increases in peak flows will require continued assessment with the growth of the City. Upstream detention facilities are critical to preventing localized downstream flooding, further increases to the floodplain, and if properly

designed also help to reduce pollutant loads to downstream waterbodies. Development and significant redevelopment projects need to meet stormwater quality requirements through the use of Stormwater Quality Best Management Practices facilities. Requirements can be accomplished through the use of detention facilities that are developed in a manner that incorporates water quality best management practices and causes minimal adverse impact to existing residential, agricultural and other land uses.

Basin management plans are a more recent watershed planning initiative that is part of the ongoing effort to proactively forecast, evaluate and manage stormwater quality impacts associated with existing and future development and redevelopment of the City. These plans provide available information on the source of contaminants and how such contaminants can be reduced through projects and programs. They also include information for the education of the public on water quality and include projects to protect and restore stream channels. The first of these basin management plans (Antelope Creek from Holmes Lake to Salt Creek) provides a framework upon which future plans may be built.

Floodplain Management

The overriding policy for the floodplain is a "No Adverse Impact" policy for the City and County, which means that the community has a goal of insuring that the action of one property owner does not adversely impact the flooding risk for other properties. The majority of the strategies below relate back to and support this umbrella concept.

The No Adverse Impact concept is supported by which designates the majority of floodplain areas outside of the existing urban area as Green Space, Environmental Resources, and Agricultural Stream Corridors. This supports the opportunity to reduce the risk of flood damage to life and property and to preserve the important functions of floodplains. This concept is more explicitly supported by the Salt Creek Flood Storage Area Standards and the Flood Regulations for New Growth Areas which protect flood storage in the areas with greatest risk for impacts. While regulations to support the No Adverse Impact concept have not been fully adopted throughout the Existing Urban Area or in the County's jurisdiction, goals and strategies in this plan support minimizing impacts to the floodplain in all circumstances.

Solid Waste (Sustainable Materials Management)

The City of Lincoln has entered into interlocal agreements with Lancaster County and all the villages and cities in Lancaster County, with the exception of Hallam, to serve as the lead agency for solid waste management in the County. The Lincoln Transportation and Utilities Department, Solid Waste Operations in conjunction with the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department Environmental Division oversees the City and County's solid waste management programs. In 2013, the City completed the Solid Waste Plan 2040, which shall serve as a guidance document, communication tool, and a resource for policy decisions. The Solid Waste Plan was updated in 2021 and is expected to be updated again in 2026/2027.

Collection

Lincoln Municipal Code requires collection and removal of solid waste by a licensed waste hauler from single family residences at least once a week and at least twice a week for all other residential properties. However, homeowners are allowed by ordinance to self-haul waste from their own residence to the City operated small vehicle transfer station located at 5101 North 48th Street. All licensed waste haulers are also required to offer recycling services to all residential and commercial customers. Private companies also provide roll-off services within Lincoln and Lancaster County; however, they are not required to be licensed.

Three villages in the county — Bennet, Davey and Panama – operate solid waste transfer stations. Residents transport their waste to these facilities. All other communities in the county offer residential waste collection.

Disposal

The City of Lincoln's primary solid waste sanitary landfill, Bluff Road Landfill, is located at Nebraska Highway 77 (N. 56th St.) and Bluff Road, just north of I-80. This facility began operating in the late 1980's. The facility accepts approximately 1,000 to 1,300 tons per day Monday through Friday, and 300 tons on Saturday and 100 tons on Sunday. The parcel that houses current operations is projected to be at capacity near the year 2035 based on current generation rates and the projected population growth rate of 1.2 percent per year. Planning for expansion of the Bluff Road Landfill on City owned property just east of the existing site is underway and formal site approval by Council has been completed via resolution. The City policy of public ownership, operation and financing of integrated solid waste management services is anticipated to continue during the planning period. The planned landfill expansion will be included in the permit renewal application submitted to the State of Nebraska Department of Water, Energry, and Environment in 2027/2028. Waste haulers may choose to utilize landfills in nearby counties for disposal of waste generated in Lancaster County; however, traditionally less than one percent of waste generated in Lincoln is being exported.

The City also operates a landfill for construction and demolition debris at 5101 North 48th Street. This facility is located on the site of the County's previous solid waste landfill, and the site also hosts the small vehicle transfer station for the general public to self-haul waste for disposal. The waste is then transferred to the Bluff Road Landfill. The construction and demolition debris landfill is projected to have capacity through the year 2048.

Environmental Services

Lincoln's Solid Waste Operations and the Lincoln-Lancaster Health Department (Environmental Health Division) provide a wide assortment of integrated solid waste management services. These range from source reduction and pollution prevention to recycling and disposal. Many of these services are voluntary — that is, they are not specifically required by any federal or state regulations.

The City considers these services to be like any other utility, and recycling opportunities should be accessible to every resident in the community. Diversion of waste from landfill disposal extends the life of the landfill, conserves natural resources, contributes to the local economy by creating jobs to collect and sort recyclables and reduces greenhouse gas emissions by producing products with recycled content versus raw material. City operated recyclables collection sites available to the public to recycle traditional materials – cardboard, paper, plastic, metal and glass – were consolidated in 2020-2021 to optimize the system for collection, provide surveillance to prevent illegal dumping and efficiently utilize rate revenues.



Development, maintenance and ultimate closure of the Bluff Road Landfill, as well as daily operations, are funded by a fee collected for disposal of wastes in the landfill. Other solid waste management programs are funded by a combination of user fees, revenue bonds and an occupation tax assessed to refuse haulers collecting refuse in the city or in the county and utilizing the Bluff Road Landfill for disposal. These forms of financing for solid waste management are anticipated to continue during the planning period.

In 2018, the City of Lincoln passed a resolution banning corrugated cardboard from the City's Landfills. This resolution also required every waste collection company to offer curb-side recycling to all of its customers.

Recycling helps to save landfill space, conserves resources, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. For those reasons, the City has established a goal of increasing waste reduction and recycling and reducing the per capita rate of disposal. This goal in accordance with the Solid Waste Plan 2040 and the 2021 Update reduces the per capita disposal rate of 1,970 pounds per person in 2014 to 1,510 pounds per capita per year by 2050. Multi-material recyclables collection sites are located in the City of Lincoln, accepting cardboard, mixed paper (junk mail, magazines, newspaper, office paper), glass, plastic, and metal containers.

Residents and businesses also have the option to subscribe to single stream recycling collection services through private haulers for a nominal fee. Business and institutions that generate sufficient amounts of cardboard, office paper, or other recyclables can also obtain collection services for specific recyclable commodities.

Landfill Gas Collection and Control

Landfill Gas consists of about 50% methane and 45% carbon dioxide, with other trace gases resulting from biological decomposition of solid waste. Methane is of particular concern as a greenhouse gas since each unit of methane equivalent to 21 units of carbon dioxide. An active landfill gas collection system is in place at the Bluff Road Landfill and since 2014, in cooperation with the Lincoln Electric System's Terry Bundy Generating Station produced approximately 4 MW of electricity.

In late 2025 the City entered into an agreement whereby Sparq Renewables will finance, construct, operate and maintain a renewable natural gas project at the Bluff Road Landfill for an initial period of 15 years, with options to extend agreement to 25 years. The project ensures that landfill gas extracted from the landfill is captured for beneficial uses including revenue for the City from the sale of landfill gas.

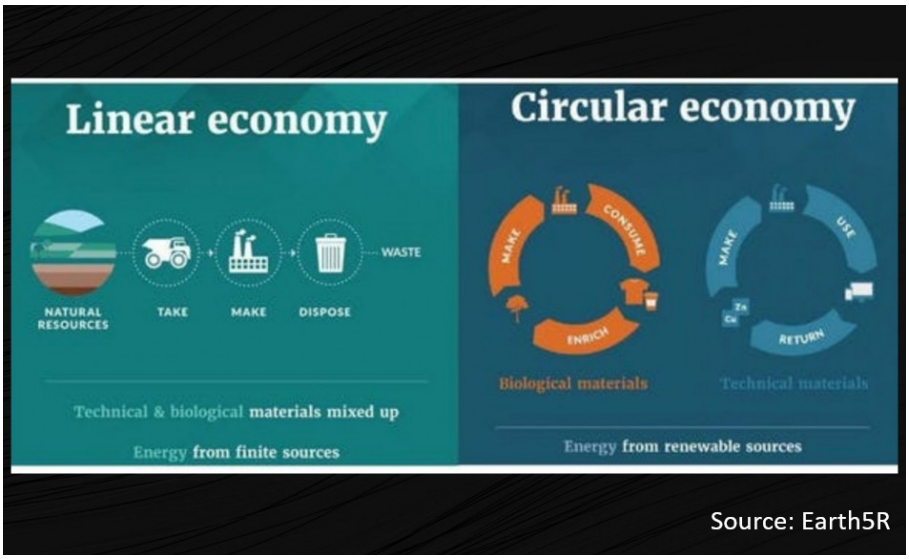
Strategies for Solid Waste Management

The guiding principle of privately-owned and operated refuse and recyclables collection services with public ownership, operation and financing of other solid waste management services related to disposal, transfer, processing and environmental protection will continue during the planning period. Other services related to managing solid wastes are currently offered by privately-owned businesses and include material processing and organic waste composting facilities. The private sector also operates material reuse services as a component of a comprehensive integrated waste management system.

The management of solid waste is beginning yet another paradigm shift; one that recognizes the resource value of the materials currently being put into landfills. The decades long concept of the linear economy (often referred to as "take, make, waste (or dispose)") is shifting to the circular economy, which employs strategies that use the Earth's finite natural resources and through improved product design and manufacturing processes consciously minimizes the environmental impacts from production and consumption. The concept of a circular economy is much more than recycling; much more than zero waste concepts. It is considered and promoted as a viable solution to challenges like climate change. In contrast to the linear economy, the circular economy concludes nothing is waste and promotes thinking and behavior to that end, but it will take decades to transition.

At the local government operational level, the concept of the circular economy can be thought of as sustainable materials management (SMM). Again, a rather recent paradigm shift from terminology such as solid waste management. Information suggests the EPA began this transition in 2010 when the Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery shifted program emphasis from a broad array of resource recovery initiatives to sustainable materials management.

Figure E8.h: Solid Waste Circular Economy



Policies Related to this Element

P48: Renewable Energy

P49: Conservation of Energy

P50: Water Quantity and Quality

P51: Groundwater

P52: Wastewater System

P53: Gravity Flow Collection System

P54: Wastewater Resource Recovery Facilities

P56: Landfill

P57: Landfill Gas

P58: Waste Reduction

P59: Electric Utility

P60: Technology

P61: Industrial Zoning and Pipelines

Goals Related to this Element

G8: Community Resiliency

G10: Effective Government

G14: Technology

E9: Transportation



This element discusses the multimodal transportation network with regards to the elements of the Long Range Transportation Plan which include transportation goals, outreach and public participation, needs assessment, needs based plan, funding outlook, and fiscally constrained plan. It describes a balanced local transportation system built upon PlanForward's vision.

The City of Lincoln is the federally recognized MPO for the Lincoln Metropolitan Area serving Lincoln and Lancaster County to carry out transportation planning and decision-making. The MPO coordinates the planning activities of all transportation-related agencies and adopts long range plans to guide transportation investment decisions. The Lincoln MPO *2050 LRTP Update* anticipates changes that may influence the transportation network. Changing demographics, employment patterns, and technologies will create challenges for provision of transportation services and facilities. These challenges are addressed through the eight goals of the LRTP as described and illustrated below.

Maintenance: A well-maintained transportation system.

Mobility & System Reliability: An efficient, reliable, and well-connected transportation system that leverages innovation and technology for moving people and freight.

Livability & Travel Choice: A multimodal system that provides convenient and affordable travel options to support a more compact, healthy, livable urban environment.

Safety & Security: A safe and secure transportation system.

Economic Vitality: A transportation system that promotes economic vitality and sustainable growth for residents and businesses.

Environmental Sustainability: A transportation system that minimizes negative impacts on and strives to enhance the natural, cultural, and built environment.

Funding & Cost Effectiveness: Collaboration in funding transportation projects that maximize user benefits and local funding and embrace innovative funding approaches.

Access & Opportunity: A multimodal transportation system that expands access to opportunities and enhances connections for communities with limited transportation options.

The LRTP builds on a strong foundation of adopted plans, policies, and programs that guide transportation, land use, redevelopment, safety, and public investment across the community. This plan was developed concurrently with an update of the Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan and the new Lincoln Mobility Plan to create an integrated approach to land use, transportation, and mobility planning. The Comprehensive Plan establishes the long-range vision, growth strategy, and population and employment forecasts that informed the LRTP's travel demand analysis, while the Lincoln Mobility Plan identifies multimodal mobility needs and strategies.

As the population grows, demand for transportation infrastructure will rise. Aging facilities, escalating construction costs, and the need for sustainable, resilient systems strain available funding. To address these challenges, the LRTP focuses on maximizing the efficiency of the current system while prioritizing strategic investments to foster a transportation network that emphasizes active mobility, accessibility, and reliable commuting options. Continued community dialogue and regular updates to this plan will be essential to meet the community's long-term transportation goals.

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Current Transportation System Overview

A comprehensive overview of Lincoln and Lancaster County's transportation network provides valuable insight into how mobility supports the region today. The overview of the current transportation system is in Chapter 4 of the LRTP. and demonstrated safety are key elements of successful bicycle and pedestrian networks. People may choose to ride or walk only if they feel safe and comfortable on the bikeway and pedestrian networks. According to the City of Lincoln Crash Data Analysis for 2012 to 2016, crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists accounted for 3 percent of all crashes, but 12 percent of all severe crashes, which is disproportionate to the number of people bicycling and walking. Pedestrian and Bike Crash frequency is one of five intersection criteria the City of Lincoln uses to prioritize safety countermeasures.

Land Use, Demographics, and Travel Patterns

Population and employment trends further influence Lincoln's transportation needs. Where people live and work shape the demand for infrastructure and services across all travel modes. Lincoln's population reached 294,750 in 2023, a 1.95 percent increase since 2019, while Lancaster County grew by 2.4 percent to 326,716.

Forecasted growth for residential, commercial, and school enrollment were used in the planning and travel forecasting process. Overall, households are forecast to increase by 23 percent by 2050, with a 20 percent growth in anticipated commercial development (square footage) and a 47 percent increase in total enrollment (K-12 and college/university).

Lancaster County functions as a regional employment hub. In 2023, there were nearly 50,000 commuters from outside the county each day, while about 29,500 residents traveled elsewhere for work in 2023. Approximately 130,700 residents both live and work within the county, underscoring the need for coordinated transportation and land use planning to support a connected workforce.

Roads and Bridges

The Lincoln MPO is served by a widespread and diverse network of streets and highways, ranging from high-capacity roadways that accommodate thousands of vehicles each hour to quieter residential streets. Essential to the regional economy, this transportation system enables the efficient movement of goods throughout the city and county. In rural areas, the roadway network connects smaller communities where many commuters to Lincoln live, and provides vital access for agricultural producers to reach key transportation hubs, thereby supporting the distribution of commodities across the region and into global markets.



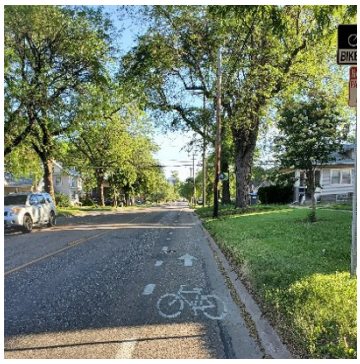
The City of Lincoln and Lancaster County make significant investments in infrastructure to support a more resilient and connected future. As the demand for transportation infrastructure has increased, the maintenance of roadways has become even more vital. The City of Lincoln, Lancaster County, and NDOT assess bridge conditions using data from the National Bridge Inspection Program. Per federal guidelines, all bridges must be inspected at least once every 24 months and given a rating based on the conditions of key structural components.

Active Mobility

Promoting active transportation, including walking and biking, is a critical aspect of a well balanced transportation system that meets the needs of all users. Communities that invest in safe, convenient, and comfortable active transportation options often experience improved public health and enhanced quality of life. Over the past several years, the City of Lincoln has made meaningful strides in strengthening the active transportation network.

BikeLNK is the city's official bikeshare system, providing both standard pedal bikes and electric-assist bikes (e-bikes), accessible at docking stations located throughout the city. In 2022, a permanent e-scooter program, ScooterLNK, was introduced after a successful pilot program.

Due to Lincoln's development policies, sidewalks line both sides of nearly all local, collector, and arterial streets. This robust system, spanning nearly 1,500 miles, is supported by an expansive trail network. However, cracked and uneven sidewalks can hinder mobility, especially for individuals with disabilities. Older neighborhoods generally face greater issues, with factors like sidewalk width, proximity to traffic, damage from tree roots, and frequent curb cuts affecting accessibility.



Transit

StarTran, the City of Lincoln's public transit division, operates 14 fixed bus routes. In 2022, StarTran covered approximately 87 percent of transit supportive areas. In 2020, StarTran introduced VanLNK, an on demand van service that allows travelers to request riders via an app for $5 per trip. Additionally, paratransit services are available for $2.50 to serve riders who experience disabilities. StarTran saw more than 2 million riders in 2023. Rural transit routes, operated by Lancaster County Rural Public Transit and managed by Aging Partners, run on alternate weekdays to and from the north and south portions of the County.

Intermodal Connections and Freight

Lincoln and Lancaster County's economic vitality depends on the ability of manufacturers, retailers, and distributors to move goods efficiently throughout the region. A high performing transportation system is essential for these industries to operate effectively. Even residents without direct ties to the freight sector benefit from reliable goods movement every day, highlighting the broader economic importance of maintaining smooth and dependable freight operations.



Freight movement in Lancaster County is expected to remain heavily dependent on trucking through 2045. Truck freight is projected to increase slightly from 78.6 percent of tonnage in 2023 to 79.2 percent in 2045, while its share of freight value is expected to grow from 76.8 percent to 77.9 percent. This dominance reflects the region's strategic location along major highway corridors and the importance of truck transportation for serving local businesses, industries, and consumers.
Rail remains the second-largest freight mode, carrying approximately 14.2 percent of freight tonnage and 18.1 percent of freight value in 2023. The higher share of value relative to tonnage highlights rail's continued role in transporting significant quantities of agricultural products, manufactured goods, and other commodities within the regional freight network. The rail cargo mix is dominated by coal and agricultural products, along with manufacturing shipments. BNSF's Hobson Yard, just west of downtown, acts as a critical hub for fueling, inspections, and switching, while the Havelock Shops in northeast Lincoln are a key site for freight cars repair. Numerous at-grade rail crossings pose safety risks and cause delays for street network users. To address these concerns, the Lincoln/Lancaster County Railroad Transportation Safety District (RTSD) works to identify problem crossing locations, priorities, and solutions.

The Lincoln Airport is the major air facility servicing Lincoln, Lancaster County, and the region. It provides an important transportation link to national and international markets. It is in the northwestern part of Lincoln, with access provided by Interstate and State highways. Smaller private airports and airfields are also located throughout the county.

Pipeline, air, and other modes collectively account for a relatively small share of freight activity. Although these modes represent a minor portion of overall freight volumes, they provide important support to specialized sectors of the regional economy.

Electric Vehicles and Advanced Vehicle Technology

Per the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Nebraska had 6,920 electric vehicle registrations in 2023. The City of Lincoln has 55 public charging stations as of 2025 and has made significant efforts to expand their EV charging network. The City of Lincoln has numerous electric and alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) including StarTran, whose entire fleet of buses will consist of AFVs by the end of 2026.

Automated vehicles (AVs) offer promising possibilities for the future of transportation. Using advanced technologies, AVs can partially or fully operate without human drivers, thereby enhancing safety, efficiency, and mobility. Major automakers and tech leaders like Google and Tesla are actively working to develop and test AV models, some of which are already available with limited autonomous capabilities.

Safety

Safety is a top priority locally, across the state, and across the country. Federal regulations require each state to develop and implement a comprehensive highway transportation safety plan. Nebraska's Strategic Highway Safety Plan, updated in 2023, identifies key focus areas that need ongoing or new safety programs.

A local initiative, Safe Streets Lincoln, aligns with the national Vision Zero campaign to eliminate traffic fatalities. This project developed a comprehensive Vision Zero Action Plan, with a safety goal of eliminating all roadway fatalities and reducing serious injury crashes by 60 percent by the year 2045 on all locally maintained streets. Vision Zero acknowledges that many factors contribute to safe mobility, including street design, speeds, behaviors, technology, and policies.

The average number of serious injury or fatality (KSI) crashes per 100,000 population was 38 KSI crashes per year in Lincoln city limits and 102 KSI crashes per year in Lancaster County. Between 2019 and 2024, there were 672 KSI crashes and more than 10,000 minor or possible injury crashes in the city of Lincoln, and there were 194 KSI crashes and just over 1,100 minor or possible injury crashes in Lancaster County. All other crashes were property damage only (PDO).

Community Input on Transportation

Public engagement is described in Chapter 3 of the LRTP. Public involvement played a key role in shaping both the Lincoln MPO LRTP and the Lincoln Mobility Plan. Broad-based, inclusive community outreach efforts for this plan encouraged active participation in identifying the vision, goals, and needs of the region. The Lincoln MPO reached out to stakeholders across the region through online surveys and engagement opportunities, open houses, pop-up events, and focus groups. The City of Lincoln and Lancaster County participated extensively in the development of this plan, as did NDOT and many community-based organizations and advocacy groups representing the diverse interests of Lincoln and Lancaster County.





Information gathered throughout the LRTP community engagement revealed several recurring themes:

- **Safety.** Public input consistently emphasized the need for a safer transportation system, with improvements to intersections, crossings, roadway design, and operations to better protect all users.
- **Active Transportation Connectivity.** Community members expressed strong support for expanding and connecting sidewalk, trail, and bicycle networks to provide safe and convenient access to destinations throughout Lincoln and Lancaster County. Residents cited "Trails and Biking" as what they liked best about Lincoln's transportation system.

- **Transit and Mobility Choice.** Participants highlighted the importance of reliable transit service and expanded mobility options that provide residents with more ways to travel throughout the region.
- **System Reliability and Maintenance.** Maintaining and improving existing transportation infrastructure emerged as a priority, with attention to roadway conditions, congestion, and overall system performance. While maintenance of the system remains a critical priority, it received less focus than in past plans, when it ranked as the top concern. This change likely reflects the success of increased local investment in recent years, including "Lincoln on the Move."
- **Growth and Accessibility.** Residents emphasized the need for transportation investments that not only support future growth but also improve access to housing, jobs, services, and community destinations.
- **Multimodal Transportation.** Engagement participants supported a balanced transportation system that accommodates walking, bicycling, transit, freight movement, and automobile travel while strengthening connections between modes.
- **Funding and Implementation.** Stakeholders stressed the importance of strategic investment decisions, project prioritization, and coordinated implementation to maximize the effective use of funds.

Future Needs Assessment

The LRTP identifies the transportation investments needed to support Lincoln and Lancaster County through 2050. These needs include both specific capital projects that can be evaluated and prioritized through the LRTP and ongoing programs that are addressed through broader funding allocations. The details of the of the needs assessment are described in Chapter 5 of the LRTP.

The project prioritization process focused on four categories for which specific projects have been identified: Lincoln roadway projects, Lancaster County roadway projects, NDOT projects, and trail projects. Within each category, some projects are already committed through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), while additional projects represent longer-term needs. Other important transportation needs—such as operations and maintenance, roadway and bridge rehabilitation, safety programs, transit, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and technology, and planning and engineering activities—are treated as programmatic funding categories rather than individual projects prioritized through the LRTP.

Major Streets and Right-of-Way Considerations

Right-of-Way (ROW) widths for selected major street segments are shown in Figure E9.a.

Major Streets

The major streets identified in Figure E9.a include arterials from the Existing Functional Classification designations in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) along with future arterial streets within the PlanForward2050 Growth Tiers boundary. Other major streets shown on the map are interstates/expressways from the Existing Functional Classification map in the LRTP.

Descriptions of each street type per the LRTP are as follows:

Collectors: Collector streets connect local roads to the larger arterial network. They help move traffic within neighborhoods and between residential, commercial, and industrial areas. Streets like Calvert Street (between 13th and 56th) provide both access to properties and circulation through communities. Collectors also offer more direct routes for pedestrians and cyclists. In rural areas, minor collectors serve smaller towns and important local

destinations. Their spacing is based on population density and the need to connect local roads to the broader network.

Principal Arterials: Principal arterials are major streets that carry most of the traffic between and within communities in the urban area. Designed to handle high volumes, these roads—such as Superior Street and 84th Street—primarily serve to move traffic efficiently. While they may provide access to nearby properties, that access is secondary to their main purpose of supporting regional travel.

Minor Arterials: Minor arterials serve medium-length trips and help connect neighborhoods and commercial areas to the larger road network. Streets like Vine Street (between 17th and 70th) and Cotner Boulevard (between South and 70th) are good examples. These roads carry moderate to heavy traffic and provide a lower level of mobility than principal arterials. They also offer some direct access to nearby properties and support a large portion of the city's transit routes.

Interstate and Expressway: Freeways and expressways are high speed roads designed to move large volumes of traffic efficiently. Freeways, like I-80, are fully controlled-access roads with no at-grade intersections or direct access to adjacent properties. Expressways, such as the South Beltway, are similar but may include some at grade crossings and partial access control. These roadways offer the highest level of mobility in the transportation network, typically serving longer trips and higher traffic volumes.

Right-of-Way

Projects occurring at the intersection of two arterial streets or at locations where right turn lanes are required will warrant the further dedication or acquisition of public right-of-way up to 130 feet in width for the "2+1 at 120 feet of ROW" and "4+1 at 120 feet of ROW" projects, and 150 feet in width for the "6+1 at 140 feet of ROW" projects, for a distance extending two blocks from the centerline (approximately 700 feet) of the intersection. The length of the intersection improvement should consider the existing and proposed land uses in the general area, traffic studies, and other pertinent information. Signalized intersections occurring along an arterial but not crossing another arterial may also fall under these ROW standards. The standard applies when land uses or other factors demonstrate the need for a wider ROW at that location.

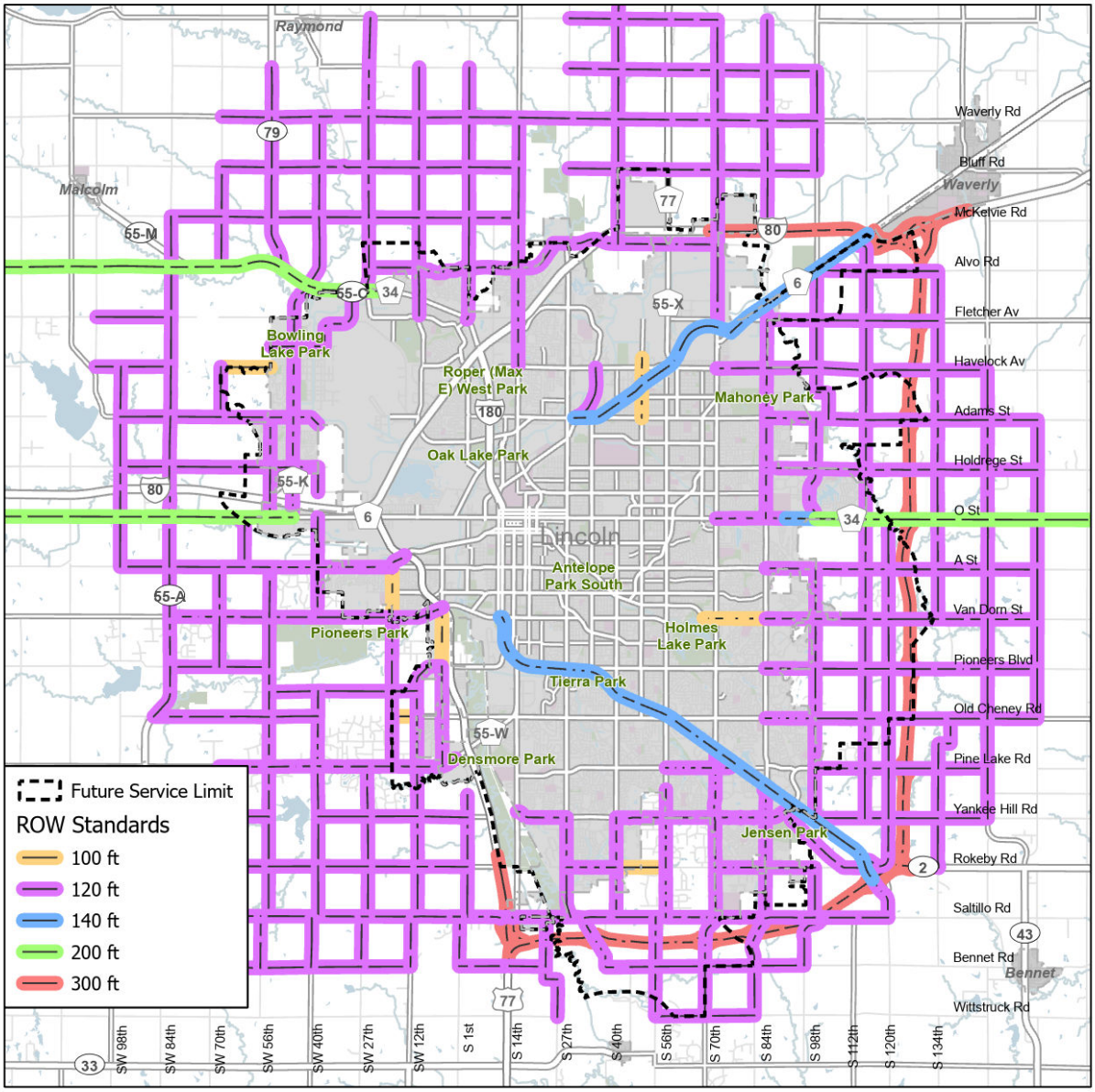
Within Lincoln's future Growth Tiers I, II and III, a public ROW width of 120 feet for any potential future arterial street is considered the standard for this Plan. This may include, but is not necessarily limited to, the existing section and half-section line roads in these future Growth Tiers. Any ROW obtained to extend or otherwise complete the section line road system in the future growth area should also be done at this standard.

There are instances — mostly but not always in newer areas — where trails are to be placed along an arterial street. This may occur in order to provide trail connections and to allow safe trail crossings at arterial streets. When a future trail or bike lane is designated along an arterial roadway, the corridor should be expanded by six (6) additional feet on the side where the trail will be located. This additional ROW should be obtained in advance of development.

Modifications to existing or proposed right-of-way are typically noted with the implementation of roundabout intersections. In most cases, ROW needed for exclusive right-turn lanes at intersections can now be lessened on the approaches due to the less intrusive footprint of roundabout intersection approaches.

Additional considerations are needed at some intersection roundabout corners. However, due to the circular intersection characteristics which can identify more ROW needs due to the offset required on approaches to control vehicle entry speeds.

Figure E9.a: Major Streets and Right-of-Way Map



Fiscally Constrained Transportation Plan

Funding Outlook

Revenue forecasts begin with a 2027 base year estimate for each local, state, and federal transportation funding source. An annual growth rate is then applied to each source based on historical trends and expected future performance, averaging approximately 2.5 percent per year. The LRTP focuses on allocating the approximately $5.15 billion in revenues available between 2031 and 2050. The available revenue sources and revenue forecasts are described in Chapter 6 of the LRTP.

While significant funding is expected through 2050, resources are limited relative to the scale of identified needs. A large share of available funding is committed to maintaining and operating the existing transportation system, with a considerably smaller portion available for new projects and strategic investments. The LRTP must carefully balance preservation, safety, mobility, and system expansion.

Approximately two-thirds of this funding is either committed to specific projects and ongoing programs or restricted by federal, state, or local funding requirements. In addition, the first four years of the plan (2027–2030) are programmed through the MPO's adopted TIP, leaving approximately $1.91 billion in flexible funding available to support new transportation investments between 2031 and 2050.

The Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) funds, which comprise a portion of the flexible funds (approximately $285 million), can be used in Lincoln or Lancaster County. The LRTP recommends continuing a 70% (Lincoln)/30% (Lancaster County) split for these funds. This split will provide federal funding for construction of priority projects in the urban and urbanizing areas (that will likely be annexed into the City of Lincoln), as well as some critical rural projects.

Revenue forecasts are not adequate to achieve the goals of LRTP and meet all of the region’s transportation needs. The LRTP strongly encourages pursuit of additional revenues to fund needed transportation improvements.

Public feedback highlighted a community priority for improving transportation choice, safety, and system preservation. The top public responses on funding priorities were “Construct new trails (22%), “Add bike facilities” (12%), “Expand and improve transit service” (12%), and “Maintain existing streets and bridges” (11%). Community insight provided important context for shaping and evaluating the LRTP funding recommendation. The recommended funding strategy considers these priorities alongside technical analysis, identified transportation needs, existing commitments, funding restrictions, and long-term system responsibilities. Rather than fundamentally changing the overall distribution of funding, the recommended funding scenario reallocates approximately $200 million (about 12 percent of Lincoln's flexible funding) from the previously approved LRTP funding scenario to emphasize various transportation priorities.

Compared to the previously approved LRTP, the Recommended Funding Plan includes additional funding for:

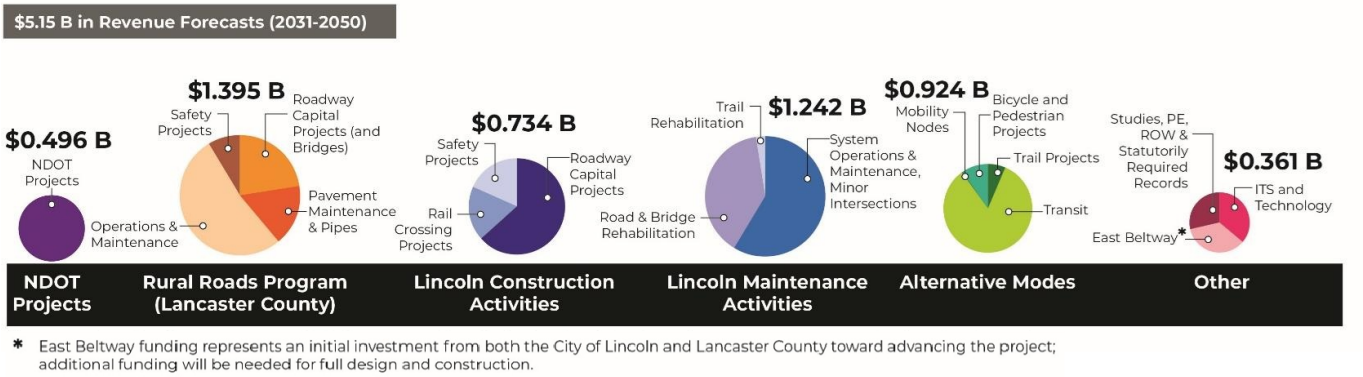
- Safety Projects to support implementation of the VZAP and other safety focused initiatives.
- Trail Projects and Trail Rehabilitation to improve both expansion and maintenance of the trail system.
- Transit to support expanding transportation choices.
- Mobility Nodes and Other Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects to strengthen multimodal connectivity.
- East Beltway, to provide additional local funding toward this important regional investment.

Fiscally Constrained Transportation Plan

The financial analysis presented in this chapter complies with federal metropolitan transportation planning requirements and provides the framework for implementing transportation investments across all modes. Project costs and anticipated funding sources are estimates and will continue to be refined as projects advance toward implementation.

Federal regulations require the LRTP to demonstrate that anticipated revenues are sufficient to support planned transportation investments and the continued operation and maintenance of the existing transportation system. Accordingly, the Fiscally Constrained Plan provides a reasonable estimate of available revenues and program costs, expressed in year-of-expenditure dollars. This approach accounts for the long-term costs of operating and maintaining existing infrastructure, while ensuring that planned investments can reasonably be implemented within anticipated resources. The resource allocation is detailed in the Fiscally Constrained Plan, as documented in Chapter 7 of the LRTP.

Figure E9.b: LRTP Resource Allocation



NDOT Highways Program

The recommended funding strategy allocates approximately $496 million to NDOT highway projects within the Lincoln metropolitan area. Two major projects, the I-80 widening and West Beltway projects, are already committed, while four additional NDOT projects were evaluated and prioritized.

Lancaster County Rural Roads Program

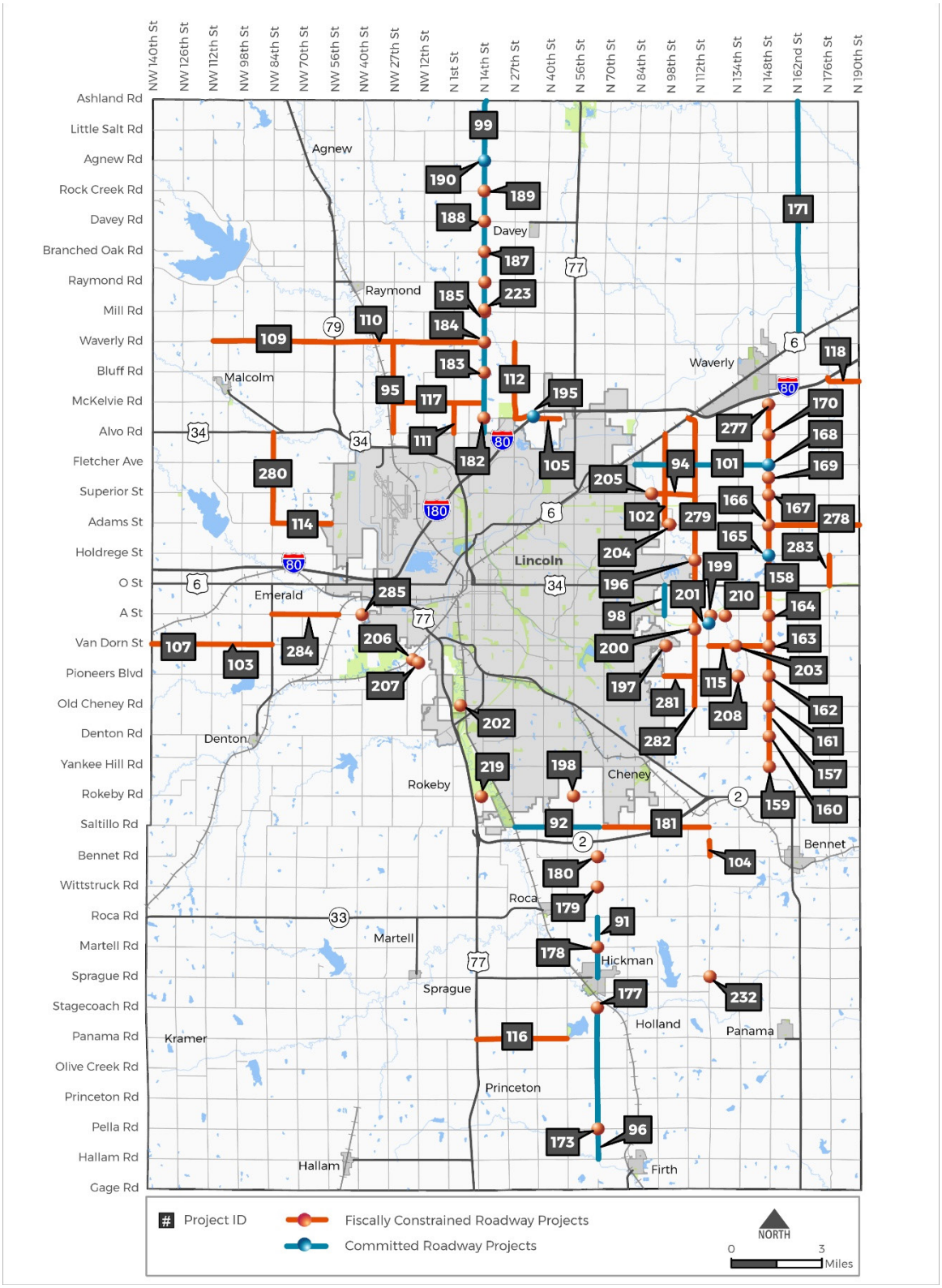
Lancaster County's Rural Roads Program provides for the continued operation, preservation, improvement, and safety of the County's transportation system. Together, these investments provide ongoing stewardship of the rural road network and address identified capital and safety needs. Funds are allocated across four program areas totaling $1.4 billion:

- Road & Bridge Capital Projects
- Pavement Maintenance & Drainage
- Operations & Maintenance
- Safety Projects

The LRTP identifies 67 roadway and bridge capital projects beyond the 12 projects already programmed in the TIP. The recommended $312 million allocation is sufficient to fund all 67 projects through 2050 after accounting for construction cost inflation and the anticipated year of expenditure.

The plan provides $231 million to preserve existing pavement and maintain rural road drainage infrastructure, $734 million for the day-to-day operation and maintenance of the County transportation system, and $118 million to safety projects through 2050.

Figure E9.c: Lancaster County Fiscally Constrained Projects



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Lincoln Construction Activities Program



Lincoln Construction Activities include major investments that improve, expand, and enhance the safety of the city's roadway system. Together, these investments address priority infrastructure needs, improve connections and system performance, and advance a safer transportation system.

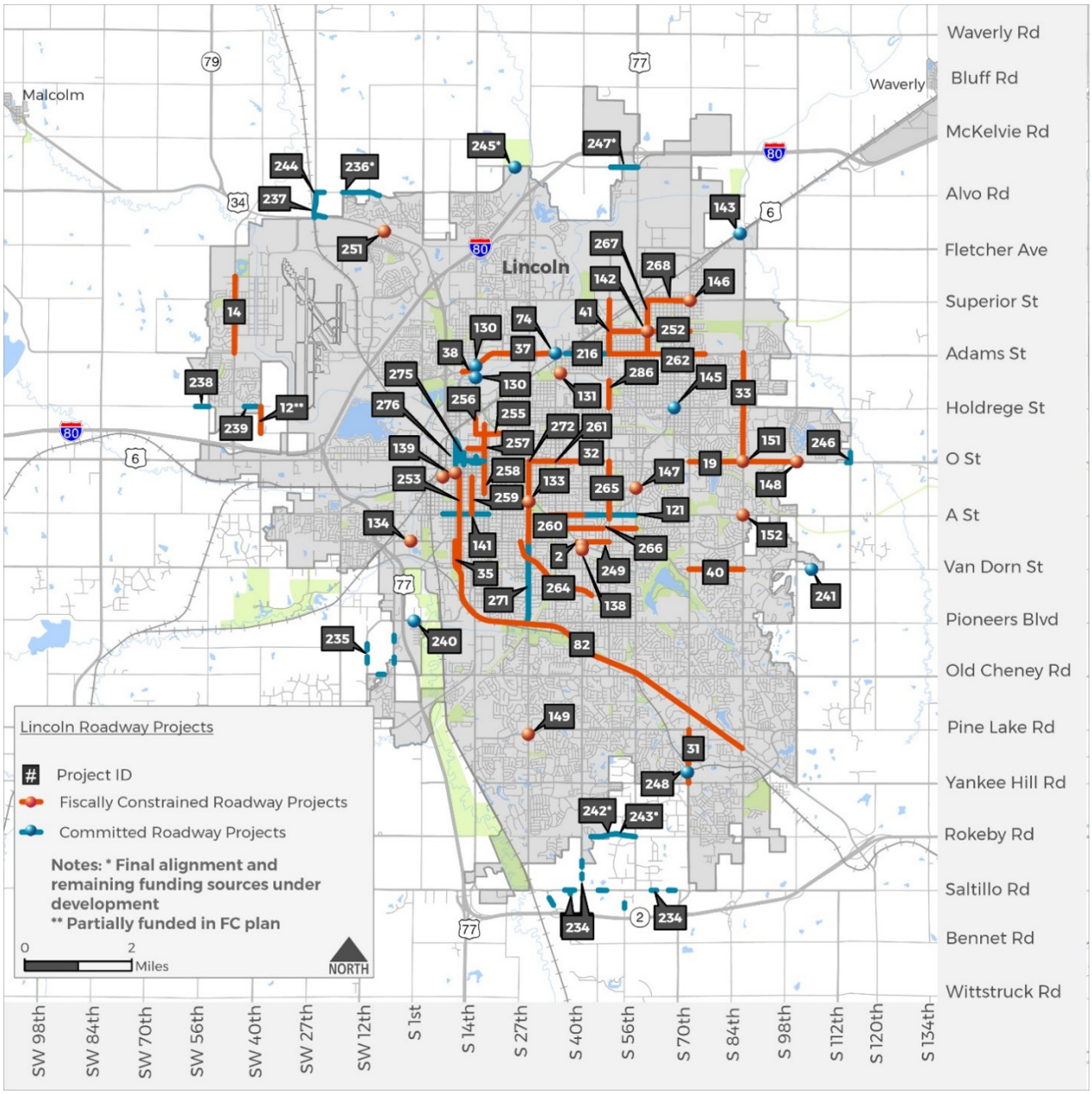
The recommended funding strategy provides $734 million across three program areas:

- Roadway Capital Projects
- Rail Crossing Projects
- Safety Projects

The LRTP identifies 101 Lincoln roadway capital projects beyond the 25 projects already programmed in the TIP. It also allocates $134 million to Lincoln rail crossing projects and $133 million to Lincoln safety projects.

Funding is allocated to Lincoln Maintenance Activities to provide for the daily operation and long-term preservation of the City's roadway, bridge, and trail infrastructure. The recommended funding strategy provides approximately $1.2 billion across three program areas: System Operations and Maintenance, Road and Bridge Rehabilitation, and Trail Rehabilitation.

Figure E9.d: Lincoln Fiscally Constrained Roadway Projects



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Alternative Modes

The Alternative Modes program provides investments that expand transportation choices and strengthen connections for people walking, bicycling, and using transit. All four program areas receive targeted funding increases under the recommended strategy, reflecting an increased emphasis on multimodal connectivity and transportation choice.

Trails

The LRTP identifies 37 trail projects beyond the 4 projects already programmed in the TIP. The funding allocation of $60 million is sufficient to fund 25 of the 37 priority projects through 2050.

The plan provides $774.4 million to support StarTran service through 2050. Funding provides for continuation of existing transit service, as well as ongoing maintenance and replacement of the vehicle fleet and passenger amenities. The additional funding allocated for transit provides an opportunity to make progress toward mobility goals by enhancing service. Enhanced service could potentially include increased frequencies on select routes or adding Sunday service (not currently provided by StarTran). Specific service improvements will be further evaluated and established through the Transit Development Plan.

Transit

The plan provides $774.4 million to support StarTran service through 2050. Funding provides for continuation of existing transit service, as well as ongoing maintenance and replacement of the vehicle fleet and passenger amenities. The additional funding allocated for transit provides an opportunity to make progress toward mobility goals by enhancing service. Enhanced service could potentially include increased frequencies on select routes or adding Sunday service (not currently provided by StarTran). Specific service improvements will be further evaluated and established through the Transit Development Plan.



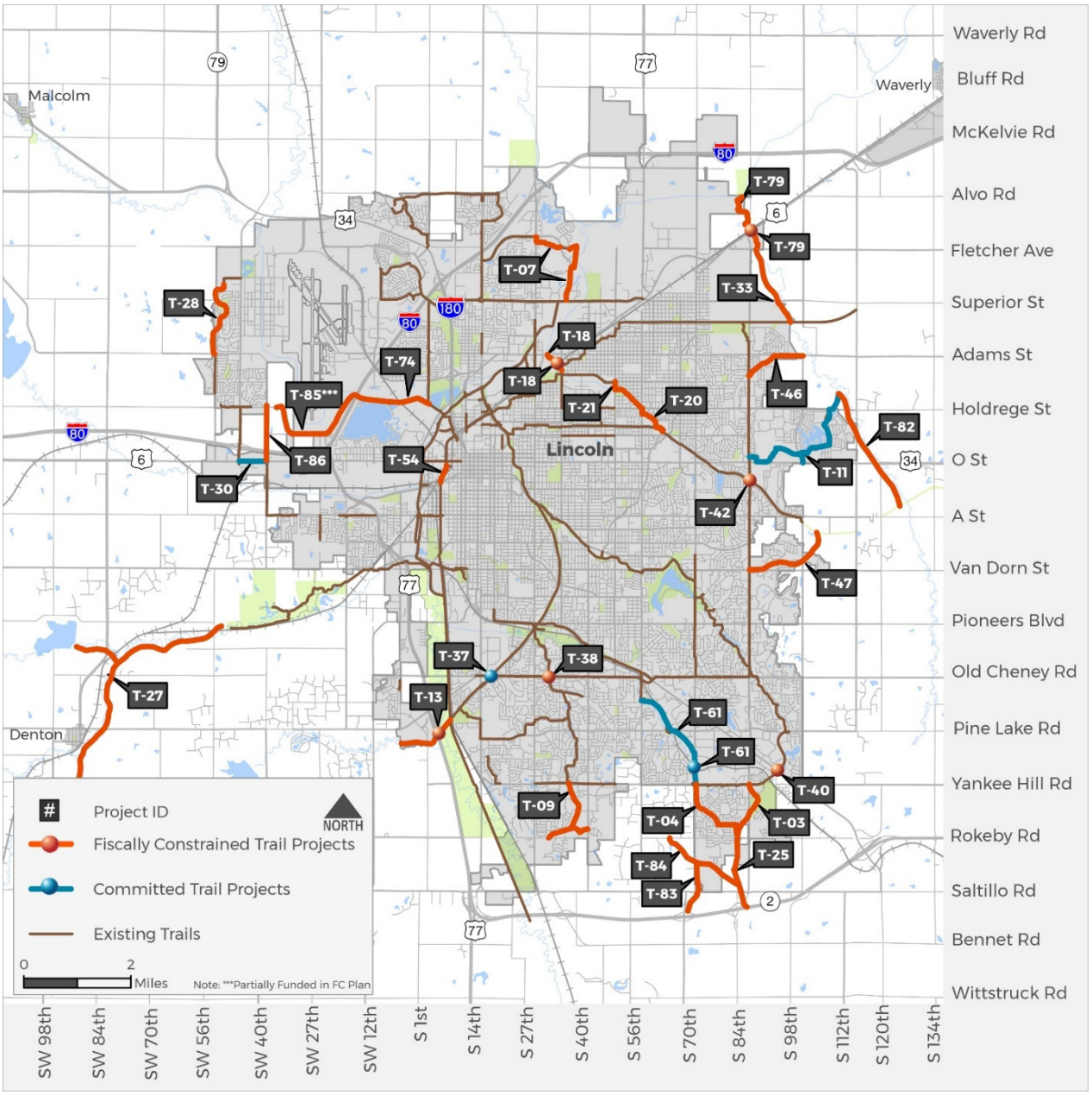
Table 25 of Chapter 7 in the LRTP identifies the StarTran funded and priority transit projects. These projects are expected to be funded within the Fiscally Constrained 2050 Plan. The TDP update may result in adjustments to the transit priorities in the region.

Mobility Nodes and Bicycle & Pedestrian Projects

The recommended funding strategy establishes Mobility Nodes and Connecting Corridors as a new investment category and increases funding for other bicycle and pedestrian improvements, supporting the priority recommendations of the Lincoln Mobility Plan. Mobility nodes are strategically located places designed to improve connections between transportation options and destinations, particularly for people walking, bicycling, using transit, or using shared mobility services. $2 million is allocated to mobility nodes and $88 million to bicycle and pedestrian projects.

Some priority bicycle improvements identified in the Lincoln Mobility Plan may coincide with roadway projects included in the Fiscally Constrained Plan and are expected to be incorporated as those roadway projects are implemented.

Figure E9.e: Priority Trail Projects



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Other Transportation Programs

The recommended funding strategy allocates $357 million total to support technology, long-range project implementation, and essential transportation planning activities. These investments improve the efficiency of the transportation system, advance major regional initiatives, and ensure projects remain ready for implementation as funding opportunities arise.

$130 million is allocated to Intelligent Transportation Systems and Technology such as traffic signal modernization, connected transportation technologies, and other operational improvements that enhance safety, improve traffic flow, and maximize the performance of the existing transportation system. $130 million is allocated to advance implementation of the East Beltway, including funds from Lancaster County, the City of Lincoln, and Keno/ Gambling revenues. Lastly, $101 million supports planning studies, project development, right-of-way activities, and other essential functions that ensure transportation projects remain ready for implementation as funding opportunities arise.

Illustrative Plan

Illustrative projects represent additional roadway, intersection, bridge, and system improvements identified through the LRTP planning process but that cannot be accommodated within anticipated funding through 2050. Illustrative projects are presented in Chapter 7 in Tables 30 and 31 in the priority order as they were determined by the LRTP goals, public input and technical analysis.

Policies Related to this Element

P15: Infrastructure and Economic Development

P63: Transportation Access and Opportunity

P64: Transportation and the Future

P65: Complete Streets

P66: Transportation and Managing Growth

P67: Congestion Management

P68: Transportation and Economic Health

P69: Transit

P70: Active Transportation

P71: Public Right-of-Way and Access

P72: Freight

P73: Advanced Mobility

P74: Transportation Partnerships

P75: Safety

P76: Transportation Maintenance

P77: Transportation Funding

P78: Airport

Goals Related to this Element

G1: Safe, Affordable, and Accessible Housing

G2: Complete Neighborhoods

G4: Economic Opportunity

G5: Equity and Inclusion

G6: Healthy, Active, and Connected People

G7: Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

G14: Technology

PLAN forward

Lincoln-Lancaster County
2050 Comprehensive Plan

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

Policies

CITY of LINCOLN

LANCASTER COUNTY
EST. 1859

PlanForward consists of 78 policies, each with multiple action steps. These policies and action steps represent the key components of the Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan. Each policy relates to goals and elements.

P1: Housing Affordability

P2: Existing Neighborhoods

P3: Developing Neighborhoods

P4: Rural Housing

P5: Downtown

P6: Nodes and Corridors

P7: Redevelopment Incentives

P8: Infill and Redevelopment

P9: Skilled, Diverse, and Trained Workforce

P10: Supporting Small Businesses

P11: Parking Requirements

P12: Economic Growth

P13: Commercial and Industrial Centers

P14: Commercial Infill

P15: Infrastructure and Economic Development

P16: Rural Economy

P17: Predictability

P18: Conservation Design

P19: Native Prairie

P20: Ecology and Habitat

P21: Floodplains and Riparian Areas

P22: Local Food

P23: Salt Valley Greenway and Connective Green Corridors Concept Implementation

P24: Environmental Resource Protection

P25: Open Space with Development

P26: Community Forestry Management

P27: Regional Parks and Tournament Facilities

P28: Community Parks

P29: Neighborhood Parks

P30: Recreation Centers / Community Learning Centers

P31: Aquatic Facilities

P32: Other Recreational Facilities and Activities

P33: Parks and Recreation Partnerships

P34: Urban Design Standards

P35: Entry Corridors

P36: Public Art

P37: Historic Preservation

P38: State Capitol

P39: Community Space

P40: Libraries

P41: Fire and Rescue

P42: Law Enforcement

P43: Health Care Access

P44: Education

P45: Early Childhood Care and Education

P46: Public Buildings

P47: Civic Participation

P48: Renewable Energy

P49: Conservation of Energy

P50: Water Quantity and Quality

P51: Groundwater

P52: Wastewater System

P53: Gravity Flow Collection System

P54: Wastewater Resource Recovery Facilities

P55: Watershed Planning

P56: Waste Management System

P57: Energy from Waste and Emission Reductions

P58: Waste Reduction and Diversion

P59: Electric Utility

P60: Technology

P61: Industrial Zoning and Pipelines

P62: Annexation

P63: Transportation Access and Opportunity

P64: Transportation and the Future

P65: Complete Streets

P66: Transportation and Managing Growth

P67: Congestion Management

P68: Transportation and Economic Health

P69: Transit

P70: Active Transportation

P71: Public ROW and Access

P72: Freight

P73: Advanced Mobility

P74: Transportation Partnerships

P75: Safety

P76: Transportation Maintenance

P77: Transportation Funding

P78: Airport

P1: Housing Affordability

Make available a safe residential dwelling for all residents.



Housing is a basic human need. Safe housing in a variety of product types should be available across all income levels in our community. According to HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research, housing has the capacity to help improve residents' health, access to education, and employment prospects. In order for people to thrive they should be able to live in a quality home and also be able to pay other nondiscretionary costs. Being able to afford housing is a key component to promoting positive life outcomes.

Action Steps

1. Implement the housing and neighborhood strategies as embodied in the Affordable Housing Coordinated Action Plan, City of Lincoln Consolidated and Annual Action Plans and subsequent housing and neighborhood plans. These plans provide the core for affordable housing and neighborhood preservation actions for public and private agencies. An example would be continuing to develop affordable housing zoning text amendments that support the goals of the Affordable Housing Coordinated Action Plan and other documents and community input.
2. Distribute and preserve affordable housing throughout the community to be near job opportunities and public transit and to provide housing choices within existing and developing neighborhoods.
3. Encourage public/private partnerships with housing entities such as Lincoln Housing Authority, Habitat for Humanity, and NeighborWorks Lincoln.
4. Provide for more education of the public about affordable housing and code enforcement.
5. Promote the preservation, maintenance and renovation of existing housing and neighborhoods throughout the city, with special emphasis on low and moderate income neighborhoods.
6. Preserve the existing affordable housing stock, increase the supply of affordable owner and renter units, and add more variety in housing types.
7. Provide for long range infrastructure and pedestrian supported needs, such as sidewalks, streetlights, street trees, and other landscaping or amenities when constructing new housing.
8. Enforce better property maintenance, both interior and exterior, by implementing proactive code enforcement, to help preserve affordable housing and encourage residents to take pride in and maintain their homes.
9. Pursue additional sources to be used in tandem with the City's Affordable Housing Fund.
10. Support development of an Affordable Housing Consortium to build strategic partnerships, develop a shared vision, and create a funding mechanism for shared risk as essential components for creating new housing product types and lower price-points.
11. Prom the Greater Nebraska PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) District (GNPD) program to local lenders and developers to support the construction of energy efficient multi-family housing, particularly for low income populations.

12. Convene City, LES, Community Action and other resource providers to develop a joint plan to address energy efficiency in low income and multi-family housing stock. Research federal, state, local, and private funding sources for low-income energy efficiency programs.
13. Engage Black Hills Energy about partnering with the City to create an incentive-based program for the installation of direct use high efficiency natural gas appliances for space and water heating, including gas absorption heat pumps, furnaces and water heaters in low income residential areas.
14. Examine building code updates that could support affordable housing while maintaining the safety of occupants. An example would be allowing single-stair egress in certain types of multi-family buildings if other fire safety conditions are met.
15. Implement strategies from the *Lincoln Age-Friendly Community Three-Year Action Plan* to increase age-friendly housing options that meet the needs of older adults. Priority near-term strategies include:
    a. *Conduct a brief assessment to understand high impact, cost-effective design needs and priorities for age-friendly housing.*
    b. *Advocate at the state level to raise the income eligibility threshold for the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), expanding access for eligible older adults and providing opportunity for PACE expansion into Lincoln.*
    c. *Identify and advocate for funding streams to enhance local incentives for age-friendly housing for developers, energy, utilities and others.*
    d. *Address policy and other barriers (e.g., zero entry, zoning).*

Goals Supported by this Policy

G1: Safe, Affordable, and Accessible Housing

G2: Complete Neighborhoods

G5: Equity and Inclusion

Elements Related to this Policy

E1: Complete Neighborhoods & Housing

E2: Infill and Redevelopment

P2: Existing Neighborhoods

Continue our commitment to strong, diverse, and great neighborhoods.



Strong, diverse, and complete neighborhoods provide more than just the basic element of housing – they also support the overall health and well-being of the people that live there. Preserving existing housing for owners and renters and a mix of supporting uses should remain the focus in established neighborhoods, with modest opportunities for infill and redevelopment. Existing neighborhoods often contain a mix of uses including neighborhood commercial uses, parks, and schools. The patterns of land use in existing neighborhoods support walkability and already achieve many of the Complete Neighborhoods recommendations.

Action Steps

1. Promote the preservation, maintenance, and renovation of existing housing and supporting neighborhood uses throughout the City, with special emphasis on low and moderate income neighborhoods.
2. Maintain and enhance infrastructure and services, commensurate with needs, in existing neighborhoods.
3. Encourage well-designed and appropriately placed density, including within existing apartment and group living complexes and in redeveloping commercial or industrial centers, where there is land available for additional buildings or expansions. Provide flexibility to the marketplace in siting future residential development locations. This includes appropriately placed infill in prioritized nodes and corridors, neighborhood edges, and underutilized commercial or industrial sites.
4. Implement the neighborhood edges concept as discussed in E2: Infill and Redevelopment.
5. Review the Community Unit Plan (CUP) and Planned Unit Development (PUD) requirements and consider revisions to support high-quality growth. CUPs and PUDs should be used to support appropriately placed density, optimize infrastructure costs, encourage creativity, protect valuable natural or cultural features, and help lower the overall cost of property development. A maximum CUP size should be considered in order to support mixed use design in suburban growth areas. Additional consideration should be given to minimum densities and a minimum mix of housing types for developments that utilize the CUP or PUD zoning tools. High-quality growth is discussed in more detail in the Growth Framework section of this plan.
6. Recognize that broad economic diversity within existing neighborhoods encourages reinvestment and improves quality of life for all residents while acknowledging the need for affordable housing.
7. Preserve, protect and promote the character and unique features of urban neighborhoods, including their historical and architectural elements.
8. Promote the continued use of residential dwellings and all types of buildings, to maintain the character of neighborhoods and to preserve portions of our past. Building code requirements for the rehabilitation of existing buildings should protect the safety of building occupants, while recognizing the need for flexibility that comes with rehabilitating existing buildings.
9. Implement the housing and neighborhood strategies as embodied in the Affordable Housing Coordinated Action Plan, City of Lincoln Consolidated, Annual Action Plans, and subsequent housing and neighborhood

plans. These plans provide the core for affordable housing and neighborhood preservation actions for public and private agencies.

10. Retain and encourage a mix of housing in existing and new neighborhoods in order to provide a mix of housing types at a variety of price points.
11. Implement elements of great neighborhoods for existing neighborhoods. Great neighborhoods are discussed in *E1: Great Neighborhoods and Housing*.
12. Encourage public and private investment in neighborhood infrastructure and services to support economic diversity that improves the quality of life for all residents.
13. Balance expanding housing options and neighborhood character. Infill development should include housing for a variety of incomes and households and should complement the character of the existing neighborhood by including appropriate transitions, scale, and context.
14. Preserve areas designated for multi-family and group living housing in approved plans to support a distributed choice in affordable housing.
15. Promote neighborhood and community design that supports healthy and active lifestyles.
16. Enforce better property maintenance, both interior and exterior, by implementing proactive code enforcement, to help preserve affordable housing and encourage residents to take pride in and maintain their homes.
17. Encourage the expansion of rental rehab programs beyond the South of Downtown neighborhood to improve the quality of affordable rental housing and support the City's Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes programs.
18. Encourage additional rehabilitation programs for residential districts and upper stories of mixed-use buildings for adaptive reuse as housing.
19. Examine current residential zoning districts R5 and R6 and propose modifications to encourage 'missing middle' units (single-family attached, cottage courts, townhomes, live-work, and a variety of three- and four-plex configurations), including affordable units, to people with a range of incomes. Neighborhood edges in particular present an opportunity for missing middle housing.
20. Encourage a variety of housing types including townhomes, senior living facilities, low/no maintenance condominiums, accessory dwelling units, multi-family development, and small lot single-family units.
21. Consider zoning revisions that align with home occupation trends and the community's expectations.
22. Explore economic development incentives to attract grocery stores to neighborhoods lacking access to fresh food.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G1: Safe, Affordable, and Accessible Housing

G2: Complete Neighborhoods

G12: History and Culture

G13: Community Appearance

Elements Related to this Policy

E1: Complete Neighborhoods & Housing

E2: Infill and Redevelopment

P3: Developing Neighborhoods

Accommodate and encourage growth that aligns with PlanForward's growth scenario and provides a mix of housing options with convenient access to parks, schools, shopping, jobs, and other community resources.



A neighborhood is more than housing – great neighborhoods combine all the elements of parks, education, commercial areas, environmental resources, and housing together in one place. Thus, principles from the Complete Neighborhoods Goal and Element also apply here.

Developing neighborhoods should have a variety of housing types and sizes, plus commercial and employment opportunities. Developing a pedestrian orientation of buildings and street networks that provides substantial connectivity is also a priority for developing areas. Neighborhood commercial centers provide services and retail goods oriented to the neighborhood level, with significant pedestrian orientation and access, and should be planned for and integrated into new neighborhoods.

Action Steps

1. Provide for an adequate supply of land and timely infrastructure improvements that meet the demands of growth.
2. Review the Community Unit Plan (CUP) and Planned Unit Development (PUD) requirements and consider revisions to support high-quality growth. CUPs and PUDs should be used to support appropriately-placed density, optimize infrastructure costs, encourage creativity, protect valuable natural or cultural features, and help lower the overall cost of property development. A maximum CUP size should be considered in order to support mixed use design in growth areas. Additional consideration should be given to minimum densities and a minimum mix of housing types for developments that utilize the CUP or PUD zoning tools. High-quality growth is discussed in more detail in the Growth Framework section of this plan.
3. Structure incentives to encourage higher densities to make greater use of the community's infrastructure.
4. Encourage new development to achieve densities of at least five dwelling units per gross acre.
5. Examine updates to the base zoning and subdivision regulations within the R5 and R6 districts that introduce greater flexibility, reducing reliance on additional tools such as CUPs or PUDs and helping streamline the development process.
6. Implement elements of great neighborhoods for developing areas. Great neighborhoods are discussed in *E1: Great Neighborhoods and Housing*.
7. Encourage public and private investment in neighborhood infrastructure and services to support economic diversity that improves the quality of life for all residents.
8. Include housing for a variety of incomes and households throughout the community that is integrated into neighborhoods and provides appropriate transitions, scale, and context.
9. Promote mixed-income neighborhoods.
10. Preserve areas designated for multi-family, and group living housing in approved plans to support a distributed choice in affordable housing.

11. Support addition of higher density development in existing multi-family development.
12. Promote neighborhood and community design that supports healthy and active lifestyles., such as the benefits of street trees.
13. Examine current residential zoning districts R5 and R6 and propose modifications to encourage 'missing middle' units (single-family attached, cottage courts, townhomes, live-work, and a variety of three- and four-plex configurations), including affordable units, to people with a range of incomes. Neighborhood edges, nodes and corridors, and R5 and R6 residential zoning present opportunities for missing middle housing.
14. Encourage a variety of housing types including townhomes, senior living facilities, low/no maintenance condominiums, accessory dwelling units, multi-family development, and small lot single-family units.
15. Consider zoning revisions that align with home occupation trends and the community's expectations.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G1: Safe, Affordable, and Accessible Housing

G2: Complete Neighborhoods

G13: Community Appearance

Elements Related to this Policy

E1: Complete Neighborhoods & Housing

P4: Rural Housing

Allow for acreage development in appropriate areas of Lancaster County while preserving land resources for efficient future urban development, continued agricultural uses, and natural open spaces.



There is a small but steady demand for acreages in rural Lancaster County, and planning for limited acreage development will ensure that demand can be met while minimizing negative impacts. Allowing for development of additional acreages will increase housing choice in Lancaster County. There is already ample supply of potential acreage areas that can meet demand for at least the next two decades. Additional acreage development in any of the growth tiers is discouraged. Over the past 10 years there have been approximately 50 new acreage homes per year built in rural Lancaster County. As of January 1, 2026 there was a supply of approximately 850 potential new acreage units, either through existing approvals that haven't been built or Low Density Residential areas on the Future Land Use map that do not yet have approvals.

Action Steps

1. Preserve agricultural land within Tier I, II, and III growth areas, both to reduce conflicts in the future growth of Lincoln and to ensure available land for the production of food products that are important to the health and economic vitality of the community.
2. Support acreage development within areas with development approvals, on areas designated as low-density residential in the County, and on areas designated as low-density residential in the village and smaller city jurisdictions. Additional acreage development should utilize zoning tools like the Community Unit Plan to preserve open space and limit overall density.
3. Continue to use GIS data and other sources, along with adopted county zoning criteria, to help determine which lands are most suitable for acreage development.
4. Require applicants seeking plan designation or rezoning for acreages to provide information on water quality and quantity if planning to use on-site wells.
5. Pursue state legislation to enable the County to establish a transfer of development rights program that helps encourage acreage development in more suitable locations while protecting environmental resources and prime farmland, while also respecting property rights by compensating owners who agree to the transfers.
6. Expand education for prospective home buyers on the implications of rural living.
7. Educate homeowners in acreage subdivisions of the City's annexation and growth policies.
8. Review the "build-through" model for acreages in the County and make recommendations that align with the PlanForward policies and growth scenario.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G1: Safe, Affordable, and Accessible Housing

G11: Rural Environment

Elements Related to this Policy

E1: Complete Neighborhoods & Housing

P5: Downtown

Continue to make Greater Downtown a major focus for mixed-use reuse, infill and redevelopment.



Downtown Lincoln is the heart of our community, a unique common ground for all Lincoln and Lancaster County residents. It is also emerging as an attractive place to live, becoming an increasingly vibrant mixed-use neighborhood. Over 1,600 dwelling units were permitted in Greater Downtown from 2011 to 2020. The Plan envisions an additional 5,000 dwelling units in this core area by 2050. 1,000 of which should be affordable at 60% area median income.

A strong downtown is important to the economic future of the community. Downtown is the main hub of employment, entertainment, government agencies and higher education. Over the years, there have been significant public and private investments in new building construction, renovations, and infrastructure. In order to capitalize on these collective investments, further development in the Greater Downtown should be realized.

Downtown is discussed in more detail with the Downtown Lincoln Master Plan, which was adopted in 2018 as part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Action Steps

1. Support development and implementation of the Downtown Master Plan, South Haymarket Neighborhood Plan, Antelope Valley Redevelopment Plan, Lincoln Center Redevelopment Plan, and South of Downtown Redevelopment & Strategic Plan.
2. Ensure that new development is compatible with the existing Downtown and is pedestrian-oriented.
3. Maintain the urban environment, including a mix of land uses with a major focus on residential uses, including a variety of types and affordable to diverse income levels.
4. Encourage higher density development with parking areas at the rear of buildings, below grade, or on upper floors of multi-use parking structures.
5. Retain the City's government center in Downtown and wherever possible locate local, state, and federal offices Downtown when expansions and relocations are considered or new facilities are located.
6. Continue to support Downtown as the entertainment center of the community through development of the Music District proposed in the Downtown Master Plan, continued enhancements and programming for public spaces such as the Railyard, Tower Square, Union Plaza and Canopy Yard along with maintaining Lincoln's successful Theater Policy.
7. Develop a strategic plan for the future of downtown parking to address changes to parking and curb lane demand caused by the increase in rideshare, food pickup and delivery, alternative-fuel vehicles, and future autonomous vehicles. The plan would address items such as the mix of parking/drop-off areas and options for serving alternative-fuel vehicles, and improving public parking options in underserved areas to discourage private surface lots.
8. Continue to preserve and enhance Downtown's role as the community's major office and employment center.

9. Develop a study that assesses the impact of the potential convention center and looks at ways to maximize the positive impact on Downtown.
10. Update the 2018 Downtown Master Plan prior to the next Comprehensive Plan update in 2030.
11. Utilize recommendations of the Lincoln Mobility Plan to expand safe mobility options downtown.
12. Continue implementing multi-modal infrastructure projects in Downtown to increase connectivity for bicyclists, pedestrians, and those who utilize public transportation.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G1: Safe, Affordable, and Accessible Housing

G2: Complete Neighborhoods

G3: High-Quality Workforce

G4: Economic Opportunity

G5: Equity and Inclusion

G6: Healthy, Active, and Connected People

G10: Effective Government

G12: History and Culture

G13: Community Appearance

G14: Technology

G15: Transportation

Elements Related to this Policy

E1: Complete Neighborhoods & Housing

E2: Infill and Redevelopment

E3: Business, Economy, and Workforce

E4: Environmental Resources

E5: Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

E6: Placemaking

E7: Community Facilities

E9: Transportation

P6: Nodes and Corridors

Facilitate the redevelopment of prioritized Nodes and Corridors to create high-quality mobility-focused neighborhoods. Focus efforts on supporting additional jobs and residential development, including a variety of housing types and price points.



Nodes encompass generalized locations of commercial and industrial land uses with access to arterial streets, public transportation, and proximity to community facilities such as parks and schools. As the foundation of a great new neighborhood, nodes should provide services and retail goods oriented to the residents in and adjacent to the development, with significant pedestrian orientation and access. The adaptive reuse of historic or other existing structures into mixed uses is encouraged. The size, scope, and spacing of a node will depend on the Commercial Center designation. Nodes should be located on arterials and should have access to public transit. They should provide adequate facilities for multi-modal transportation including a complete sidewalk network, transit stops, automobile parking and circulation, and storage of bicycles. This concept is designed and intended to be mutually beneficial for existing adjacent neighborhoods and the new mixed use neighborhood created by the redeveloped center. Newer commercial centers that are not yet fully developed are encouraged to utilize this concept as a guide for amending their approved plans to develop as mixed use centers.

Corridors represent priorities for future public transportation enhancements (such as increases in level of service), areas to encourage mixed use redevelopment of commercial strips, and connections for Mixed Use Redevelopment Nodes and/or commercial centers. Corridors are typically a half block to a block wide along arterial streets in commercially or industrially-zoned areas. Since they are often located on major arterials between commercial centers, they experience a lot of traffic and usually have transit service. Corridors present opportunities for small-scale reuse or redevelopment projects and should include a mix of land use types, especially residential including a variety of types and affordable to diverse income levels. The adaptive reuse of historic or other existing structures into mixed uses is encouraged. Due to the linear nature of Corridors, existing residential neighborhoods are often next door or across the alley from the commercial strip or industrial remnant. This close relationship makes the adoption of design standards very important in proceeding with this strategy.

Design standards should be developed for Redevelopment Nodes and Corridors. Urban design standards generally only cover residential areas inside the 1950 City limits and the Downtown. Most commercial areas of the city are not under any design review and sometimes create rough edges and poor entryways to neighborhoods. Establishing design standards for Redevelopment Nodes and Corridors should result in better design within commercial centers and soften the transition to surrounding neighborhoods.

Action Steps

1. Implement nodes and corridor principles as discussed in *E2: Infill and Redevelopment*. Strategies should include:
    a. Consider updates to the zoning ordinance that support mixed-use redevelopment of nodes and corridors and streamline the development process across various zoning districts. For Primary Mixed Use Redevelopment Nodes, updates should focus on the B-5 Planned Regional Business zoning district. Zoning updates would address items such as: allowed uses, density, site layout, and building scale.
    b. Implement design standards as discussed in *P34: Urban Design Standards.*

c. Implement design strategies for the O Street Redevelopment Corridor as discussed in *E2: Infill and Redevelopment*. The O Street Corridor is a primary mixed use redevelopment opportunity. O Street is Lincoln's "main street" and the corridor is an opportunity to extend Lincoln's high-density urban core beyond Downtown. Implementation of the O Street Corridor concept is a significant undertaking that will include corridor planning, zoning and design standards updates, and a blight study with redevelopment plan if TIF were to be used. The long term goal for the O Street Corridor is a land use pattern that supports enhanced transit like Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).

2. Continue utilizing TIF, and evaluate other incentives, to promote high-quality development in targeted areas like mixed use redevelopment nodes, neighborhood edges, O Street Corridor, and Cornhusker Highway.
3. Coordinate transit and other mobility enhancements with nodes and corridor areas. Implement mobility nodes and Mobility Oriented Development (MOD) principles as discussed in E1: Great Neighborhoods and Housing and the Lincoln Mobility Plan.
4. Examine policies to encourage commercial Floor Area Ratios of at least 0.5 within buildable areas designated for commercial development inside the project boundary (including public and semi-public buildings). This strategy encourages significant returns on public investment by developing high-quality properties with sustained value, long-term viable businesses to generate sales tax, and efficient use of land and infrastructure resources.
5. Examine policies to encourage residential densities of at least 15 dwelling units per gross acre within buildable areas inside the project boundary. This strategy encourages significant returns on public investment by developing high-quality properties with sustained value, supports new businesses in the mixed use center, makes public transportation more viable, and uses land and infrastructure more efficiently.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G1: Safe, Affordable, and Accessible Housing

G2: Complete Neighborhoods

G3: High-Quality Workforce

G4: Economic Opportunity

G5: Equity and Inclusion

G6: Healthy, Active, and Connected People

G12: History and Culture

G13: Community Appearance

G15: Transportation

Elements Related to this Policy

E1: Complete Neighborhoods & Housing

E2: Infill and Redevelopment

E3: Business, Economy, and Workforce

E6: Placemaking

E9: Transportation

P7: Redevelopment Incentives

Develop incentives and other methods to reduce the cost and risk of infill and redevelopment.



Facilitating infill and redevelopment in the existing city requires both a nuanced understanding of the challenges associated with redevelopment projects and a well-thought out set of strategies to overcome them. Commonly cited challenges to infill and redevelopment include land cost and assembly, access to financing, and zoning requirements.

Action Steps

1. Support and increase the capacity of Community Development Corporations (CDC) or incorporated nonprofit organizations or groups, such as the Affordable Housing Consortium, that raises equity for projects, purchase land, offer services, and engage in other activities that promote and support community development.
2. Examine the potential for extending impact fee exclusions beyond Downtown/Antelope Valley to other designated redevelopment areas.
3. Continue to reduce the time it takes to move city-assisted projects through the City review process.
4. Land assembly:
   a. Implement a strategic land banking program to purchase and hold land for future development to reduce developer risk associated with land assembly and enhance development potential.
   b. Continue to maintain a current and accurate inventory of potential redevelopment sites that are owned by the City and available for surplus.
5. Infrastructure and amenities:
   a. Attract infill and redevelopment with complementary public improvements such as plazas, transportation improvements, utility improvements and enhanced streetscapes.
   b. Provide convenient transit service and pedestrian/bicycle connections and facilities.
6. Utilize the available economic development tools, including turnback tax, Enhanced Employment Area occupation taxes, PACE loans, Opportunity Zone tax benefits, New Market Tax Credits, and others when appropriate to facilitate affordable redevelopment.
7. Incentivize the construction and preservation of affordable housing in residential development projects with TIF-supported affordable housing grants and utilization of other City incentives and tools.
8. Continue evaluating new blighted areas to see if they meet the statutory requirements of extreme blight, and if so, formally designate the areas as extremely blighted to allow for use of 20-year repayments as authorized by the State Legislature.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G1: Safe, Affordable, and Accessible Housing

G4: Economic Opportunity

G5: Equity and Inclusion

G10: Effective Government

Elements Related to this Policy

E2: Infill and Redevelopment

E3: Business, Economy, and Workforce

E6: Placemaking

P8: Infill and Redevelopment

Encourage infill and redevelopment in appropriate locations throughout the community in order to meet the assumption for 25% of all new dwelling units being infill.



Increased infill allows the community to grow our population and tax base while focusing public dollars on maintaining what we already have, rather than spending money constructing and maintaining new facilities. Infill projects should target existing underdeveloped or redeveloping areas in order to remove blighted conditions and more efficiently utilize existing infrastructure. There are many potential redevelopment sites in Lincoln today. Major redevelopment sites are discussed in more detail in E2: Infill and Redevelopment.

This policy discusses the general concept of infill and redevelopment, including smaller redevelopment opportunities that are not part of our Nodes and Corridors discussions. Examples include adding residential uses to underutilized neighborhood commercial centers or adding "missing middle" housing such as cottages, townhomes, or small apartment buildings to large parcels, such as former school sites or residential acreage properties, in existing neighborhoods.

The PlanForward growth assumption is that 25 percent of all new residential units should be infill. The 25 percent assumption functions as a baseline, and policies should be implemented to move toward a more ambitious target of at least 30 percent infill development. Over the past three years (2023-2025) approximately 31 percent of Lincoln's new dwelling units were infill.

Action Steps

1. Encourage redevelopment of aging and underutilized commercial centers, along with other large sites in existing areas such as former schools and residential acreages, to add a variety of housing types that are affordable to diverse income levels. A mix of residential and commercial uses is desirable in locations with good visibility and access, such as most existing commercial centers, but in some cases redevelopment sites are more suited for exclusively residential uses.
2. Encourage redeveloped commercial centers to incorporate a variety of medium and high-density housing affordable to diverse income levels that could serve as a transitional use to less intensive residential development and benefit from walkable access to the commercial area and transit.
3. Encourage redevelopment of underused lots and buildings consistent with area redevelopment plans.
4. Develop updated design standards for Downtown and neighborhoods within the 1970 city limits. Design standards provide assurance that projects will enhance and add enduring quality to the surrounding neighborhood and avoid conflicting visions among developers, neighbors, and city officials.
5. Implement the zoning, design standard, and/or building code updates needed to carry out the neighborhood edges concept. Neighborhood edges are discussed in E2: Infill and Redevelopment.

6. Encourage efforts to find new uses for abandoned, under-utilized or “brownfield” sites that are contaminated, through assessment, environmental remeditation, examination of best practices, and requests for redevelopment proposals on City-owned parcels.
7. Environmentally sensitive areas (i.e. floodplains, wetlands, native prairie) may not be appropriate for redevelopment. When redevelopment does occur, environmentally sensitive areas and potential environmental improvements need to be considered and incorporated holistically as part of a redevelopment project.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G1: Safe, Affordable, and Accessible Housing

G2: Complete Neighborhoods

G4: Economic Opportunity

Elements Related to this Policy

E1: Complete Neighborhoods & Housing

E2: Infill and Redevelopment

E3: Business, Economy, and Workforce

P9: Skilled, Diverse, and Trained Workforce

Support development of a skilled, diverse, and trained workforce that enables economic growth and high-quality jobs.



The benefits of a high-quality workforce are twofold: 1) it is important that residents from diverse backgrounds have the opportunity to acquire the education and skills necessary to obtain quality jobs, and 2) it is important for business owners and entrepreneurs to have access to a top-talent workforce so that they can sustain and grow their businesses. A high-quality workforce benefits the entire community because it attracts quality employers and entrepreneurs, which helps to grow our population and tax base and facilitates quality of life investments across a variety of sectors, and it ensures that Lincoln and Lancaster County are well-positioned to compete in tomorrow's economy.

Supporting jobs and career pathways that create economic stability and mobility is critical to cultivating an economy beneficial for all. A key barrier to achieving economic stability and mobility is inequitable access to education and skills training.

Action Steps

1. Support workforce development programs that work to eliminate employment disparities. An example is the current job training partnership managed through a collaborative effort between the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development, and the Lincoln Manufacturing Council.
2. Support high-quality community-based, culturally appropriate, and accessible employment training programs that allow employers to hire a more diverse workforce and provide more residents access to living wage jobs; and ensure that workforce development programs and City initiatives emphasize in-demand careers that provide for financial stability. As an example, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, administered through the City of Lincoln and the Greater Lincoln Workforce Development, can help fund both classroom and work-based training for eligible job seekers.
3. Expand partnerships and opportunities to create apprenticeship and training programs for trade professions and growing professions such as information technology with employers throughout the community.
4. Promote healthy, safe, just, and equitable workplaces with adequate protections for all workers.
5. Promote ongoing training around cultural competency with local businesses and within City and County government to help combat implicit bias in hiring and to support retention of diversity in the workforce.
6. Continue to collect and use workforce and demographic data to inform investments in employment and training programs, and other community services such as transit routes.
7. Continue to recruit, retain, and set clear pathways for advancement to support a diverse City and County government workforce that reflects the demographics of the community.
8. Promote and invest in resources that provide professional networking opportunities and exposure to career and job opportunities, with a focus on targeted communities based on needs. An example of an existing program is the New Americans Task Force's CareerLadder program to support immigrant and refugee residents, which includes professional connectors, employment pathways, and MyCity Academy.

9. Expand and implement strategies to eliminate barriers to workforce training and employment for individuals who have been convicted as a felon or previously incarcerated.
10. Expand and implement strategies to develop workforce training opportunities and career exposure for youth, through internships, on-the-job training, and apprenticeship programs.
11. Utilize the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to promote workforce development for "green" industries. Examples include increasing on-the-job training subsidies for green employers and working with Southeast Community College (SCC) to create career ladders targeted for green industries.
12. Expand the pool of housing construction tradespeople through a partnership with the American Job Center, trade allies, and other groups to ensure a stable workforce to meet housing goals. An implementation example is the City of Lincon's Future-Ready Workforce Initiative, launched in 2025 as a collaboration with local labor partners. The initiative included $1.3 million of American Rescue Plan Act funds targeted to underemployed individuals, those facing barriers to employment, and residents seeking to enhance their job opportunities or make a career change. The funds are used to remove employment barriers by providing supportive assistance such as gas money, child or elder care, uniforms, and tools.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G3: High-Quality Workforce

G4: Economic Opportunity

G5: Equity and Inclusion

Elements Related to this Policy

E3: Business, Economy, and Workforce

P10: Supporting Small Businesses

Support the development, growth, and retention of small businesses.



Supporting small businesses is important to the local economy for a variety of reasons. In Lancaster County approximately 94 percent of all establishments employ fewer than 50 people according to the County Business Patterns report published by the US Census Bureau. Small businesses provide an opportunity for local entrepreneurs to enter the marketplace, serve as a platform for innovation, and nurture businesses that specialize in niche products and services.

Action Steps

1. Provide and enhance business technical assistance tools and programs to adapt to the changing needs of the business environment, such as developing connections to financial institutions that provide access to capital and providing technical assistance and entrepreneurship support through the Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development.
2. Use city purchasing authority to support small and local businesses when allowed by law and regulation.
3. Provide assistance, such as a collected database of resources, to small and local businesses to get minority-owned business certifications that make them more competitive for government contracts.
4. Develop strategies to minimize the displacement of businesses in buildings that will be redeveloped, including ways to reduce barriers to relocate within the new development.
5. Develop strategies to include affordable commercial tenant spaces for small businesses in new developments.
6. Regularly review and update City ordinances, policies and processes to make them friendlier for small businesses and entrepreneurs.
7. Support the creation of public and non-profit incubator and co-op spaces, including shared commercial kitchens, workshops, and access to technologies and equipment.
8. Create a multi-agency staff team to help new businesses sort through regulatory challenges and connect with resources.
9. Promote the development of smaller stores next to larger anchor stores in commercial centers during the development review process to encourage small businesses and to provide a variety of goods and services for customers utilizing the centers. Projects that use city incentives or special zoning tools like PUDs provide the opportunity for additional staff input on design and layout of commercial centers.
10. Continue and expand green recognition program (via Health Department) that promotes and awards local businesses and leaders in energy efficiency who prioritize sustainable practices.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G3: High-Quality Workforce

G4: Economic Opportunity

G5: Equity and Inclusion

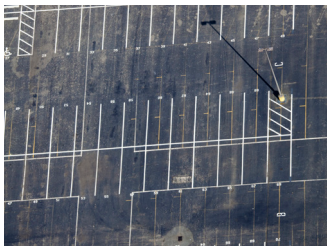
Elements Related to this Policy

E2: Infill and Redevelopment

E3: Business, Economy, and Workforce

P11: Parking Requirements

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



Minimum parking requirements can increase development costs and lead to an excess of unused parking spaces. They can also make it difficult to redevelop small underutilized commercial and residential properties. If implemented in a thoughtful manner, eliminating or reducing minimum parking requirements can allow property owners to determine their parking needs while minimizing impact on neighboring properties. In 2024 a zoning text amendment was approved that removed minimum parking requirements from most of Lincoln's commercial districts. In addition, the B-4 (Downtown) district has been without minimum parking requirements for the past several decades.

In addition to zoning changes, the City can support reduced private sector parking by ensuring adequate public transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities are located throughout the city to make alternate modes of travel more appealing and easy to use.

Action Steps

1. Consider additional districts that would benefit from eliminated or reduced parking minimums.
2. Encourage large employers and public agencies to provide bike parking, lockers, and shower facilities to help reduce on-site automobile parking demand.
3. Amend the zoning ordinance to require bicycle parking citywide. Consistent and reliable parking would make bicycle transportation more convenient, encouraging more people to choose bicycles for non-recreational trips.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G2: Complete Neighborhoods

G4: Economic Opportunity

G6: Healthy, Active, and Connected People

G13: Community Appearance

G15: Transportation

Elements Related to this Policy

E1: Complete Neighborhoods & Housing

E2: Infill and Redevelopment

E3: Business, Economy, and Workforce

E9: Transportation

P12: Economic Growth

Promote and foster appropriate, balanced, and focused future economic growth that maintains the quality of life of the community.



It is expected that employment in Lancaster County will continue to grow across all sectors during the planning period, matching the slow and steady projected population growth discussed in the Growth Framework section of the plan. Community resources should be leveraged to maintain steady growth across all sectors of the economy.

Action Steps

1. Offer incentives for "primary" employers – that is, for companies where the majority of their business and sales come from outside Lancaster County.
2. Locate all new commercial and industrial development within Lincoln or within the smaller incorporated communities in Lancaster County. Certain commercial uses that are compatible with agriculture and the rural environment, such as commercial wind and solar energy facilities, are allowed in rural areas of the county.
3. Continue to coordinate the City's economic development efforts with research and development functions of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, including continued development of Innovation Campus. The success of the University's research and development is important to the future of the city.
4. Continue to fund the Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development (LPED) and promote business retention, recruitment, and workforce development strategies and outcomes for the City of Lincoln through this public/private partnership.
5. Encourage public-private partnerships, strategic alliances, and collaborative efforts as a means to accomplish future economic objectives.
6. Explore additional opportunities for streamlining the zoning and building permitting processes.
7. Focus primarily on retention and expansion of existing businesses; attracting new businesses should also be encouraged.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G3: High-Quality Workforce

G4: Economic Opportunity

Elements Related to this Policy

E3: Business, Economy, and Workforce

P13: Commercial and Industrial Centers

Support high-quality commercial and industrial centers located throughout the community.



Lincoln remains the county's dominant home to both the commercial and industrial sectors of the local economy. Most of the recent growth in commercial and industrial space has occurred within the city limits of Lincoln, with other incorporated communities experiencing some growth as well. This clustering of commercial and industrial activity in the City of Lincoln has been completed in accordance with the goals of previous comprehensive plans, and PlanForward continues this development pattern. Commercial and industrial center locations are described in more detail in E3: Business & Economy.

Action Steps

1. Implement commercial center location and design principles as discussed in the E3: Business & Economy.
2. Discourage "four corner commercial development" – with commercial uses at all four corners of an intersection – in order to promote walkability and ease of movement within each commercial center and to reduce local traffic congestion at major intersections. Exceptions to this guideline can be made for neighborhood-scale commercial centers intended to provide walkable access to adjacent residential areas.
3. Implement industrial center principles as discussed in the E3: Business & Economy.
4. Continue incentive-based (residential, commercial, or industrial) programs promoting the installation of renewable energy systems. Incentives may include offering rebates on purchasing equipment, attractive net metering pricing, tax incentives, height allowances, setback, and area-based incentives, expedited permitting, and others.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G3: High-Quality Workforce

G4: Economic Opportunity

Elements Related to this Policy

E3: Business, Economy, and Workforce

P14: Commercial Infill

Develop infill commercial areas to be compatible with the character of the area.



Lincoln has many aging commercial sites. While in some cases these sites will be redeveloped for residential or a mix of uses, many aging commercial sites will be redeveloped with new commercial uses. Commercial infill, particularly neighborhood-scale commercial uses, are an important piece to developing and maintaining complete neighborhoods throughout the community.

Action Steps

1. Implement commercial infill redevelopment principles as discussed in the E3:Business & Economy.
2. Maintain and encourage businesses that conveniently serve nearby residents, while ensuring compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods.
3. Avoid encroachment into existing neighborhoods during expansion of existing commercial and industrial uses, and take steps to ensure expansions are in scale with the adjacent neighborhood, use appropriate screening, fulfill a demonstrated need, and do not hinder health and safety.
4. Prioritize retaining areas for continued residential development in older sections of the community by maintaining existing housing and supporting infill housing. Prior to approving the removal of housing to provide additional parking for existing centers, alternatives such as reduced parking requirements, shared parking, additional on-street parking, and/or the removal of other commercial structures should be explored.
5. Support commercial districts in University Place, N 27th Corridor, Greater Downtown, and other older commercial areas with TIF districts that include façade and commercial infill programs.
6. Maintain and encourage ethnically diverse commercial establishments that are beneficial to existing neighborhoods.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G3: High-Quality Workforce

G4: Economic Opportunity

Elements Related to this Policy

E2: Infill and Redevelopment

E3: Business, Economy, and Workforce

P15: Infrastructure and Economic Development

Efficiently utilize investments in existing and future public infrastructure to advance economic development opportunities.



A key element to supporting future development in Lancaster County is ensuring that adequate sites are available with associated infrastructure.

Action Steps

1. Continue to provide adequate sites with associated infrastructure to serve the community's economic development needs.
2. Continue the County's support for road improvements that accommodate commercial and other development within the smaller incorporated areas.
3. Continue the work of the City and LPED to maintain an inventory of potential economic development sites and their current status in terms of planning and infrastructure.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G4: Economic Opportunity

G10: Effective Government

Elements Related to this Policy

E3: Business, Economy, and Workforce

E9: Transportation

P16: Rural Economy

Support agriculture as the primary driver of the rural economy, but recognize that some compatible land uses are also appropriate for these areas.



Agriculture is the dominant land use in Lancaster County, accounting for roughly 3/4 of all land. While this land is largely considered "undeveloped," it is an important economic factor in the county's future. Agriculture's impact on the local economy goes beyond the sale at the end of production. Farms of all sizes make purchases of goods and services in the city and county throughout the year, which contribute to the local tax base and sustain growth for other businesses in the agriculture industry.

Agricultural activities include growing crops for global markets and local consumption, raising livestock, or producing other agricultural products such as wine. Though agricultural activity is identified as a separate land use category in PlanForward, agricultural land does constitute a distinctive natural resource feature as well. These lands are an integral element in the natural landscape, providing habitat as well as serving as a basic element of the County's historic signature landscape.

Action Steps

1. Support appropriate use of accessory home businesses, and locate businesses within the commercial areas of incorporated towns when they expand beyond the definition of home occupation.
2. Home occupations should be limited to uses incidental to a property's residential and/or agricultural use and have minimal impact on neighboring properties.
3. Continue efforts to preserve the viability of the county's agriculture industry through zoning, easements, and other means.
4. Support all types of agriculture, including modern high-yield techniques such as animal feeding operations with appropriate conditions to limit impact on neighbors and the environment.
5. Support the development of commercial wind and solar energy installations throughout the county in accordance with the zoning ordinance.
6. Convene various stakeholders (UNL Extension, Lincoln-Lancaster County Food Policy Council (Lincoln-Lancaster FPC), Community Crops, Local producers, etc.) to host community conversations, expanding education, awareness, and support for local food and regenerative agriculture (no till, multispecies cover crops, reduction in and/or elimination of use of synthetic chemicals, toxic pesticides, and Genetically-modified Organisms (GMO)) to increase crop yield, lower production costs, improve soil fertility and water-holding capacity, and sequester carbon.
7. Use partnerships and programs from local, state, and federal agencies, UNL's School of Natural Resources, and business and nonprofit organizations to promote conservation practices on farm ground to protect its long-term productivity, provide additional environmental services, and reduce potential conflict between neighboring uses.
8. Provide opportunities to support both large-scale and small-scale agriculture and non-traditional cropping/ production systems to support local and regional economic growth.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G4: Economic Opportunity

G11: Rural Environment

Elements Related to this Policy

E3: Business, Economy, and Workforce

P17: Predictability

Strive for predictability for neighborhoods and developers.



Predictability provides assurances for surrounding property owners as well as prospective developers.

Action Steps

1. Continue to make incremental updates as needed to zoning and subdivision ordinances, along with design standards, to support economic development, great neighborhoods, and other PlanForward initiatives.
2. Support timely and efficient implementation of the growth tiers framework through the Capitol Improvement Program and other coordinated infrastructure enhancements.
3. Expand the offering of permit ready plans to include missing middle housing types like townhomes and small multi-family buildings.
4. Update Neighborhood Design Standards to provide improved clarity and flexibility while supporting high-quality redevelopment within the neighborhood context. As part of that update, expand the Neighborhood Design Standards area to apply for residential districts within the 1970 city limits boundary. Neighborhood Design Standards currently apply within the 1950 city limits boundary.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G10: Effective Government

Elements Related to this Policy

E1: Complete Neighborhoods & Housing

E2: Infill and Redevelopment

E7: Community Facilities

E8: Energy & Utilities

E9: Transportation

P18: Conservation Design

Promote conservation design principles with both new growth and redevelopment projects.



Conservation design is a type of development where buildings are grouped together on part of the site while permanently protecting the remainder of the site from development. This type of development provides great flexibility of design to fit site-specific resource protection needs.

Conservation design best practices include:

- Setbacks from rivers and streams beyond the minimum floodplain corridor that are sufficient to preserve riparian habitat.
- Conservation of significant trees and tree stands to the extent possible and designation of area within new developments specifically for trees and/or prairie.
- Sustainable landscape design that includes a combination of native and drought-tolerant plantings, rain gardens, bioswales, infiltration beds, constructed wetlands, limited use of turf grass, green roofs, and pervious pavement.
- Cluster subdivision design that groups new development into less environmentally-sensitive areas within a subdivision while maintaining a high overall building density. This supports the preservation of floodplains and open space, preventing ecosystem fragmentation and creating an interconnected network of conserved lands.
- Minimizing disturbance of the natural topography on a development site.
- Treatment of stormwater as an asset, by working with the natural topography and using wetlands, floodplains, and natural drainage corridors to manage stormwater runoff and flood flows.
- Trails that connect the homes in the subdivision to the preserved natural, historic, and aesthetic features within the site and to compatible adjoining uses, such as public open spaces, existing trails, and other facilities.
- Reducing impacts of light pollution on flora and fauna through screening and intelligent positioning of buildings and light fixtures, limiting lumens and the height of light poles, and installing fixtures that direct light downward.
- Preserving historic and cultural sites that add unique character or sense of place to the development and surroundings, or have importance to the community. Examples include but are not limited to historic structures, cemeteries, trails, or artifacts such as wagon ruts.
- Buffering sensitive areas on the property and abutting property from noisy streets, residences, and businesses. Locating loading docks and refuse areas on the opposite sides of the buildings. For example, design house fronts to face sensitive areas with more active backyards on the opposite side of the house.
- Preserving high-quality soils for food production. Examples of high quality soils that should be prioritized for food production include Class I and Class II soils as defined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic Database.

- Offsetting the lost carbon storage capacity of existing vegetation with new tree and vegetation plantings.

E4: Environmental Resources shows a conceptual example of these best practices in use.

When combined with incentives like density bonuses and internal setback reductions, conservation design can result in the same number of residences as a typical suburban subdivision, or at least four units per acre. There is a savings in development and maintenance costs due to less road surface, shorter utility runs, less grading and other site preparation costs. The preserved land may be owned and managed by a homeowners association, a land trust, or the City.

Conservation-focused design can help to reduce the heat island effect, increase shade, protect habitat, slow stormwater runoff, and improve mental health. Site designs that are compatible with the natural characteristics of the site, conservation design for new subdivisions, clustering development, minimizing grading and impervious surfaces, and preserving site hydrology to the maximum extent possible are encouraged.

Action Steps

1. Encourage conservation design principles as part of the development process. Developments that incorporate conservation design principles should be eligible for greater densities, height, lot, and area adjustments. In addition, conservation design principles should be a factor when considering approval for developments seeking waivers, flexible zoning tools like Community Unit Plans (CUPs), or amendments to Comprehensive Plan items such as Future Land Use or Priority Growth Areas maps, particularly in areas adjacent to important features such as riparian corridors, native prairies, or valuable cultural resources.
2. Conduct a comprehensive review of natural and cultural resources in Lancaster County to identify locations that may be appropriate for protection with development buffers. The review would include suggested resources to be buffered, buffer size needed to mitigate impacts to the identified resources, and required development practices within the buffers
3. Incorporate conservation design principles into development regulations. The update process should include extensive coordination with community stakeholders and the development community. Strategies that could be evaluated as part of the update include:
   a. Requiring conservation design principles within identified conservation buffer areas. Appropriate incentives, such as density bonuses and setback reductions, would allow for conservation buffer areas to maintain the four units per acre assumption for growth areas established in the Growth Framework section of this Plan.
   b. Requiring conservation design principles for any development seeking a Comprehensive Plan amendment (such as a Future Land Use or Growth Area change), waivers, or flexible zoning tools like CUPs and PUDs
   c. Incentives for utilizing conservation design principles with any development proposal.
4. Incorporate conservation design principles into public projects and development projects utilizing public funds (such as TIF) as appropriate.
5. Develop project approaches which view stormwater as an asset, by working with the natural topography and using wetlands, floodplains, and natural drainage corridors as natural ways to manage flood flows and stormwater runoff.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G7: Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

G8: Community Resiliency

G11: Rural Environment

Elements Related to this Policy

E4: Environmental Resources

E5: Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

P19: Native Prairie

Protect, restore, and enhance native prairies



This feature refers to the tallgrass prairie areas that are dominated by big bluestem, little bluestem, indiangrass, and sideoats grama grass species. Numerous wildflowers and forbs are also found in these prairies, including golden rod, purple coneflower, purple prairie clover, and black-eyed susan. Prairies are also incredibly rich in wildlife and host native mammals, amphibians, reptiles, birds and insects. Though historically they were the region's prevailing natural condition, native prairies are an increasingly rare feature on the Nebraska landscape. This resource thrives in conditions of disturbance caused by fires, grazing, haying, and then periods of rest. Management strategies that mimic natural disturbance are important for diverse, healthy prairie.

In native prairies plants and soil work together as a natural solution for carbon sequestration. Healthy soil and plant communities hold carbon in their organic material and keep it from escaping into the atmosphere.

Lancaster County is fortunate to have approximately 9,000 acres of native prairie remaining, mainly in the west central portion of the county, although they are scattered throughout the county in patches of land that must remain whole if their integrity as a natural resource feature is to continue. Maintaining continutity and connections between prairie parcels is critical to supporting healthy prairie ecosystems Nine Mile Prairie, Pioneers Park and Spring Creek Prairie are three of the larger massings of native grasslands in the county.

Action Steps

1. Develop planning guidelines, management techniques and supporting policies for preserving native prairies and grassland. Maximize open space conservation, prevent fragmentation of valued ecosystems, and provide an interconnected network of open spaces while maintaining overall building density.
2. Continue to coordinate prescribed burn plans among public agencies.
3. Identify opportunities to work with property owners to acquire land or conservation easements that can assist in protecting and serve as buffer areas around prairies and other natural areas for management and resource protection. Support use of federal, state, or local conservation programs.
4. Investigate, document, and disseminate means for encouraging native prairie restoration by private entities.
5. Utilize the University of Nebraska Center for Grassland Studies in assessing alternatives for grassland preservation and restoration. For signature landscapes, utilize the Greenprint Challenge of 2001, the Salt Valley Greenway and Prairie Corridor Master Plan, and the UNL Nine Mile Praire Environs Master Plan as guiding documents.
6. Resurvey and update the County's prairie and grassland inventory for inclusion in the Natural Resources Geographic Information Systems (NRGIS).
7. Include prairie managers in review of any Growth Tier Changes that may directly impact a designated prairie.

8. Expand native prairie plantings through strategies such as requiring the addition of native prairie plantings to detention ponds and runoff areas, as well as residential or commercial development. Continue to support or expand the Prairie in the Parks program.
9. Continue to support Solidago Conservancy, in affiliation with the Lincoln Parks Foundation and Parks and Recreation Department, working in partnership with landowners to preserve native prairie, wetland areas, and other natural resources.
10. Work with homeowner associations, partner organizations, and agencies to increase use of native plants and prairie in landscaping.
11. Educate citizens, increasing their appreciation for the aesthetics of native plantings and raising awareness of the benefits of increasing such plantings that would foster pollinator habitat, sensible water use, flood control, and carbon sequestration.
12. Lincoln is committed to the Mayors' Monarch Pledge, which is a program through the National Wildlife Federation. As such, Lincoln is committed to the preservation of precious ecosystems and native habitats that protect the monarch butterfly and other pollinators.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G7: Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

G8: Community Resiliency

G11: Rural Environment

Elements Related to this Policy

E4: Environmental Resources

E5: Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

P20: Ecology and Habitat

Protect the natural habitat to support biodiversity



Biodiversity is essential to maintaining healthy, resilient ecosystems and supporting the overall quality of life in Lancaster County. A diverse range of plant and animal species contributes to critical ecological functions such as pollination, water filtration, soil health, and climate regulation, while also enhancing the region's ability to adapt to environmental changes. In addition, biodiversity provides economic, recreational, and educational benefits, reinforcing the importance of conservation efforts.

A focus within the biodiversity framework is the protection of threatened and endangered species.Threatened and endangered species in Lancaster County include the Salt Creek tiger beetle (State and Federal Endangered), Western Prairie Fringed Orchid (State and Federal Threatened), Saltwort or Western Glasswort (State Endangered), and the Northern Long-Eared Bat (State and Federal Threatened).

An ecological buffer zone is one way to protect natural habitat. An ecological buffer separates a particular area from another, providing protection for the particularly valuable aspects of a parcel that could be harmed by aspects of the other.

An ecological protective buffer zone is a designated, often vegetated, transitional area surrounding sensitive habitats, such as grasslands, wetlands, or wildlife reserves. It protects such habitats from negative external human pressures, including light and noise pollution, excessive or polluted runoff, and pesticide drift. Buffer zones maintain ecosystem integrity and biodiversity by providing essential habitats for plants and animals, connecting landscape patches, and mitigating "edge effects". A "one size fits all" categorization cannot be set for ecological buffers because the nature of the sensitive habitat and impact of potential negative pressures must be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Action Steps

1. Review and revise regulations as appropriate for requiring buffer areas around critical natural areas. Implementation of conservation design principles discussed in P18: Conservation Design are a key component to supporting buffers while promoting efficient and creative development within our growth areas.
2. Research continues into the conservation of Nebraska's eastern saline wetlands, which will enhance Salt Creek tiger beetle habitat. This will continue to include authorizing or soliciting funding for hydrology or hydrogeology research of the habitat area, determining basin-wide impacts of land use and human activities on the wetlands, characterizing the tiger beetle's biology and habitat, and assessing the economic impacts of potential management efforts.
3. Continue cooperation between public and private entities to support biodiversity in Lancaster County and protect habitat for threatened and endangered species. Current efforts include those of the Solidago

Conservancy, Saline Wetlands Conservation Partnership, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Nature Conservancy, Nebraska Audubon, Nebraska Environmental Trust, and others.

4. Landowners with saline wetlands and within the 500-foot buffer zones should be offered assistance concerning programs to preserve and protect wetlands and transition lands occurring on private property.
5. Investigate incentives that allow land owners to pursue voluntary purchases, conservation easements, transfer of development right (TDR),maintenance endowments, or other similar preservation options.
6. Secure grant opportunities for saline wetland preservation and enhancement.
7. Continue the public education effort to raise awareness of threats to insect and bird species in area habitats, including the Salt Creek tiger beetle and its unique habitat.
8. Continue support of native plantings, creation of community gardens,and expansion of pollinator habitat by the Parks and Recreation Department.
9. Support the installation of streetlights and other light fixtures that direct light downward to reduce the impacts of light pollution on flora and fauna, particularly in areas located near sensitive natural habitats.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G7: Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

G8: Community Resiliency

G11: Rural Environment

Elements Related to this Policy

E4: Environmental Resources

E5: Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

P21: Floodplains and Riparian Areas

Protect and preserve floodplains and other riparian areas for flood storage, conveyance and other natural resource benefits.



Currently about 14% of Lancaster County is designated as floodplains. Floodplains provide multiple benefits to both the natural (flood storage and conveyance, flora and fauna habitat preservation and diversity, stormwater quality, groundwater recharge) and the built (recreation, public health and safety, economic) environments.

The overriding policy for the floodplain is a "No Adverse Impact" policy for the City and County, which means that the community has a goal of insuring that the action of one property owner does not adversely impact the flooding risk for other properties.

Action Steps

1. Designate areas for future urban development outside of the floodplain and floodway to avoid introducing new development to flood risks and to preserve the important functions of the floodplain.
2. Develop and utilize watershed plans during the review and evaluation of proposed developments and as a guide in the preparation of future capital improvement projects.
3. Utilize stormwater as an asset, by directing it through natural waterways, wetlands, and drainage corridors to minimize flood damage and prevent Non-Point Source Pollution (NPS) from occurring when storm waters flow through impervious surfaces in urban areas and cultivated and grazing land in rural areas.
4. Implement a Rain to Recreation watershed approach that reduces storm water damage, aids in maintaining water quality, and provides additional natural areas that can be used by the public for recreation and educational purposes..
5. Continue to expand and enhance the following stormwater run-off mitigation measures including:
   - Vegetative buffers along stream corridors.
   - Preservation of natural areas, actively preserving the natural functions of floodplains.
   - Developing and implementing a floodplain buyout program while minimizing impacts on existing neighborhoods, citizen needs, and historic districts.
   - Making comprehensive, watershed-based approaches to floodplain management a high priority with accurate mapping and public involvement.
   - Retain City or County property in the floodplain in public ownership whenever possible, including conservation easements to protect floodplain functions.
6. Implement incentives and education efforts to promote environmental stewardship between the CIty, County, LPSNRD and property owners. Notify floodplain property ownersland prospective buyers of flood risks and opportunities for shared environmental stewardship..

7. Maintain no net fill conditions for properties in the floodplain being developed or redeveloped. Maintain no net fill conditions for those properties seeking Special Permits through Planning, Tax Increment Financing, or on former City property.
8. Implement recommendations of the Salt Creek Resiliency Study, per the City of Lincoln Climate Action Plan.
9. Maintain the Community Rating System (CRS) rating that allows for a 25% reduction in flood insurance premiums for property owners in floodplains.
10. Prepare for federal adoption and make publicly available an updated floodplain map for Lincoln that reflects increased precipitation and streamflow projections based on precipitation data from NOAA Atlas 14 data. The floodpain re-mapping project includes 13 watersheds within Lincoln and Lancaster County and is following FEMA's Risk MAP process. Initial phases are in-progress and the city-wide flood maps are expected to be completed by 2032.
11. Continue and enhance current outreach and education efforts with landowners and business owners located in the revised floodplain about their flood risk. Develop a comprehensive outreach and education strategy with residents in the revised floodplain about their flood risk.
12. In response to the findings of the Salt Creek Resiliency Study, assemble key partners and leaders in the City and County to develop comprehensive strategies that reduce flooding risks, improve soil health, sequester carbon, and maintain natural systems within the City and County, to include the Solidago Conservancy.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G7: Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

G8: Community Resiliency

G11: Rural Environment

Elements Related to this Policy

E4: Environmental Resources

E5: Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

P22: Local Food

Encourage opportunities to grow and buy local food, as locally produced food can provide a secure source of nutritious food that has a reduced impact on the environment and increased benefit to the health of consumers.



Despite its location in a top agricultural-producing state, Lincoln imports 90% of the food consumed —approximately 1.6 million pounds of food per day. At the same time, Lincoln residents spend an estimated $1.1 billion annually on food produced outside the region, representing a significant missed opportunity to reinvest in the local food economy. The Center for Rural Affairs found that if every Lincoln metro resident spent $5 a week on local food, it would generate $91 million annually for regional farms. Rising food costs, reduced food assistance, and persistent disparities in access have also created growing concern for resident food security.

Lincoln's Local Food Plan, adopted in 2023, seeks to strengthen the security of food produced, processed, and consumed in Lincoln. The Plan sets four key goals: improve access to healthy food for all, support a thriving local food and farm community, promote sustainable agricultural practices, and reduce food waste. Building on the momentum of the Plan and the strategies identified within will contributes to a more sustainable and resilient food supply chain, supports the local economy, and creates jobs and vocational training opportunities.

The action steps for this policy are organized into four broad themes.

Action Steps

1. Increase and Ensure Access to Healthy Food for All
    a. Create more community gardens, ensuring they are distributed equitably throughout Lincoln and in areas of highest need, and ensure they are easily accessible by public transportation, bike, and/or foot.
    b. Expand community seed and plant exchanges, explore establishing a public seed library, and increase access to seed-saving education and resources.
    c. Encourage community gardeners, home gardeners, and farmers' market vendors to partner with the Food Bank of Lincoln, food pantries, and meal distribution programs to donate fresh produce.
    d. Expand and utilize local education programs, focused on nutrition, budget-friendly cooking (especially for singles and seniors), farm-to-school, food assistance programs, and gardening skills.
    e. Explore ordinance changes, such as Title 6, that would expand opportunities for livestock, urban agriculture, and pollinator habitats in city limits.
    f. Promote the use of public spaces for planting edible trees, shrubs, and other food-producing plants that are accessible for public harvest and use and increase access to locally grown food.
2. Invest in a Thriving Local Food and Farm Community to Increase Local Food Production and Food Security
    a. Help improve market access for local producers such as encouraging institutional food buyers to source from local producers through the Mayor's Local Food Challenge.
    b. Support the development and expansion of affordable, accessible local food processing infrastructure, including commercial kitchen facilities, through funding, incentives, and

partnerships. Additionally, continue supporting the expansion of a rentable kitchen inventory in Lincoln.

c. Approach city councils and village boards in Lancaster County about the potential for collaboration to re-localize our food supply.

d. Establish a collaborative approach to marketing and educating regarding local food, encouraging events that create a community culture centered around food growing and access.

e. Support a sustainable “Buy Local” food campaign with community partners and a local food challenge during the summer to highlight locally grown produce.

3. Promote Food Production Practices that Protect Soil, Water, and Air

a. Encourage overall best management practices for home gardens, community gardens, and farms including water conservation, reduced or alternative uses to pesticides and fertilizer, and regular soil testing.

b. Provide education and technical resources on water-conserving irrigation practices as well as the use of cover crops, mulch, compost, and biochar to improve water infiltration, holding capacity, and stormwater mitigation.

c. Encourage the conservation of high-quality soils Class 1 and Class 2 soils, as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) by implementing conservation design principles from P18: Conservation Design with new developments and redevelopments.

4. Reduce Food Waste

a. Support the coordination of pantries, emergency food providers, etc. to improve recovery of safe, healthy food from area retail food outlets.

b. Encourage all food retailers, restaurants, institutional kitchens, agricultural producers, etc. to participate in food waste reduction and donate leftover food items to local pantries or the Food Bank.

c. Partner with local organizations/institutions to provide public outreach and trainings; expand existing educational programs to prevent/reduce food waste (i.e., proper food handling and storage, how to navigate “best by” date labels, etc.); and support backyard composting programs.

d. Explore hosting “zero food waste” events for all city-sponsored events.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G5: Equity and Inclusion

G8: Community Resiliency

G11: Rural Environment

Elements Related to this Policy

E5: Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

P23: Salt Valley Greenway and Connecting Green Corridors Concept Implementation

Use the Salt Valley Greenway and Connecting Corridors concept to embody the PlanForward Vision and environmental resource principles.



Since the first City/County Comprehensive Plan in 1961, the Salt Creek watershed has influenced planning for open space, greenways, recreation, and environmental resources in Lincoln and Lancaster County. The Salt Valley Greenway wraps around the City of Lincoln and is fed by tributaries that radiate out into the surrounding rolling hills. The effect is that of a large loop, primarily made of Salt Creek and Stevens Creek, with connecting green corridors linking urban and rural areas. Corridors which generally follow Salt Creek and its tributaries provide multiple benefits; creating connections between urban and rural areas, providing connections to the County's Salt Valley Lakes, creating green partitions which help to prevent a "wall-to-wall" urban feel, connecting habitat for the movement of wildlife, protecting floodplain, and many others. Implementation of the Salt Valley Greenway and connecting corridor concept will provide an environmental framework upon which a thriving economy can be built.

Action Steps

1. The Salt Valley Greenway and Prairie Corridor Master Plan developed in 2012 should continue to be a guide for acquiring and conserving lands within the Salt Valley Greenway and Connecting Corridors through cooperative efforts of public agencies, private organizations, and individuals.
2. Encourage the collaborative efforts of the public-private partnership that is concentrating efforts on further planning, funding, land acquisition, and development of the Salt Valley Greenway and its connecting corridors. This should be viewed as a local natural resource as well as a major economic development program.
3. Identify and pursue funding sources for the acquisition of significant properties forming the Greenway.
4. Use conservation easements to protect greenway areas where it may be desirable to allow compatible land uses such as row crop farming or pasturing.
5. Use of fee simple title may be more appropriate for areas that are best maintained in a natural state due to particularly sensitive features such as rare or sensitive areas, or that have value for resource-based recreation like hiking, interpretive activities, and wildlife viewing. Develop criteria and priorities to determine land areas that are most appropriately acquired and managed by a public agency.
6. City and County Officials should work with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (NRD)), the Nature Conservancy and other organizations to provide and enhance recreation facilities around the Salt Valley Lakes and other natural resource sites.
7. Provide trail access to the Salt Valley Lakes and other natural resources via connections to the Salt Valley Greenway and associated tributary stream corridors.
8. Prepare and distribute information to community residents regarding the functions and value of the Salt Valley Greenway, and of the plans for its creation.
9. Utilize greenway linkages for commuter/ recreation trails.
10. Apply implementation tools specific to each of the Salt Valley Greenway and Connecting Corridor segments:

a. Continue to develop the Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch to connect Pioneers Park Nature Center with Conestoga Lake and then continue south through the Village of Denton and on to Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center. This project includes preservation and restoration of over 7,000 acres of tallgrass prairie, wetlands, and wooded riparian corridor wound through by an extension of the City's trail network. Use the Salt Valley Greenway and Prairie Corridor Master Plan and partners to identify unique areas of the County and promote private lands stewardship on land in or adjacent to Prairie Corridor.

b. Seek the early acquisition (or the application of other management techniques) of land along Stevens Creek and within the Stevens Creek Basin for future greenways, open space and park uses. Examine possible park and open space potential around Walton where the MoPac and future Stevens Creek Trails will connect. Use the Stevens Creek Watershed Master Plan as a guide for identification of areas of opportunity.

c. Continue development of the "Crescent Green" concept to provide a continuous greenway and open space corridor around the west and northern part of Lincoln.

d. Explore alternatives for creating a greenway corridor along the South and East Beltways. The corridor could range from park-like areas like those along Highway 2, to more riparian settings as are found in Wilderness Park. Planning for these corridors should be coordinated with planning for the trail network.

e. Provide for a greenway corridor along Interstate 80, between North 27th Street and the City of Waverly. This corridor already includes a number of wetland areas (both saline and fresh water) that are under public ownership – City of Lincoln and the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District in particular. The corridor contains Prairie Pines, the Warner Wetlands, Marsh Wren and the City's wetland mitigation bank. The area is a major entryway into the City of Lincoln and provides associated trail and open space opportunities.

f. Extend the protected greenspace along Salt Creek extending south of Saltillo Road to the South Beltway, in conjunction with enhanced floodplain mapping for this area. This extension can be accomplished through a combination of land purchases, conservation easements, donations, and other options. Work with other incorporated communities within the county — notably Roca and Hickman – to coordinate the Greenway's extension.

g. Continue the efforts along the Rock Creek and Little Salt Creek stream corridors to conserve and enhance Nebraska's most limited and endangered wetland type, which provides habitat for a variety of native plant and animal species, including two endangered species. Link these important natural resource corridors to the Salt Valley Greenway via future county trails.

h. Partner with Solidago Conservancy to assist in landowner outreach, negotiations, and real estate transactions to help meet important conservation goals.

11. Continue Lincoln's commitment Lincoln to the Mayors' Monarch Pledge, which is a program through the National Wildlife Federation. As such, Lincoln is committed to the conservation of precious ecosystems and native habitats that protect the monarch butterfly and other pollinators.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G7: Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

G8: Community Resiliency

G11: Rural Environment

Elements Related to this Policy

E4: Environmental Resources

E5: Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

P24: Environmental Resource Protection

Environmental resources provide the framework for a healthy, active, and economically vibrant community.



Lancaster County boasts a diverse set of environmental resources and landscape types that should be respected and maintained. The Greenprint Challenge, developed by the City of Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Department, Parks and Recreation, and the Lower Platte South NRD in 2001, provides an approach for sound and sensitive urban and rural development that is interwoven with the community's desire for maintaining and enhancing the ecological and economic benefits of our natural and cultural environment. Although 20 years old, the resources identified, and the recommended principles for their protection, in the Greenprint Challenge are still applicable today and will continue to be in the future.

Lancaster County's environmental resources reside within a broad range of contexts that should be considered as policy and land use decisions are made. The Plan should consider both the local and broader regional and global impacts of actions affecting environmental resources.

Action Steps

1. Pursue a variety of funding and financing options on a continuing basis. These may include: enlisting Solidago Conservancy to enable donations of land, capital improvements programming providing for further acquisition of park property and natural areas, and grant funding from such sources as the Land and Water Conservation Fund, various floodplain and water quality funding programs, and the Nebraska Environmental Trust.
2. Conduct outreach efforts bringing together private landowners, environmental interests, and the development community to seek a common understanding and approach regarding natural resource features and the vision described in this Plan.
3. Consider the relationship among environmental resources (i.e., prairies, riparian corridors, floodplains, freshwater and saline wetlands, and other natural areas), key corridors/linkages, and the adjacent land uses for appropriate management and resource protection.
4. Implement the "Prairie in the Park" concept by including prairie plantings and pollinator gardens in all new park master plans. Work to retrofit existing parks with prairie plantings and pollinator gardens as they are rehabilitated. Continue support of native plantings, creation of community gardens, and expansion of pollinator habitat by the Parks and Recreation Department.
5. Support natural climate solutions identified in the Climate Action Plan including carbon sequestration, interconnected habitats, flood mitigation and water conservation and apply strategies to quantify the benefits of ecosystem services.
6. Encourage efforts to preserve healthy soils and agricultural practices that enrich depleted soils. This could include efforts during construction to preserve topsoil or add compost/soil supplements to disturbed topsoil, use of multi-species cover crops, and review of pesticides to evaluate their impact on soil health.
7. Investigate means for encouraging native prairie restoration by private entities.

8. Utilize the University of Nebraska School of Natural Resources and Center for Grassland Studies in assessing alternatives for grassland preservation and restoration.
9. Resurvey and update the County's prairie and grassland inventory for inclusion in the Natural Resources Geographic Information Systems (NRGIS). Support implementation of efforts and plans that protect and preserve habitat for Federally and State threatened and endangered species including the Saline Wetlands Implementation Plan and State Wildlife Action Plan and its supplement.
10. Support implementation of efforts and plans that protect and preserve habitat for Federally and State threatened and endangered species including the *Saline Wetlands Implementation Plan* and *State Wildlife Action Plan*.
11. Continue cooperation between public and private entities to protect habitat for threatened and endangered species. Current efforts include those of the Saline Wetlands Conservation Partnership, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, Solidago Conservancy, the Nature Conservancy, AudubonGreat Plains, and others.
12. Landowners with saline wetlands and within the 500-foot buffer zones should be offered assistance concerning programs to preserve and protect wetlands and transition lands occurring on private property.
13. Document historic, cultural and archeological sites throughout the City and County.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G7: Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

G8: Community Resiliency

G11: Rural Environment

Elements Related to this Policy

E4: Environmental Resources

E5: Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

P25: Open Space with Development

The community should continue to acquire parkland and conserve open space areas commensurate with expanding development, population growth, and community needs.



While planning for future growth is integral to the Plan, it is equally important that environmental resource features be accorded similar attention. The community should invest planning resources into the early identification of those areas that are most valued as part of the *Greenprint Challenge*. This principle supports the notion of "getting ahead of the game" by knowing what resources are most valued, where they are located, and what actions should be made within the broader planning process to secure their future for the community.

Action Steps

1. Acquisition and development of parks and open space areas should conserve and enhance signature landscapes and environmental resources, and provide opportunities for outdoor active and passive recreation.
2. Integrate the natural resource feature concepts into future planning activities such as zoning and subdivision review, watershed master planning, subarea planning, transportation and utility planning, and floodplain management studies.
3. Pursue stormwater management practices that consider both water quality and quantity approaches near freshwater and saline wetlands. Buffer areas should be encouraged at their perimeters to decrease the effects of adjacent future uses.
4. Designate areas for future urban development outside of the floodplain and floodway in order to mitigate the impacts of flooding and preserve natural flood storage. Floodplain in public ownership should remain in public ownership. However, where it is determined that there is public benefit to releasing floodplain property to private ownership, flood storage capacity should be maintained through easements, deed restrictions, or other tools.
5. Utilize a "Rain to Recreation" approach to open space and greenway linkages that is coordinated with the City's watershed management program and the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District to reduce flood damages, protect water quality and natural areas, while providing for recreational and educational opportunities to realize multiple benefits.
6. Provide appropriate incentives to encourage landowners to preserve saline and freshwater wetlands. Incentives to be used or considered further include:
   a. Special density credits or bonuses for wetland conservation.
   b. Utilize these areas for wetland bank mitigation.
   c. Technical assistance for wetland preservation and enhancement.
   d. Conservation easements with tax incentives.
   e. Fee simple purchase of land for conservation.

f. Tax benefits from charitable donations of land and easements for conservation.

7. Trails should be an integral part of the community's green spaces and corridors. Pursue the active coordination of all future trail network extensions and enhancements. The urban network of trails should connect employment centers, shopping areas, schools, and residential neighborhoods.
8. Establish trail easements or comparable options along selected county roads.
9. Monitor rail lines which may be abandoned in the future for acquisition as trails as part of an overall open space and recreation system for the county.
10. Conserve prime agricultural land within the Tier I and Tier II areas, both to reduce conflicts in the future growth of Lincoln and to ensure available land for the production of food products that are important to the health and economic vitality of the community.
11. Develop planning guidelines, management techniques and supporting policies for conserving native prairies and grassland.
12. Encourage the retention of linear connections of green spaces wherever possible. Efforts should be made to conserve small stream corridors throughout future developments. Adopt revised minimum corridor standards to preserve longer and wider stream corridors.
13. Pursue greenways connecting urban and rural areas. Such corridors should follow stream courses and connect valuable natural resource areas to keep habitats and ecosystems intact.
14. Ensure that as greenways and open space corridors are identified and created, provisions are made for possible future access points across these areas. This may include, but not be limited to, access for new road alignments, road widenings, utilities, and other similar services
15. Identify open space areas that are particularly valued by community residents for rare or unique attributes and establish development regulations utilizing a balance of incentive and mandatory measures.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G7: Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

G8: Community Resiliency

G11: Rural Environment

Elements Related to this Policy

E4: Environmental Resources

E5: Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

P26: Community Forestry Management

Comprehensive and adaptive community forestry management approaches should be applied as part of sustaining the urban forest.



The Urban Forest represents a significant community investment, both public and private, and the environmental benefits are far-reaching and highly important to the community.

Action Steps

1. Ensure no genus of tree composes more than 10% of the City's public trees. Consider selection of street tree species that will be adaptable to the changing climate.
2. Systematically and proactively manage trees on public property.
3. Continue to plant and replant public trees through City tax funds, grants, and public/private partnerships.
4. With the arrival of the Emerald Ash Borer in April of 2018, and in cooperation with public and private partners, continue to implement the response plan and funding strategy that involves phased removal and replacement of ash trees and preservation of some high value ash trees.
5. Replace public ash trees on a one-to-one basis with a diverse mix of tree species.
6. Monitor other emergent insect infestations and diseases that threaten the vitality of public trees; develop readiness plans.
7. Promote public education regarding the planting and care of trees, and opportunities for volunteer involvement in planting and maintaining public trees.
8. Street trees require ongoing, regular management to assure adequate clearance over sidewalks and over streets, and to maintain visibility of traffic safety signage. Consideration needs to be given to appropriate management of street trees over time so that their benefits are achieved.
9. Consider development of regulations that promote preservation of significant trees within new commercial and residential subdivisions.
10. Continue to require that parking lot trees be planted with new construction and consider increasing the number of required trees.
11. Assess street tree coverage and provide assistance as needed to ensure consistent street tree canopies across all neighborhoods.
12. Assess baseline tree canopy with emphasis on low-income neighborhoods and prioritize tree plantings to reduce heat island effect, increase stormwater management, and reduce utility bills.
13. Increase funding resources to meet recommended tree replacement goal of 1:1 and to reduce pruning cycle of street trees from 25+ years to under 10 years.
14. Develop streetscape design standards that include preservation of existing trees and planting of new trees as part of redevelopment projects.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G7: Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

G8: Community Resiliency

Elements Related to this Policy

E4: Environmental Resources

E5: Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

P27: Regional Parks and Tournament Facilities

Continue to provide and expand Regional Parks and Tournament Sports Facilities to serve Lincoln and the larger community.



Regional Parks are tracts of land that encompass special or unique facilities and features that are of interest to diverse groups throughout the community. Regional Parks primarily provide opportunities for day use activities that may include community festival/ gathering spaces, picnicking, hiking, sports, fishing, canoeing, boating, and environmental interpretation/appreciation. Tournament Sports Facilities may exist within Regional Parks, Community Parks, or as stand-alone facilities. Fields and courts for organized sports activities may be secondary or primary uses when part of a larger park.

Action Steps

1. Continue to enhance opportunities for interpretation of native landscapes and ecosystems indigenous to eastern Nebraska through conservation of additional parcels for buffering and enhancement of visitor facilities at the Pioneers Park Nature Center.
2. Explore opportunities to provide enhanced water recreation activities at Holmes Lake in Holmes Park.
3. Acquire additional land adjacent to parkland at N 98th and Adams. This property is currently adequate for a Community Park but it is desirable to increase the size to serve a Regional Park function.
4. New, large park facilities are significant capital expenditures and need financing beyond the typical funding. Identify a funding strategy to address the gap in capital repair and replacement funding and provide for new recreational opportunities in the community.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G6: Healthy, Active, and Connected People

Elements Related to this Policy

E5: Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

P28: Community Parks

Continue to provide Community Park facilities as the City grows.



Community Parks are typically 30 to 50 acre sites that are readily accessible from arterial streets and the commuter/recreational trail system. Community Parks may include play fields and play courts for organized sports, a playground with an accessible fall surface, facilities for day use activities including a picnic shelter and restroom, seating, walking paths, and off-street parking. They may also include a swimming pool and/or a recreation center. Community Parks often include areas left in a natural state with meadows, prairies, forest, wetlands and other natural features as part of Parks and Recreation's efforts to integrate native plants into natural and landscaped areas. Community Parks often include activity areas consistent with those located in neighborhood parks and as a result, Community Parks may serve as the Neighborhood Park for surrounding residential areas. The Plan recognizes the need for about 150 acres of new Community Park land. Three new Community Park sites are anticipated.

Action Steps

1. Locate Community Parks on a collector or arterial street to accommodate automobile access and parking; park sites should also be readily accessible by pedestrians and bicyclists from a commuter/recreation trail.
2. Locate Community Parks adjacent to middle schools where possible.
3. Community Parks should be adjacent to greenway linkages.
4. Provide buffering between Community Park activities and adjacent residential areas to minimize traffic and noise impacts.
5. Enact design standards for field and parking lot lighting that seek to minimize glare, light spill-over onto adjacent properties, and impacts on the dark night sky.
6. Select sites for Community Parks that allow for multiple functions, such as stormwater management and habitat conservation.
7. Focus on the development and maintenance of sports fields and associated day use facilities.
8. Establish Youth Baseball/Softball complexes as part of Community Parks throughout the city.
9. Create pedestrian connections between surrounding residential development and neighborhood-related park features such as playgrounds and park shelters.
10. New, large park facilities are significant capital expenditures and need financing beyond the typical funding. Identify a funding strategy to address the gap in capital repair and replacement funding and provide for new recreational opportunities in the community.
11. Develop Jensen Park, southeast of Yankee Hill Road and South 84th Street as a Community Park as funding becomes available.
12. Develop Bison Park, located southeast of West Van Dorn and South Coddington Avenue as a Community Park as funding becomes available.

13. Acquire and develop a Community Park in the Stevens Creek basin in the vicinity of A Street and South 120th Street as funding becomes available.
14. Develop Cornhusker Bank Park integrating both active recreation options and natural resource land conservation.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G2: Complete Neighborhoods

G6: Healthy, Active, and Connected People

Elements Related to this Policy

E1: Complete Neighborhoods & Housing

E5: Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

P29: Neighborhood Parks

Continue to develop Neighborhood Parks to serve newly developing areas of Lincoln.



Neighborhood parks are centrally located within areas of residential development and intended to be accessible by no more than a ten-minute walk from residences within the neighborhood. Typical activity areas include playground equipment, open lawn areas for informal games and activities or play courts with a single basketball goal for informal games, shaded seating, and walking paths. When possible, neighborhood parks are co-located with elementary schools, a concept referred to as “Sparks.” Neighborhood parks that are associated with schools are typically 2 acres in size and located so that they can be accessed by students during the day and still easily accessible to the neighborhood when school is not in session. When parks are not located with schools, an area of about 4 acres is desirable to provide some of the open play area which is provided by school playfields in a “Spark.” In some cases, Neighborhood Park services are provided within larger Community Parks.

Action Steps

1. Locate Neighborhood Parks close to the center of residential areas and within a 10-minute walking distance of a majority of residents; park sites should be readily accessible by pedestrians and bicyclists.
2. Develop “Sparks” such that site planning and development is coordinated, anticipating that the primary use of the Spark will be school students during the school day and related after school programming; Sparks will be available for use of neighborhood during the evening, weekend, and summer hours.
3. Locate Neighborhood Parks adjacent to greenway linkages where possible. Where possible, select sites for Neighborhood Parks that allow for multiple functions, such as stormwater management or habitat conservation.
4. As the City continues to grow and the community demographics shift, seek out opportunities to provide neighborhood park activities that address the needs of different cultures, age groups, and abilities.
5. Locate park sites where residents living in surrounding homes, people in passing vehicles, or pedestrians can view activities in the park to provide for informal supervision.
6. Identify opportunities to acquire and develop Neighborhood Parks in established neighborhoods that are deficient in Neighborhood Park resources, particularly in those neighborhoods where indicators of vulnerability are higher.
7. Continue joint planning activities between the City of Lincoln and Lincoln Public Schools for selection and acquisition of future school/park sites.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G2: Complete Neighborhoods

G6: Healthy, Active, and Connected People

Elements Related to this Policy

E1: Complete Neighborhoods & Housing

E5: Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

P30: Recreation Centers / Community Learning Centers

The City supports a comprehensive recreation approach including neighborhood based services; community-wide celebrations, leagues and events; partnerships and collaborations with many organizations and community members; to provide services that support active living, youth development, livable neighborhoods and family life for all community members.



The Parks and Recreation Department operates six neighborhood recreation and community centers offering youth development (before and after school programs, summer day camps), recreation, leisure interest, fitness and human services programs. Three of the facilities are co-located with schools (Belmont, Calvert, and Irving), and three are freestanding buildings (Air Park, Easterday and F Street). With the exception of the Air Park Community Center, the City facilities were constructed between the 1970's and early 2000's. Therapeutic and adaptive recreation programs are a primary emphasis of programming at Easterday Recreation Center. A new recreation center replacing the current Air Park Recreation Center facility was completed in 2023. This facility is co-located with the Williams Branch Library and is adjacent to Arnold Elementary School. A major update and expansion of the Easterday Recreation Center is also planned.

Action Steps

1. Explore opportunities with Lincoln Public Schools to develop multi-purpose community space (activity centers) with new school facilities, allowing for expanded community programs and activities at school sites.
    a. An activity center should include a large multipurpose space, public restrooms and shared office and storage space for community agencies and organizations offering programs in the center.
    b. Access to the activity center should be designed so that it can be restricted to the school during school hours and accessed via a separate entrance after hours.
    c. Activity centers should also be designed so that they can be used in combination with the school gym, media center, cafeteria and entry lobby to support youth programs before and after school, as well as a variety of other community activities.
2. Complete a major renovation and possible expansion of Easterday Recreation Center in order to support unique programming at that site.
3. Continue to encourage and support expansion of the community learning center initiative as a model for offering neighborhood-based services to residents.
4. Explore opportunities to work with the Lincoln YMCA and Lincoln Public Schools to develop new community recreation center facilities in additional areas of Lincoln similar to the school / YMCA / park model of Moore Middle School in southeast Lincoln and Schoo Middle School / YMCA in northwest Lincoln.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G2: Complete Neighborhoods

G6: Healthy, Active, and Connected People

Elements Related to this Policy

E1: Complete Neighborhoods & Housing

E5: Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

P31: Aquatic Facilities

Continue to provide opportunities for aquatic activities with emphasis on facilities that serve quadrants of the Cityand are easily accessible by pedestrians and bicycles.



Aquatic Facilities are developed to provide opportunities for water recreation activities. The City of Lincoln owns and manages ten Aquatic Facilities: nine outdoor public pools, and onefree-standing sprayground in Trago Park. The City should maintain its commitment to outdoor water recreation activities.

Action Steps

1. Continue to maintain and upgrade mechanical systems of existing outdoor swimming pools; regularly add features to Neighborhood Pools to make them inviting and attractive to visitors.
2. Complete a major renovation of Star City Shores, adding new features.
3. Construct a new Community Pool facility similar to Star City Shores in the Steven Creek basin.
4. Provide aquatics amenities in each of the four quadrants of the City.
5. Renovate three existing Community Pools (Highlands, University Place, and Woods) over time as needed.
6. Renovate four of the Neighborhood Pools (Air Park, Belmont, Eden and Irvingdale) to bring the pool basins and bathhouses into compliance with accessibility guidelines, as has been completed at Ballard Pool, contingent upon adequate funding for annual operations and for repair/renovation costs.
7. Consider public-private partnerships with organizations such as the YMCA to provide access to outdoor pools in Lincoln that are outside of the service area of City operated pools on a non-membership, fee-for-use basis.
8. Explore opportunities as they emerge to promote development of an indoor aquatics center with competition facilities as an emphasis; potential partners include UNL and one or more private partners.
9. Complete an aquatics facilities assessment.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G2: Complete Neighborhoods

G6: Healthy, Active, and Connected People

Elements Related to this Policy

E1: Complete Neighborhoods & Housing

E5: Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

P32: Other Recreational Facilities and Activities

Continue to provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities to the people of Lincoln and Lancaster County and continually monitor current trends in recreation.



Within Lancaster County, a wide variety of recreational opportunities are presented by both public and private sectors. Lincoln Parks and Recreation has facilities ranging from golf courses to wilderness trails, from horseshoe pits to skate parks, and from public gardens to dog runs. These park facilities serve a wide range of interests, ages, cultures and activity levels. Park facilities strive to reflect the ever-changing demographics of the community they serve. Parks also serve an important economic development role and can play a large part in the decisions made by businesses and individuals as they select a future home.

Action Steps

1. Continue to update and implement plans and projects included in the Department's 10-Year Facilities Plan, including the Wilderness Park User Experience Master Plan.
2. Continue to plan for the long-term operation and maintenance of the City's five public golf courses.
3. Continue to work with the Lincoln Plant Conservatory to explore the viability and sustainability of a plant conservatory in Lincoln.
4. Consider expansion of dog run facilities into two additional sites as envisioned in the Dog Facility Master Plan.
5. Continue to work with Friends of Woods Tennis to provide community tennis programming in Woods Park. Explore development additional indoor and outdoor courts within the capacity of Woods Park and at other locations as community interest in tennis grows.
6. Explore opportunities to upgrade and better maintain public tennis courts in parks.
7. Coordinate facilities and programming for the Prairie Corridor to support and enhance the work of the Pioneers Park Nature Center.
8. Continue to seek opportunities to partner with other agencies and organizations to provide special facilities on park property as appropriate.
9. Continue to monitor local and national trends in recreation in order to provide recreational opportunities that reflect the needs and desires of the Lincoln community.
10. Implement the end use master plan for a bike park on the soon to be decommissioned N. 48th Street Landfill. Consideration of access from both major roadways and the commuter trail system is important. Identify community partners for planning, funding and long-term management of this park.
11. Evaluate the capacity of Lincoln's Community and Neighborhood parks to include new recreational features such as pickleball courts, skate park amenities, disk golf baskets, and others in underutilized areas. These limited facilities make activities available to a wider audience and provide an opportunity for those new to the sports to try them and gain confidence to participate at larger facilities.

12. Coordinate with the YMCA in their efforts to replace aging centers and expand into new growth areas, particularly replacement of the downtown and northeast centers and future growth into Stevens Creek.
13. Complete upgrade of the skate park at Peter Pan Park to the same or better standard as the skate park at Tierra Park.
14. Assist with the relocation of the radio-controlled car racing facility at Oak Lake Park. The new facility should be designed to allow for ADA access.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G2: Complete Neighborhoods

G6: Healthy, Active, and Connected People

Elements Related to this Policy

E1: Complete Neighborhoods & Housing

E5: Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

P33: Parks and Recreation Partnerships

Identify and foster partnerships with agencies and private organizations to provide a full range ofpark and recreational services to Lincoln and Lancaster County.



Community partnerships are critical to developing a park, recreation, and open space system that fully serve the people of Lincoln and Lancaster County. The Parks and Recreation Department has a long history of partnerships. These partnerships broaden the resources available for important public projects and result in a better outcome. Partnerships can also foster a sense of community ownership and assure a more equitable outcome.

Action Steps

1. Identify and foster partnerships to maintain and operate parks, recreation programs and natural areas in the county. This structure may involve existing agencies, reflecting a modification in current responsibilities and authorities. The entity should have clear responsibility to act both inside and outside the City of Lincoln and its extra-territorial limits.
2. Continue the cooperative efforts of the City of Lincoln, Lancaster County, Lower Platte South Natural Resources District, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Solidago Conservancy and other partners on various efforts including land conservation, wildlife and habitat preservation, flood management, recreation, maintenance, and game management.
3. Formalize cooperative agreements between the City of Lincoln, Lancaster County and the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District and other partners as appropriate regarding planning, funding, conservation and management of open space and greenway areas.
4. Continue to develop a cooperative relationship with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the Lower Platte South Natural Resource District to provide recreation facilities within rural areas of the community.
5. Establish an organizational structure for coordination of open space conservation activities between public agencies and private organizations.
6. Identify cooperating partner agencies and organizations and formalize roles and responsibilities for acquisition and development of parkland and conservation of open space and natural areas.
7. Continue to refine roles and responsibilities associated with the Solidago Conservancy and identify any necessary agreements to be put in place for that effort.
8. Continue to work with Lincoln Public Schools to identify opportunities to co-locate park and school facilities, and to develop Activity Centers in new schools to support Community Learning Center / full-service community school programming
9. Continue to formalize partnership agreements to clarify roles and responsibilities, with the goal of maximizing effectiveness of cooperative efforts.
10. Continue to support the Lincoln Parks Foundation and the Solidago Conservancy, working in partnership with landowners to preserve native prairie, wetland areas, and other natural resources.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G6: Healthy, Active, and Connected People

Elements Related to this Policy

E1: Complete Neighborhoods & Housing

E5: Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

P34: Urban Design Standards

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



Urban design is the concept and practice of studying people's experience of their physical environment—both visual and functional—then consciously striving to improve that experience. It is essential both to preserve and enhance key existing elements and to create improvements that mesh with and strengthen a distinctive and enjoyable place. When successful, urban design and historic preservation make a community more enjoyable for residents, more attractive to visitors, and more competitive in drawing new businesses and retaining existing ones. A truly sustainable community recognizes and builds on its heritage by fostering good urban design, creating a sense of place and uniqueness that supports a strong economy, values environmental assets, and promotes social engagement and interaction. Successful urban design requires cooperation of public and private sectors.

Action Steps

1. Implement expanded design standards that could be applied across various zoning districts or corridors. Design standards should be clearly written and allow for an efficient, expeditious review process, while especially focusing on the interface with residential neighborhoods, attractive streetscapes, and safe and comfortable movement of people – whatever their mode of travel.

   a. Implement commercial design standards that could apply to any commercial area or corridor.

   b. Implement design standards for mixed use nodes and corridors as discussed in E2: Infill and Redevelopment. Incorporate Mobility Oriented Development (MOD) into design standards to support implementation of the mobility nodes concept as discussed in E1: Great Neighborhoods and Housing and the Lincoln Mobility Plan. These mixed use nodes and corridor standards could be incorporated into the overall commercial design standards or be their own standard.

   c. Implement design standards that support the O Street Redevelopment Corridor as discussed in E2: Infill and Redevelopment.

   d. Implement updated design standards for Downtown.

2. Update Neighborhood Design Standards to provide improved clarity and flexibility while supporting high-quality redevelopment within the neighborhood context. As part of that update, expand the Neighborhood Design Standards area to apply for residential districts within the 1970 city limits boundary. Neighborhood Design Standards currently apply within the 1950 city limits boundary.

3. Continue to identify and maintain high-value Capitol View Corridors and protect those views through regulations and guidelines, including vistas that gain prominence as the community grows. Structures that may interfere with these public corridors should be reviewed by the Capitol Environs Commission and a recommendation made within the context of their overall effect upon the view.

4. Extend the contributions of Urban Design Committee to advise on building projects of Lancaster County and other local government agencies as appropriate.
5. Create a redevelopment toolkit to provide guidance and best practices for design considerations with redevelopment projects.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G10: Effective Government

G12: History and Culture

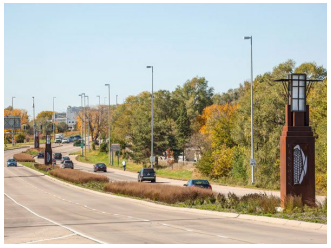
G13: Community Appearance

Elements Related to this Policy

E6: Placemaking

P35: Entry Corridors

Entryways should be studied, protected, and enhanced to create and express community pride.



Attractive, well-designed entryways can have a lasting impression on new visitors, positively shaping their perception of the community as a whole and increasing the likelihood of a return visit. Inversely, poorly designed – or poorly maintained – entryways can deter visitors from exploring a community or coming back more often. For local residents and employees who travel the entryway regularly or live in close proximity, successful corridors can positively impact their quality of life, promote community pride, and fuel future reinvestment in the surrounding area.

Action Steps

1. Study key entryways to Lincoln and adopt zoning tools and incentives to protect and enhance "first impressions" of the community, including a thoughtful, distinctive, and attractive system of "wayfinding" signs to key community attractions.
2. Identify opportunities to use TIF districts to support key entryways in eligible areas of the City and encourage additional private investment.
3. Continue and update a wayfinding system of related, attractive signs guiding and orienting motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians throughout the community.
4. Preserve and enhance the character of key entry points and corridors into the City of Lincoln through enhanced landscaping and public art in rights-of-way, and respectful development of adjacent properties.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G10: Effective Government

G12: History and Culture

G13: Community Appearance

Elements Related to this Policy

E6: Placemaking

P36: Public Art

Public art is an important means by which the community can strengthen its sense of place and promote a positive image.



Done successfully, public art can transform a public way or space into an experience or moment to remember. A collection of these experiences throughout the community can enhance community pride and establish a sense of place that both residents and visitors will benefit from and embrace.

Action Steps

1. The corridors along I-180 from Interstate 80 to the entry into Downtown, and from Lincoln Municipal Airport along Cornhusker Highway from N. 11th Street to N. 56th Street should be a special focus for public/private partnerships to identify special themes and appropriate sites for public art.
2. Support implementation of the Public Arts Master Plan for the City of Lincoln which identifies art projects and policies that enhance the cultural fabric of the City.
3. When evaluating the public art inventory and identifying future locations, the aim should be to locate significant works of art throughout the city so that the public collection can be enjoyed by all.
4. The inclusion of public art should be considered during the conceptualization and design of any major public project, with a focus on context-driven art that feels integral to the urban experience.
5. Seek the early integration of the talents of artists with architects, landscape architects, and engineers on public improvements.
6. Prioritize the inclusion of artists and public art advocates as key stakeholders in the planning and design process for public improvement projects, and work to establish public-private partnerships with Public Art Lincoln and other relevant organizations to facilitate the inclusion of public art in said projects. Identified stakeholders should be representative of the art community's diverse representation across backgrounds and cultures.
7. Prioritize the implementation of public art projects and creative urban design installations that have broad appeal to the community, including those which have interactive qualities or facilitate social interaction in the public spaces in which they exist.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G12: History and Culture

G13: Community Appearance

Elements Related to this Policy

E6: Placemaking

P37: Historic Preservation

The community's distinctive character and desirable quality of life should be supported by exercising stewardship of historic resources throughout the County.



Many parts of PlanForward contribute to the attainment of this statement, but urban design and specifically historic preservation, relate most directly to guarding and enhancing the community's physical image. The community's distinctive character and desirable quality of life for current residents and for future generations is buoyed by exercising stewardship of historic resources throughout the County, while maximizing benefits of past investments in public infrastructure and private property. Historic areas and quality new development share underlying aspects of good design— durable materials, thoughtful attention to maintaining or creating a desirable overall setting,and accessibility by multiple modes and all people, When successful, urban design and historic preservation make a community more enjoyable for residents, more attractive to visitors, and more competitive in drawing new businesses and retaining existing ones.

Action Steps

1. Expand the community's historic preservation program to include Lancaster County through interlocal agreements between Lancaster County, the City of Lincoln, and other incorporated communities. Widen the scope of the mission and membership of the Historic Preservation Commission to include all of Lancaster County.
2. Lincoln and Lancaster County should work in partnership with state and federal historic preservation programs, but local landmark protections are usually the most effective and should be encouraged.
3. Continuously monitor and improve local programs and regulations, especially working to balance conflicting regulations that may offer alternatives to achieve life-safety goals while protecting threatened historic resources.
4. City and county governmental policies should provide for the protection and enhancement of historic resources.
5. Continue to inventory, research, evaluate, and celebrate the full range of historic resources including standing structures, distinctive neighborhoods, landscapes, and buried cultural resources throughout Lancaster County, collaborating with individuals, associations, and institutions.
6. Designate landmarks and districts through the local preservation ordinance and the National Register of Historic Places.
7. Seek incentives and regulatory support to maintain, rehabilitate, and minimize energy utilization of existing buildings in order to make it more feasible to rehabilitate and utilize older buildings.
8. Implement a public policy of the careful stewardship of significant, publicly owned historic resources, including a full and open examination of alternatives when major alterations or demolition are considered. Consider designation of such resources under the preservation ordinance to demonstrate leadership and standardize review of proposed changes.

9. Continue the educational outreach effort of the historic preservation program through tours, publications, on-line information, and presentations, in order to share the results of historic preservation and research with the broadest audience of residents and visitors.
10. Monitor local preservation efforts and local, state, and federal incentive programs to improve and apply the most effective tools for preserving, maintaining, and utilizing historic resources as fully utilized components of the community.
11. Include a procedure in the preservation ordinance for temporary protection of significant historic resources threatened with demolition, to allow time to explore and implement alternatives.
12. Work with various city agencies, including Building and Safety, the Health Department, Lincoln Transportation and Utilities, and other appropriate agencies to develop a “deconstruction” program for historic properties that must be removed. The program would support the removal of historic materials that could be salvaged and reused and divert an enormous amount of materials from the landfill.
13. Support and participate in neighborhood, community, and statewide groups interested in historic preservation.
14. Encourage protection and discourage destruction of buried cultural resources either by vandals, looters, or insensitive construction.
15. Most historic property is and should be privately owned and maintained. Public property, especially publicly owned historic property, is a community trust and should be maintained, preserved, and utilized in an exemplary fashion.
16. Encourage the continued use and maintenance of historic resources, including properties not formally designated as landmarks.
17. Work with the Preservation Association of Lincoln to provide workshops to educate property owners in how to accomplish common repairs needed for historic properties, such as window glazing and counterweight restringing, preparing wood siding for paint, and so on.
18. Encourage the use of historically compatible Permit Ready Plans for single- and multi-family dwellings, and ADUs for the construction of new housing on vacant lots in existing and potential historic districts.
19. Work with Urban Development to require eligible historic properties being redeveloped through Tax Increment Financing be landmarked and proposed exterior alterations be subject to HPC review.
20. Develop innovative ways to educate realtors and new owners of landmarked properties about the design review process. Seek access to MLS data and cross reference with addresses for local landmarks.
21. Create and implement a contractor historic preservation certification program to educate builders on the design review process and the Historic Preservation Design Standards.
22. Inventory and pursue the preservation of unique historical and natural resources to provide educational and interpretive opportunities. These include quarries and areas of geological significance, remnants of historic trails, unique bluffs near Bennet, the sandstone prairies, and historic pits and grasslands around Hickman and Roca.
23. Continue to use tax increment financing (TIF) to support preservation of historic resources, either as individual projects or as district rehabilitation projects that preserve buildings within a historic district. Encourage landmark designations for properties utilizing TIF when appropriate.
24. Conduct a survey of downtown to identify additional options for Local Landmark and /or National Register Designations.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G10: Effective Government

G12: History and Culture

G13: Community Appearance

Elements Related to this Policy

E6: Placemaking

P38: State Capitol

Protect and enhance the State Capitol building's stature within the community.



The 400-foot State Capitol is the key historic, architectural, and geographic landmark of the city and surrounding countryside. Views to the Capitol are highly valued by the people of Lancaster County and the State of Nebraska and should be protected and enjoyed for generations. From distant vistas along Interstate 80 to intimate glimpses from core neighborhoods, views of the Capitol enrich and unify this place. Many of the best elements of Lincoln's built environment are based on Capitol views—the Malls, the tree-framed vistas from Pioneers Park, and the homeowners' park in Woodsshire Historic District.

The community's opportunity to benefit from the Capitol is further enhanced by improvements to its immediate setting, especially to the axial malls which extend from the Capitol in the cardinal directions, such as Centennial Mall.

Action Steps

1. Continue to enforce standards for Capitol View Corridors to protect key vistas of the Capitol and identify new view corridors as the community grows.
2. Prioritize continued maintenance and enhancement of the Centennial Mall, J Street, Goodhue Boulevard and Lincoln Mall streetscapes within the Capitol Environs District, with a goal of preserving beautiful, active malls that lead to the Capitol.
3. Continue the work of the Capitol Environs Commission to protect and enhance the capitol environs area. This work should include regular review of the Capitol Environs Design Standards to ensure that the standards provide a valuable framework for decision-making by the Commission.
4. Engage the Capitol Environs Commission early in major redevelopment projects located within the Environs District to guarantee that developers understand the expected level of design to be achieved.
5. Coordinate efforts between the Capitol Environs Commission and the Nebraska Capitol Commission to address mutual interests of the City of Lincoln and the State of Nebraska as it relates to the preservation and enhancement of the Capitol and its environs.
6. Map the location and investigate the availability for preservation of several locations in the County that offer distinguished views and vistas of the state Capitol. Many of these locations may be appropriate for public ownership as future parks or open space. Efforts should be made to acquire these parcels should they become available.
7. Seek opportunities to incorporate scenic views, corridors, and natural areas into parks, trails, and other recreational facilities.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G10: Effective Government

G12: History and Culture

G13: Community Appearance

Elements Related to this Policy

E6: Placemaking

P39: Community Space

Enhance existing community gathering spaces and look for opportunities for new gathering spaces.



An important aspect of building a strong, livable community is the establishment of shared spaces that allow for the type of human connections that become possible with frequent casual interaction. Examples of these spaces include public parks and plazas, as well as flexible streetscapes that can be programmed to host farmers markets, concerts, and other events that contribute to a sense of place.

Whether new or old, community spaces should be viewed as ever-evolving and capable of being modified to fit the changing needs of the community. This can be a difficult concept for a municipality to embrace, because public improvement projects are typically built with permanence in mind. Regardless, it is essential that this permanence does not get in the way of a space's ability to adapt over time.

Action Steps

1. Develop a framework or toolkit to analyze and improve existing public spaces to better serve their surrounding community. For new spaces, a similar framework should be developed to ensure that the design of proposed public spaces meet community expectations.
2. Engage diverse stakeholder groups in the enhancement of existing community spaces and the development of new community spaces to ensure that the insights and desires of the community are being weighed equitably.
3. Partner with local organizations and businesses to better activate and program Lincoln's community spaces in a ways that aim to both enhance the space and benefit the surrounding local economy.
4. Identify and prioritize funding for the ongoing maintenance and enhancement of existing and new community spaces.
5. Explore and implement temporary design solutions, often referred to as urban prototyping or tactical urbanism, as a way to experiment with new ideas that may lead to more permanent design improvements in community spaces. Work closely with interested and impacted organizations and community groups to develop, test and refine these design solutions.
6. Support implementation of community-led placemaking projects in the public right-of-way and other community spaces that add to the vibrancy of Lincoln by developing and refining clear approval processes. Further, establish a community placemaking fund to support and facilitate such efforts.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G6: Healthy, Active, and Connected People

G12: History and Culture

G13: Community Appearance

Elements Related to this Policy

E5: Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

E6: Placemaking

E7: Community Facilities

P40: Libraries

Balanced and accessible service should be provided to all.



Public libraries in Lincoln and across the United States are rapidly transforming to meet evolving community needs. Driven by the rising growth of digital borrowing, lifelong learning, and the library as a community hub, Lincoln City Libraries are active places where residents have access to books, technology, programming for all ages, and access to study and conference spaces. Modern urban libraries are stronger through collaborative community partnerships inside and outside of their buildings, which aids in introducing and delivering library services to the City's diverse population.

Action Steps

1. As additional new libraries are being considered or existing libraries renovated, the following factors are important:
   a. Library locations should be distributed to parallel the city's geography and population patterns.
   b. Placement should consider equity, neighborhood and downtown development, transportation corridors, pedestrian and mass transit accessibility, public school patterns, and agencies and services that complement the library system.
   c. Technology may change operational process, customer expectations, and the layout of library spaces.
   d. Co-location of libraries with other facilities or services may optimize costs and better serve the community.
   e. Community demand suggests increasing the amount and variety of gathering spaces.
   f. Spaces should be adaptable and responsive to changes in demographics, community priorities, or unexpected events.
   g. Strong consideration must be given to materials and systems that are durable, efficient and environmentally appropriate.
   h. Trauma-informed design should be incorporated into updated and new buildings to create spaces that promote safety, wellbeing, and healing. Examples in the library would include shorter shelving that maintains good sightlines, and use of technology equipment that can be moved to a place of the customer's own choosing.
   i. Invest in building improvements to maintain safe, modern, and efficient facilities, avoiding a long-term buildup of deferred maintenance.
2. The following should be maintained or expanded:
   a. Services to Lancaster County through contractual arrangements.
   b. Innovative ways to serve people living in poverty.
   c. Community campaigns in support of community goals, such as preparing young children for school success and promoting stable internet access.

d. Events held in partnership with other organizations, such as job fairs and community resource assistance.

e. Provide stronger outreach service in areas lacking a nearby library with increased bookmobile activities.

3. The following should be introduced:

a. Reconfigure and adapt current spaces in reaction to resident's desire for more program, study, and meeting spaces.

b. Collaborative projects in support of environmental sustainability, such as community gardens, landscaping using native plants, and charging stations for electric vehicles.

c. Create a local and family history center at the central library.

d. Explore the feasibility of new facilities in southeast and northeast Lincoln to meet growing populations.

e. Complete the new 89,000 sq. ft. central library that is set to open in 2028 in the former Centrum Mall/ Southeast Community College location at 12th and O Streets in Downtown Lincoln.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G5: Equity and Inclusion

G9: Civic Participation

G10: Effective Government

G14: Technology

Elements Related to this Policy

E7: Community Facilities

P41: Fire and Rescue

Provide timely and effective emergency response services.



Lincoln Fire and Rescue and the 17 volunteer rural fire departments that serve outside of Lincoln will continue to evaluate ways to maintain and enhance services as needed.

Action Steps

1. Fire and Rescue services must be able to grow as the community grows to continue to provide timely public safety services.
2. Continue to routinely monitor the response time from all existing stations.
3. Lincoln Fire and Rescue should continue to identify needed fire facilities that will allow them to meet or exceed the National Fire Protection Association standards with a response time of 6 minutes 20 seconds for fire suppression, 6 minutes for medical calls, 90 percent of the time, and to meet the City Ordinance standard of 8 minutes or less for ambulance response to critical calls, 90 percent of the time.
4. Explore the possibility of relocating fire stations and constructing new stations ahead of development to meet the community's needs. The Capital Improvement Program will be used to plan and finance projects needed to meet this growing need.
5. Lincoln Fire and Rescue should strive to partner with abutting fire jurisdictions to provide public safety services equal to or above existing public safety services.
6. Continue to follow the City of Lincoln Equity, Access and Diversity Plan, that endeavors to recruit and hire employees without discrimination based on an individual's protected classes.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G5: Equity and Inclusion

G10: Effective Government

Elements Related to this Policy

E7: Community Facilities

P42: Law Enforcement

Provide efficient delivery of public safety services to the community.



The Lincoln Police Department and Lancaster County Sheriff's Office are anticipated to remain as the sole providers of law enforcement services to the City and County during the planning period. The Sheriff's Office will continue to provide contract law enforcement support to the various incorporated towns of the county. In addition to the Lincoln Police Department, the City of Lincoln also has law enforcement presence on the UNL campus from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Police Department as well as Nebraska State Patrol presence as a part of the Capitol Security Division.

The Lincoln Police Department has focused on community-based policing in Lincoln since 1975 and have embarked upon comprehensive strategic planning initiatives to enhance their efforts. The Lincoln Police Department notes that they will continue to build on some of their most powerful strengths: a highly educated and capable work force, a respect for research and evaluation, and a willingness to change. They also acknowledge that they will continue to learn from local/national events and industry best practices, collaborate with the community on decision-making processes and policy decisions, and focus on continuous improvement and innovation as we adapt to a changing city, society, and world.

Action Steps

1. Continue to promote the cooperation exhibited by the City, County, University of Nebraska police and State Patrol in furthering the efficient delivery of public safety services to the community.
2. The Lincoln Police Department will experience a need for additional full-service assembly stations and other facilities located within the community. The Capital Improvement Program will be used to plan and finance projects needed to meet this growing need.
3. Continue development and implementation of neighborhood watch and crime prevention initiatives.
4. Continue to follow the City of Lincoln Equity, Access and Diversity Plan, that endeavors to recruit and hire employees without discrimination.
5. Continue to implement cooperative programs with the community, such as the TRACE (Trust, Respect, Accountability, Collaboration, and Equity) initiative, Project Restore, or Take Pause and seek opportunities to interact with the public in less formal settings.
6. Respond to changing needs of the growing community in order to provide public safety services.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G5: Equity and Inclusion

G10: Effective Government

Elements Related to this Policy

E7: Community Facilities

P43: Health Care Access

Encourage health care service facilities to meet the demand of the community's growth and need based on changing demographics.



Health care access is critical to achieving the goal of having a healthy, active, and connected community.

Action Steps

1. Develop Lincoln as a major network of quality regional health care services at reasonable costs.
2. Encourage medical services, including physical and mental health care services, to be integrated and accessible throughout the community.
3. Provide for accessible and quality physical and mental health care services in appropriate areas in and around residential neighborhoods.
4. Any hospital expansion will need to take into consideration the impact on adjacent neighborhoods.
5. Hospitals should plan on using parking garages and multi-story construction in order to maximize use of the land.
6. Plan for further construction on medical campuses.
7. Assess health equity impacts of climate change in Lincoln. Utilize Center for Disease Control's (CDC) Building Resistance to Climate Effects model to develop strategies to reduce impacts on human health.
8. Advocate for health equity.
9. Optimize health – personal, environmental, and behavioral – for all residents.
10. Use results from Community Health assessment to reduce health inequities within the community.
11. Explore ways to improve Emergency Service response time to ER.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G6: Healthy, Active, and Connected People

Elements Related to this Policy

E7: Community Facilities

P44: Education

Encourage cooperative planning and site development between the City and public and private educational institutions.



Lancaster County has ten public school districts, the largest being Lincoln Public Schools (LPS), the only public school district in Lincoln. In addition, there are dozens of private and parochial schools in the county, with a majority located in Lincoln. Lincoln is also home to several colleges and universities, including University of Nebraska, Nebraska Wesleyan University, Union College, Southeast Community College and satellite campuses for Doane University and Bellevue University.

Action Steps

1. Elementary and middle schools should be sized and located to enable children to walk or bicycle to them in order to create good health habits and minimize vehicle traffic in neighborhoods at the beginning and end of the school day. Middle schools and high schools should also allow for multiple modes of access, including pedestrian and bicycle, and be located in areas with the capacity to accommodate the increased automobile traffic and parking associated with these uses.
2. Lincoln Public Schools is the only public school district within the City of Lincoln, and the Lincoln Public School boundary will continue to expand as the city limits of Lincoln expand.
3. Schools are vital to the preservation of existing neighborhoods, and every effort should be made to enhance and retain 'neighborhood schools.'
4. Coordinate school site selection with subarea plans, community open space, and trails system development. Develop new schools on sites where they serve as the heart of the neighborhood.
5. Plan for joint school sites with other public or civic uses when feasible. Examples of uses that could be appropriate as part of a school or civic campus include parks, recreational facilities, health clinics, and libraries.
6. Coordinate neighborhood revitalization and transportation plans for the surrounding areas with University of Nebraska, Nebraska Wesleyan University, Union Adventist University, and Southeast Community College.
7. Assist educational institutions with being "good neighbors" with surrounding residential areas and ensure that neighborhoods are involved in the discussion of any zoning changes related to campus boundary updates.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G3: High-Quality Workforce

G5: Equity and Inclusion

Elements Related to this Policy

E7: Community Facilities

P45: Early Childhood Care and Education

Evaluate methods to improve access to and quality of early childhood care and education experiences.



Education is a basic human right, and beginning education early in life has many benefits. Having access to high-quality early childhood care and education should be available across all income levels. Early childhood care and education experiences include settings and programs that aim to support positive outcomes for young children, birth to age 8, and their families (i.e., child care, home visitation, preschool, early intervention services, parks, cultural institutions).

According to UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization): “Early childhood care and education (ECCE) is more than preparation for primary school. It aims at the holistic development of a child’s social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs in order to build a solid and broad foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing. ECCE has the possibility to nurture caring, capable and responsible future citizens.”

More than 125 child care centers are located across Lincoln, including many preschools. A specific example of ECCE is Lincoln Public Schools’ Early Childhood Programs. These programs provide quality learning experiences to help promote growth of young children and their families. They accomplish this by offering a variety of free quality programs from birth, including the student child learning centers, birth-five early childhood special education services, and half-day preschool with several options to best meet the needs of families. Currently, 29 of 40 elementary schools have free, early childhood programs.

Action Steps

1. Locate child care centers within neighborhoods and near schools and parks when possible.
2. Examine building and zoning code requirements for child care centers and family child care homes to determine if there are any obstacles that could be removed while maintaining the safety of the building occupants.
3. Consider access to educational institutions, places of employment, and childcare services, when planning public transportation investments.
4. Expand the use of park facilities, public buildings, and cultural institutions for enriching early childhood experiences.
5. Support philanthropic and advocacy groups that provide all children with access to high quality early childhood care and education (i.e., Lincoln Littles).
6. Support efforts that build capacity of ECCE workforce to support stability of experiences for children and families (i.e., childcare providers, professionals that work with families).
7. Support the City’s Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes programs to foster economic stability and access to healthy and safe housing and child care centers.
8. Promote public-private partnerships to increase resources for low-income families to access high-quality early learning programs to promote kindergarten readiness.

9. Support Lincoln Public Schools' efforts to provide early childhood programs in all elementary schools.
10. Support an increase in access to prenatal care and targeted home visitation services for new parents, including fathers.
11. Support continued collaboration with providers of healthcare and social services, and partner with organizations to support healthy development of babies and toddlers.
12. Consider ways to leverage seniors in assisting to create intergenerational connections (i.e., NeighborLNK, grand-friends).
13. Expand community partnerships between Lincoln Public Schools, the University of Nebraska, and other social service agencies to provide additional funding and services (such as EduCare Lincoln).
14. Educate childcare providers on climate-related health issues for young children.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G2: Complete Neighborhoods

G3: High-Quality Workforce

G5: Equity and Inclusion

Elements Related to this Policy

E1: Complete Neighborhoods & Housing

E7: Community Facilities

P46: Public Buildings

Public buildings and structures should be well built, functional, energy efficient, and designed to blend attractively within the context of surrounding development or to serve as a guide for future development or redevelopment.



PlanForward recognizes that public buildings and structures should have a positive impact on the environment, be located in ways that provide convenient customer service, and set a high standard of urban design. During the time period covered by this Plan, there will likely be a need to construct, renovate, or abandon certain public buildings and facilities not already discussed in this document. At such time as these events may occur, public officials should make decisions that recognize and respect the vision of this Plan. This may apply to the siting of a new facility, the abandonment of an existing one, the way renovations are undertaken, the manner of financing used to complete the work, the arrangements made for the facility's operation, the process followed in making the decision, and the timing of the action. The Lancaster County Facilities Study 2020-2030 should also be used to make informed capital facilities decisions based on the documented set of recommendations.

Action Steps

1. Increase energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy, such as rooftop solar in municipal operations. and facilities. Follow recommendations of the *Lincoln-Lancaster County Municipal Buildings Energy Management Plan (EMP)*. The EMP establishes an energy use baseline for buildings owned and operated by the City of Lincoln, Lancaster County, and the Public Building Commission (PBC). Through building energy use analysis, facility condition walk-throughs, and stakeholder interviews, the EMP identifies opportunities for energy efficiency improvements and recommends a pathway towards achieving 100% carbon neutrality for both City and County operations.
2. Prioritize native plantings on municipal and development projects.
3. Future public buildings should be designed, built, and maintained to ensure good indoor air quality to help protect the public's health.
4. The location of public buildings should support the policies of the Comprehensive Plan and adopted subarea plans.
5. The City's government center must remain Downtown. All efforts should be made to locate local, state, and federal offices Downtown when expansions and relocations are considered.
6. Lincoln and Lancaster County should seek to integrate concepts that result in more energy efficient, lower-cost, less environmentally damaging, and more occupant-friendly facilities. All new or substantially renovated public buildings should meet the standards of a green building certification such as Green Globes or LEED.
7. Ensure that public building projects meet, and in some cases exceed, any zoning and design standards requirements that apply to private development and redevelopment.
8. Engage the appropriate design review board early on in the design and development of new public facilities, including review of projects in the Capital Improvement Program.
9. Maintain a teleworking policy for City employees to allow for efficient use of public buildings.

10. Public buildings and structures should be well built, durable, and highly functional. Most should be designed to blend attractively within the context of surrounding development. Major civic structures should serve as focal points in the community and should be of superior, even iconic, design. All public projects should be worthy to serve as guides for future development or redevelopment.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G9: Civic Participation

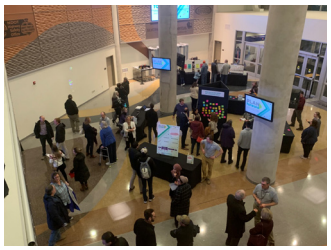
G10: Effective Government

Elements Related to this Policy

E7: Community Facilities

P47: Civic Participation

Maintain a commitment to engaging with all members of the community in civic processes.



It is important to ensure that all members of the community have the opportunity to be informed and involved with civic processes.

Action Steps

1. Create an on-demand virtual participation option for all public input events. On-demand virtual events allow for participation from home or other location with internet access at a time that fits with an individual's schedule.
2. Explore enhanced accessibility options at public hearings, including virtual participation, as state law allows.
3. Create a language access policy for the City and County to ensure greater access to translation and interpretation services for residents with limited English proficiency.
4. Continue to support diverse representation on appointed City and County boards and commissions.
5. Continue training and education for the local government workforce to understand biases that may be built into our processes and how to address those biases.
6. Actively engage with cultural groups and neighborhood organizations so that residents can stay informed about activities in their community and provide ideas for planning and public policy. Include neighborhood association meetings and events as additional venues to engage residents.
7. Continue to follow the City of Lincoln Equity, Access and Diversity Plan, that endeavors to recruit and retain employees that reflect the diversity of the community.
8. Encourage developers and others with planning proposals to make early contact with neighborhood groups and other interested parties. This will allow for a greater understanding of the issues and for time to seek resolution of contentious items.
9. Maintain current mailing and contact lists of local neighborhood groups and homeowner associations that are available to the public.
10. Notify surrounding property owners, interested groups, and other appropriate agencies of formal development applications.
11. Explore options to expand free internet access for those in need.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G9: Civic Participation

G10: Effective Government

G14: Technology

Elements Related to this Policy

E7: Community Facilities

P48: Renewable Energy

Make renewable energy/low-carbon generation and consumption a key element to the community's sustainable future.



Local government entities, including all local utilities, should strive to increase utilization of renewable energy sources such as wind power, hydropower, solar energy, biomass, and geothermal energy. Energy providers such as Lincoln Electric System, Norris Public Power District and Black Hills Energy should strive to produce or purchase a higher percentage of energy from renewable and low-carbon sources.

When fossil fuels such as oil, coal, and gas, are burned to produce energy, carbon dioxide, nitrous oxides, and methane are emitted into Earth's atmosphere. These "greenhouse gases" trap the Sun's heat around Earth's surface, acting as a transparent blanket that warms the Earth. In the last 100 years, the level of carbon dioxide from human activities has skyrocketed in the Earth's atmosphere causing global temperatures to rise.

Today, on a nameplate basis, the LES generating capacity portfolio is now essentially split equally between renewables, natural gas, and coal. Over the last decade, LES has increased renewable energy production from the equivalent of 9% of total retail sales in 2010 to 45% in 2023. LES' carbon intensity, the rate at which LES' aggregate generating fleet produces CO2 (tons/net MWh), has dropped 46% from 2010 to 2023.

Action Steps

1. Promote increased adoption of accessory wind and solar installations on residential and commercial properties throughout the County.
2. Seek opportunities to add accessory wind and solar installations to public facilities.
3. Support the development of commercial wind and solar energy installations throughout the County in accordance with the zoning ordinance.
4. Incorporate the use of alternative fuels into municipal fleets.
5. Investigate effective incentive-based (residential, commercial, or industrial) programs promoting the installation of renewable energy systems. Incentives may include offering rebates on purchasing equipment, attractive net metering pricing, tax incentives, height allowances, setback, and area-based incentives, expedited permitting, and others.
6. Increase energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy in municipal operations.
7. Support the LES Board adopted goal to achieve net zero carbon dioxide production from its generation portfolio by 2040.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G7: Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

G8: Community Resiliency

G9: Civic Participation

G10: Effective Government

G11: Rural Environment

Elements Related to this Policy

E4: Environmental Resources

E7: Community Facilities

E8: Energy & Utilities

P49: Conservation of Energy

Promote the conservation and efficient use of energy across all sectors of the community.



Because of the limited amount of nonrenewable energy sources on Earth, and the impact that nonrenewable resource consumption has on the Earth, it is important to both reduce consumption of resources and substitute non-renewable resources with renewable ones, so that our natural resources will be available for future generations.

Reducing wasted energy and operating buildings more efficiently helps slow the community's overall demand for energy. As Lincoln and Lancaster County grow, improving efficiency across homes, businesses, and public facilities lessens the need for new electric generation resources, helping to save costs, reduce environmental impacts, and support long term energy reliability.

Action Steps

1. Land Use and Development:
    a. Consider prioritizing infrastructure investment based on projects that can show net energy reduction.
    b. Provide incentives for projects that meet third-party green building standards.
    c. Encourage higher density housing in/near large commercial developments, redevelopment nodes, and corridors and employment centers.
    d. Encourage energy efficient compact development, conservation design for new subdivisions and mixed use development.
    e. Revise codes to allow for more opportunities to work and live in the same place.
2. Transportation:
    a. Include provisions for safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle use.
    b. Continue implementation of the Green Light Lincoln initiative including tracking and reporting of time and fuel savings along with emissions reduction metrics attributable to the program.
    c. Incorporate use of technology and fiber capacity.
    d. Expand transit services to increase use of transit.
    e. Encourage integration of alternative modes of transportation in new developments, including recommendations from the Lincoln Mobility Plan.
    f. Implement mobility nodes and mobility-oriented development across Lincoln.
    g. Encourage telecommuting to reduce vehicle miles traveled.
    h. Encourage employers to initiate work schedules that will help alleviate congestion at peak hours.
    i. Encourage carpooling, car/ bike sharing, and use of transit.

3. Buildings and Landscaping:
   a. Retrofit and weatherize existing buildings with energy efficient technologies.
   b. Incorporate energy-efficient design and technology into new buildings and renovations.
   c. Encourage orientation and siting of new buildings to take advantage of solar heating and cooling breezes.
   d. Use landscaping to provide shade to reduce heating and cooling demands and to act as windbreaks.
   e. Use Stormwater Quality Best Management Practices to improve stormwater runoff from new or substantially improved buildings.
   f. Continue and expand incentive-based programs to promote energy-efficiencies in commercial and residential buildings, such as those by the City (Tax-Increment Financing (TIF) and Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)) and LES (Sustainable Energy Program (SEP)).
   g. Reduce irrigation needs by incentivizing conservation practices and native planting.
4. Public and Semi Public:
   a. Monitor ongoing energy usage in municipal buildings and work to make them more efficient through implementation of the *Municipal Buildings Energy Management Plan*.
   b. Offer Level 1 energy audits to all LES customers and pilot a self-guided energy audit option.
   c. Promote weatherization and energy efficiency programs.
   d. Engage in active partnerships with the City of Lincoln , the Nebraska Energy Office, and Community Action to expand energy efficiency opportunities for residential and commercial customers across the Lincoln area with a strong and intentional focus on low and moderate income communities.
   e. Educate the public on the benefits of energy efficient buildings and development.
   f. Improve the City's ability to measure energy use and conservation efforts.
   g. Continue to provide and promote waste reduction, reuse and recycling options.
   h. Explore opportunities for using grey water.
   i. Promote and encourage the use of water conservation systems and conservation design for new subdivisions in City and County codes.
   j. Convert City fleet to 100% electric/renewable/alternative fuels by 2040.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G7: Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

G8: Community Resiliency

G9: Civic Participation

G10: Effective Government

G11: Rural Environment

Elements Related to this Policy

E4: Environmental Resources

E7: Community Facilities

E8: Energy & Utilities

P50: Water Quantity and Quality

Ensure that public water systems continue to provide an adequate quantity and quality of water.



Water improvements must be in accordance with the Lincoln Water System Facilities Master Plan and the Comprehensive Plan. The Lincoln Water System Facilities Master Plan will guide future actions and serve as the basis for facilities planning and improvements.

Action Steps

1. Continue to work toward a cooperative agreement and planning effort regarding changes in service boundaries between the City of Lincoln, Lancaster Rural Water District No. 1 and Cass County Rural Water District No. 2.
2. Continue to encourage water conservation practices for development across the City and County.
3. Continue to utilize impact fees to recover a portion of the capital costs to build water mains. This includes increasing the capacity of the existing water treatment facilities for future growth.
4. Continue to collect water service and water usage utility fees to pay for operation, maintenance, debt service, replacement improvements, and fund the majority of water capital improvements, including growth related projects.
5. Continue the strategic use of revenue bonds to finance growth and expansion of the water system. (Revenue bonds are not a new source of revenue, but rather a means to address the timing of improvements.)
6. Make improvements to the existing treatment process to ensure water quality exceeds regulatory requirements.
7. Continue the Water 2.0 project for securing a second source of water supply for Lincoln.
8. Continue the Lead Safe Lincoln Program to prevent and reduce the risk of lead exposure for children and families in the community. Activities associated with Lead Safe Lincoln include lead testing in children, assessing lead exposure risk, removing lead from homes, and replacing lead water service lines.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G10: Effective Government

Elements Related to this Policy

E8: Energy & Utilities

P51: Groundwater

Ensure that Lancasater County's rural groundwater resources are sustainably utilized.



Some rural development projects, such as large agriculture operations, can be significant water users. Care should be taken to ensure that new groundwater users do not jeopardize groundwater access for neighboring properties.

Action Steps

1. Development proposals in rural areas without a public water system should demonstrate adequate groundwater availability as a condition of approval.
2. Work with State and Federal agencies to develop a geographic inventory of groundwater access and quality throughout the county and use that information to guide rural land use decisions.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G7: Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

G11: Rural Environment

Elements Related to this Policy

E8: Energy & Utilities

P52: Wastewater System

The City's Wastewater system consists of two entities, Collection and Wate Resource Recovery. Together these functions transport wastewater from the community, provide treatment in accordance with regulatory requirements, and recover resources from the wastewater stream.



Approximately 35 MGD (millions of gallons a day) of wastewater is transported from throughout the community, through a pipe network called the collection system to one of the two water resource recovery facilities.

The system is owned by the City of Lincoln and managed by the City's Transportation and Utilities Department under the direction of the Mayor and City Council. It is a revenue producing and self-supporting enterprise fund system (i.e., no tax funds are used).

Action Steps

1. Continue to utilize impact fees to recover a portion of the capital costs for future growth and; to build trunk sewer lines in the collection system and capacity improvements at the existing water resource recovery facilities.
2. Continue to collect utility fees to pay for operation, maintenance, debt service, replacement improvements, and fund the majority of wastewater capital improvements, including growth related projects.
3. Continue the strategic use of revenue bonds as a means to address the timing of improvements.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G10: Effective Government

Elements Related to this Policy

E8: Energy & Utilities

P53: Gravity Flow Collection System

The City's wastewater collection system, in general, will continue to be a gravity flow system that is designed to use gravity as the main energy source to convey wastewater from the community to the wate resource recovery facilities.



A gravity flow wastewater collection system encourages orderly growth within the natural drainage basin boundaries and is an efficient and reliable way to serve urban areas. This policy encourages urban growth from the lower portion of the drainage basin to the upper and discourages pumping of wastewater across basin boundaries.

Action Steps

1. Continue to use gravity as free energy conveyance for wastewater.
2. Enhance programs to manage I&I (inflow and infiltration) into the system, thereby preserving pipeline capacity for wastewater and not ground water.
3. Support infill development which utilizes existing infrastructure.
4. Utilize the Capitol Improvement Program to plan for and expand the collection system as outlines in Plan Forward's Growth Framework.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G10: Effective Government

Elements Related to this Policy

E8: Energy & Utilities

P54: Wastewater Resource Recovery Facilities

Facility improvements must be in accordance with the Lincoln Water Resource Recovery Facilities Plan and population growth as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.



The Lincoln Water Resource Recovery Facilities Plan will guide future actions and serve as the basis for facilities planning and improvements to meet growth demands of the community and new regulatory guidelines. Resources recovered from the wastewater at the facility: include clean water, heat energy, bio solids (fertilizer), and natural gas.

In Fall 2020 the Biogas to Vehicle Fuel project was completed to transform renewable methane gas into quality vehicle fuel. Revenue collected from local and national fuel sales is reinvested back into Lincoln Wastewater System to assist with operations and maintenance costs.

Action Steps

1. Expand facilities as necessary to meet population growth and regulatory discharge limits.
2. Maintain and expand programs to recycle and reuse treated wastewater effluent.
3. Continue to develop and utilize the thermal heat recovery program.
4. Promote bio-solids where appropriate.
5. Continue efficient operations of the Biogas to Vehicle Fuel Project.
6. Encourage point source treatment of clean wastewater at industries, so that it can be discharged to the environment and avoid using up water resource recovery capacity.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G10: Effective Government

Elements Related to this Policy

E8: Energy & Utilities

P55: Watershed Planning

Continue comprehensive watershed management planning efforts to address both new growth and redevelopment within the existing city.



The City of Lincoln Watershed Management program combines previously separate floodplain and stormwater management initiatives. This approach recognizes that floodplains, tributaries, and upland areas are all part of a comprehensive, integrated watershed system. A comprehensive approach to watershed planning is crucial as development expands into new basins around the Lincoln city limits and as redevelopment occurs within the existing urban area. A comprehensive watershed management program needs to incorporate a range of strategies including land use planning, conservation design for new subdivisions, conservation efforts, appropriate standards for floodplains and stormwater, flood warning system development/expansion, stream stabilization, stormwater storage basins, and other structural flood control efforts.

Action Steps

1. Develop and utilize watershed plans during the review and evaluation of proposed developments and as a guide in the preparation of future capital improvement projects.
2. Seek broad public participation in the location and design of specific watershed management projects, and evaluate the relative benefits as they relate to flood hazard reduction, water quality, channel integrity, natural character, bridges, culverts, and existing public and private structures.
3. Consider the creation of a stormwater utility to provide for a steady revenue source to address the growing needs of the stormwater and watershed management system.
4. Continue to designate stormwater bond dollars to flood control, streambank stabilization, erosion, and sediment control projects, until a new funding source becomes available.
5. Continue implementing green infrastructure strategies such as rain gardens, bioswales and permeable pavement to reduce stormwater runoff. Expand guidance/resources, incentives, and implementation.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G7: Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

G8: Community Resiliency

G10: Effective Government

Elements Related to this Policy

E4: Environmental Resources

E8: Energy & Utilities

P56: Waste Management System

Ensure adequate system capacity is available to serve city and county residents.



The Lincoln Transportation and Utilities Department, Solid Waste Operations in conjunction with the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department Environmental Division oversees the City and County's solid waste management programs.

Action Steps

1. Accept only waste generated in Lincoln and Lancaster County at the publicly owned and operated disposal, transfer and processing facilities.
2. Discourage future urban acreage developments in the area around the Bluff Road Solid Waste Management Facility and the LES owned Terry Bundy Generating Station, which are both located between North 56th Street and North 84th Street, and between Interstate 80 and Bluff Road. Acreage development could negatively impact the operations at these facilities critical to the plan area. Recent non-acreage development near the Bluff Road facility includes a data center to the west and a future State Correctional Facility to the east.
3. Update the Solid Waste Management Plan every five years and coinciding generally with the updates to the Comprehensive Plan to review population growth, calculate waste generation, determine disposal and processing capacity in existing City permitted facilities and existing private processing facilities serving Lincoln and Lancaster County, and review the capacity for the private sector to collect waste and recyclables. Collaboration with private sector collection and processing businesses is a key part of the update process in order to understand the greenhouse gas GHG emissions attributable to the collection and processing of waste, recyclables, and organics in Lincoln and Lancaster County.
4. Create a county-wide integrated, efficient, environmentally safe and conservation-oriented waste management system, including convenient recycling opportunities and other waste diversion programs.
5. Implement the recommendations of the 2040 Solid Waste Management Plan and the 2021 Solid Waste Management Plan Update, particularly those actions that additionally support the recommendations of the Climate Action Plan.
6. Construct a waste transfer station and material recovery facility in south Lincoln.
7. Complete the permit renewal application for the Bluff Road Landfill that includes the planned landfill expansion.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G7: Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

G10: Effective Government

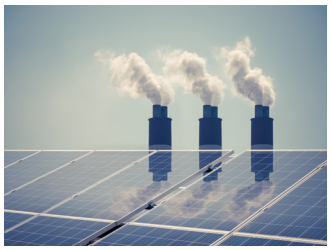
Elements Related to this Policy

E4: Environmental Resources

E8: Energy and Utilities

P57: Energy from Waste and Emission Reductions

Capture and utilization of biogas/landfill gas at the Bluff Road Landfill.



Landfill Gas consists of about 50% methane and 45% carbon dioxide, with other trace gases resulting from biological decomposition of solid waste. Methane is of particular concern as a greenhouse gas since each unit of methane has an effect equivalent to 21 units of carbon dioxide. An active landfill gas collection system is in place at the Bluff Road Landfill and in cooperation with the Lincoln Electric System's Terry Bundy Generating Station is producing approximately 4 MW of electricity.

A new renewable energy facility at the Bluff Road Landfill significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions by converting methane generated from decomposing waste into renewable natural gas (RNG).The utilization of RNG can help to offset fossil fuel use by replacing standard natural gas with a carbon-neutral alternative.

Through a public private partnership with a renewable energy company, by the end of 2026 Lincoln will be operating a modern biogas system that captures and upgrades landfill methane into clean, marketable RNG. Over the course of the City's 25 year agreement, the project is expected to generate significant revenue in RNG sales. In addition to its financial benefits, the system reduces harmful emissions, and contributes to better air quality across the community.

Action Steps

1. Complete an emissions-reduction analysis and evaluation of net benefits of organic waste diversion from the landfill alongside the landfill gas alternatives analysis.
2. Continue to expand and enhance the landfill gas collection and control system along with the utilization system when technically and economically feasible to maximize revenue from the sale of methane.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G7: Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

G8: Community Resiliency

G10: Effective Government

Elements Related to this Policy

E4: Environmental Resources

E8: Energy and Utilities

P58: Waste Reduction and Diversion

Reduce per capita per year waste disposal per goals established in the Solid Waste Management Plan.



During the planning period refuse and recyclables collection services will remain privately-owned, while other solid waste management services related to disposal, transfer, processing and environmental protection will continue with public ownership, operation and financing. Other services related to managing solid wastes are currently offered by privately-owned business and include material processing and organic waste composting facilities. The private sector also operates material reuse services as a component of a comprehensive integrated waste management system.

Action Steps

1. Convene interdepartmental stakeholders to develop standards for future commercial and industrial development to ensure sufficient space is allocated for separation and handling of recyclables, organic wastes, and wastes that must be landfilled.
2. Promote the use of products with recycled content and support product stewardship concepts, so less waste is generated, less energy is needed, and less natural resources are consumed in manufacturing and using the product.
3. Promote curbside recycling service while continuing a network of City offered recyclables collection sites.
4. Provide technical assistance to cities and villages and neighborhood associations to ensure success of recycling and organic waste diversion/composting initiatives.
5. Collaborate with the private recycling collectors and material processors to continuously educate the public about the value of recycling, the right materials to recycle, and the opportunities to recycle.
6. Engage the private sector businesses, governmental and quasi-governmental agencies and community leaders in developing strategies for achieving reduced landfill disposal goals, including developing support for legislated actions required to support such initiatives.
7. Collaborate with businesses, agencies and non-profit organizations to strategically promote activities and programs that follow the Food Waste Recovery hierarchy, including participating in the education of the public on the reduction of GHG emissions from avoiding disposal.
8. Monitor the EPA released National Framework for Advancing the U.S. Recycling System (2019) and forthcoming legislation and grant opportunities, to address critical areas for action identified as: promoting education and outreach, enhancing materials management infrastructure, strengthening secondary materials markets, and enhancing measurement.
9. Expand the operating capabilities of the HaztoGo and GoodtoGo facilities through expanded hours or other enhancements. HaztoGo provides a safe, environmentally responsible location for management of toxic chemicals and hazardous waste. Households in Lincoln and Lancaster County can dispose of their hazardous waste at no cost. GoodtoGo is a no-cost reuse store that provides gently used or unopened products that were dropped off at HaztoGo but still available for use.

10. Evaluate opportunities for waste reduction at the municipal level. Examples include a procurement policy to guide the purchase of sustainably sourced and managed materials, a construction waste diversion policy so that reusable materials are separated and recycled on municipal construction projects, and a deconstruction program for historic properties that would reuse historic materials and divert materials from the landfill.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G7: Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

G10: Effective Government

Elements Related to this Policy

E4: Environmental Resources

E8: Energy and Utilities

P59: Electric Utility

Norris Public Power and Lincoln Electric System should continue their cooperative effort in regard to future growth areas of Lincoln and changes in service boundaries between the two utilities.



Lincoln Electric System is the sole electrical utility within the City of Lincoln and much of the 3-mile jurisdiction. Norris Public Power District is the primary provider for the remainder of the county.

Action Steps

1. As LES plans new transmission line routes, it will continue its policy of examining multiple options and conducting public forums on proposed routes in order to minimize the impact of new lines as much as feasible.
2. Continue, and amend as necessary, the Norris/ LES Agreement which provides for cooperative planning and utility service in Lincoln and Lancaster County.
3. Within the City of Lincoln, wherever feasible and affordable, continue a phased program to relocate overhead utility distribution lines underground.
4. Continue to purchase efficient equipment (transformers, conductor, etc.) to reduce system energy losses and increase energy efficiency.
5. Continue to investigate the development of Smart Grid technology to increase efficiency and allow consumers a higher degree of control over their energy usage.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G7: Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

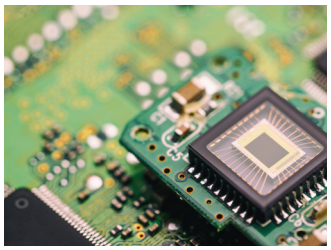
G8: Community Resiliency

Elements Related to this Policy

E8: Energy & Utilities

P60: Technology

Lincoln and Lancaster County will support ongoing technological innovation across all sectors in the community.



Lincoln has developed a well-designed fiber optic network to serve residential, business, education, and public facilities. This network ensures a high quality of life, serve as an economic development tool, and provide efficient public services. In 2018, the City of Lincoln partnered with Allo Communications to complete a fiber optic network, providing faster broadband speeds, including 1-gigabit service available to every home and business in Lincoln.

Technological innovation also includes the concept of creating a “Smart City”. Smart City technology includes a myriad of devices that communicate with each other to deliver a variety of benefits – the range and scale of connectivity and complexity can vary greatly and lead to a variety of different outcomes. In some ways the quality and performance of this infrastructure is more important than the individual buildings it serves. In addition, the development of a Smart City is more than just incorporating technology into the physical landscape – the data collected is only useful if it’s organized, analyzed and used in daily operations to make the City more resilient, sustainable and efficient.

Action Steps

1. Focus technology investments on developing a public safety network and a public safety 5G network.
2. Facilitate a joint trenching policy for developing neighborhoods so that fiber is automatically added during construction and installation of other utilities.
3. Develop a City-wide technology plan to coordinate decision-making across the organization, outline necessary steps to ensure safety of our technology infrastructure, and implement Smart City technology throughout the community.
4. Position Lincoln to be an autonomous vehicle-ready city.
5. Incorporate a system of smart kiosks into the existing wayfinding or bike share system of related, attractive signs guiding and orienting motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians throughout the community, and obtain local artist collaboration on the design. This type of system could be implemented into the mobility node and mobility oriented development concepts from the Lincoln Mobility Plan.
6. Continue to incorporate technology into the Downtown parking system such as using parking sensors, parking apps, and additional electronic vehicle infrastructure (i.e., autonomous shuttle parking and vehicle charging).
7. Utilize the fiber infrastructure for technology applications in Downtown such as wireless research, vehicle to infrastructure components, and smart cities applications. These applications should also consider the needs of businesses and entrepreneurs of all sizes.
8. Ensure the new broadband infrastructure is available to every student within our community through partnership with educational, business, and community leaders.
9. Continue the teleworking policy for City and County employees that can serve as a model in our community.

10. Pursue funding to implement technological innovation throughout the community (i.e., Smart City Challenge Grant, the National Science Foundation, and other federal grant programs).
11. Increase access to information technology for all members of Lincoln and Lancaster County, especially within minority, low income, disabled, rural, and aging communities.
12. Develop a public/private technology advisory board to review future technology needs and provide best practices to meet those needs.
13. Facilitate digital literacy and access to technological tools for residents to use in finding jobs, interacting with government and connecting with one another.
14. Ensure that all residents have equitable access to information infrastructure.
15. Continue using technology to allow residents opportunities to participate in city and county public meetings, forums, and other decision-making processes.
16. Continue using and streamlining technology to streamline City and County development services to allow community members the ability to access services online.
17. Explore the use of 3D printing technology for the construction of affordable housing in Lincoln and Lancaster County.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G14: Technology

Elements Related to this Policy

E7: Community Facilities

E8: Energy & Utilities

E9: Transportation

P61: Industrial Zoning and Pipelines

Discourage residential land uses and buildings with vulnerable populations from locating near high-pressure pipelines and industrial zoning districts. Provide adequate separation between vulnerable populations and hazardous materials to protect and promote the public's health.



There are several major pipelines that travel through Lancaster County and parts of our community. Our community will continue to grow into where these high-pressure pipelines are currently located and additional pipelines will be required to support the growth of our community and the nation. Most of these new pipelines are proposed and developed by private companies. These pipelines transport large quantities of hazardous materials that can have serious public health and safety impacts to adjacent properties in the event of pipeline failure or damage. Therefore, uses with vulnerable populations including residential structures, childcare centers, retirement facilities, schools, hospitals, or correctional facilities should not be located near pipelines. Uses that are acceptable near pipelines include residential garages, commercial and industrial uses, parking lots, open spaces and linear parks or roads.

Industrial zoning can also pose a significant risk to adjacent properties with vulnerable populations due to the types of uses that can store, use or produce hazardous materials. Rail lines are also a concern near vulnerable populations due to the transport of hazardous materials in large quantities.

Action Steps

1. Land uses with vulnerable populations should not be located within pipeline planning areas. For large high-pressure pipelines, pipeline planning areas are established based upon pipeline metrics or the United States Department of Transportation's Emergency Response Guidebook. Most high-pressure pipelines have a planning area of approximately 150-250 feet from either side of the pipeline.
2. Land uses with vulnerable populations should not be located within 300 feet of an industrially-zoned district or heavy industrial use such as a rail line. Even if a given industrial site does not include hazardous materials at present, a hazardous use could be added in the future.
3. Do not support expansion of existing residential uses currently located within a pipeline planning area or within 300 feet of an industrial zoning district.
4. Businesses and government agencies should continue to work together on developing and updating Emergency Management Plans for dealing with accidents and emergencies.
5. Continue strategic re-zonings of legacy industrial districts to less intensive commercial zoning districts when near residential uses.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G1: Safe, Affordable, and Accessible Housing

G8: Community Resiliency

Elements Related to this Policy

E8: Energy & Utilities

P62: Annexation

Annexation should be utilized to provide municipal services in a fair and efficient manner.



The City of Lincoln requires that properties receiving municipal services be located within city limits. City annexation should occur before any property is provided with water, sanitary sewer, or other potential City services. In most cases this also means that annexation must occur prior to a property receiving an urban zoning designation.

The City routinely annexes land at the request of a developer or landowner as part of the regular development process. This allows properties to be supplied with City services when they are needed, and the City benefits from the property taxes, utilities, and other fees that City residents pay.

Some properties along the City's edge may not be interested in further development and thus will not request annexation. In some cases it is necessary for the City to initiate annexation of adjacent properties that are already developed and require a minimal public investment to serve.

Action Steps

1. Regularly evaluate for potential annexation all property along the city's edge for which basic infrastructure is generally available or planned for in the near term. The City should annex land in Tier 1 Priorities A and B that is contiguous to city limits and generally urban in character. All land that is engulfed by the City should be annexed.
2. Provide advance notice to properties that may be subject to city-initiated annexation.
3. Properties within the Tier 1 Priority A growth area should be annexed upon approval of final plat.
4. Coordinate the provision of services for areas considered for annexation with the Capital Improvement Program.

What does "urban in character" mean?

The Nebraska Supreme Court (County of Sarpy v. City of Gretna, 309 Neb. 320 [2021]) determined that "urban or suburban in character" relates not only to the specific character of uses on the property, but could also relate to the property's location, proximity to growth areas, degree of development, and contemplated future development. Lincoln's city-initiated annexation policy is focused on properties adjacent to city limits within near-term growth areas that generally contain residential uses (including acreages) or other uses typically found in urban settings, along with all properties completely engulfed by the city.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G10: Effective Government

Elements Related to this Policy

E8: Energy & Utilities

P63: Transportation Access and Opportunity

Prioritize transportation systems that facilitate freedom of movement for all community members, including for communities with limited transportation options.



Transportation plays a critical role in connecting people to employment, education, healthcare, services, recreation, and other daily destinations. As Lincoln and Lancaster County continue to grow, maintaining and expanding a transportation network that supports travel options will help residents access opportunities and participate fully in community life. Providing reliable transportation choices can increase mobility, strengthen economic vitality, and improve access to destinations throughout the region.

Supporting freedom of movement also requires identifying and reducing barriers that can limit access to the transportation network. Physical barriers such as missing sidewalk connections, inaccessible crossings, and gaps in bicycle or transit facilities can make travel difficult for some users. Other challenges may include limited transit service availability, scheduling constraints, or language barriers that affect residents' ability to obtain transportation information and services. Transportation agencies and partner organizations should work to address these obstacles while using public engagement approaches that seek broad and representative participation. Outreach efforts should use various engagement methods, accessible formats, multilingual communication where appropriate, and partnerships with community organizations to ensure that transportation planning reflects the needs and experiences of people who rely on various transportation options. By removing barriers and improving connectivity, the region can support greater access and opportunity for all residents.

Action Steps

1. Expand and maintain infrastructure for all modes of transportation serving overburdened and underserved populations.
2. Remove physical, temporal and language barriers to using the transportation network.
3. Use public engagement methods that strive for representative input and full involvement of communities with limited transportation options. Broaden transit public input and validate priorities, alternatives and plans with diverse stakeholders.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G5: Equity and Inclusion

G15: Transportation

Elements Related to this Policy

E9: Transportation

P64: Transportation and the Future

Incorporate environmental stewardship, sustainability, and resiliency into transportation decisions,design andinvestments while considering impacts to all transportation users.



Maintaining clean air, protecting natural resources, and building resilience to changing environmental conditions are essential to the community's long-term quality of life. While Lincoln and Lancaster County currently meet federal air quality standards, transportation remains a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Lincoln Climate Action Plan identifies transportation as a key area for reducing emissions and advancing the community's goal of a more sustainable and resilient future.

Transportation and land use decisions should work together to reduce dependence on single-occupancy vehicle travel, support cleaner transportation technologies, and expand access to walking, bicycling, and transit. Investments in multimodal transportation and sustainable infrastructure can improve environmental outcomes, while enhancing access to parks, natural areas, cultural destinations, and other community amenities. Transportation projects should also incorporate practices that protect water quality, reduce environmental impacts, improve corridor aesthetics, and strengthen the long-term resilience and cost-effectiveness of public infrastructure. By aligning transportation investments with the goals of the Lincoln Climate Action Plan, the community can reduce emissions, adapt to future environmental challenges, and create a healthier, more connected, and more sustainable transportation system for future generations.

Action Steps

1. Support the Lincoln Climate Action Plan to build a decarbonized, efficient and resilient Transportation System.
2. Expand electric charging stations with public access.
3. Electrify remaining municipal fleet with electric vehicles and charging stations.
4. Coordinate with businesses to ensure workplaces have adequate facilities for active commuters. Incentivize active/sustainable commuting. Establish a Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program.
5. Design transportation infrastructure to limit stormwater runoff and incorporate green design elements where feasible.
6. Dedicate parking areas for carpool, vanpool, and shared micromobility vehicles in municipal garages.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G7: Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

G8: Community Resiliency

G15: Transportation

Elements Related to this Policy

E9: Transportation

P65: Complete Streets

Plan, design, build, and maintain streets to provide travel mode choice and to accommodate people of all ages and abilities.



A minimum of three percent of the total street improvement Project cost shall be allocated to the installation of new multimodal infrastructure within the Project limits. The percentage calculation may be calculated, if necessary, as an average across projects annually or during the five (5) years following adoption of the LRTP. Eligible multimodal infrastructure includes, but is not limited to, sidewalks, shared-use paths, bicycle lanes, separated bicycle facilities, pedestrian crossings, curb ramps, pedestrian refuge islands, traffic control devices that improve pedestrian or bicycle safety (such as traffic calming measures for bicycle boulevards), transit stops and passenger amenities, and other facilities that improve access and mobility for pedestrians, bicyclists, or transit users. Expenditures for the repair, replacement, or reconstruction of existing multimodal infrastructure shall not count toward this minimum requirement unless they result in the addition of new multimodal facilities or a measurable increase in multimodal capacity, connectivity, or accessibility.

Action Steps

1. Implement and track the 3 percent multimodal investment requirement for street improvement projects, with progress evaluated annually and over the first five years following LRTP adoption.
2. Expand the Complete Streets Program by ordinance to include a Complete Streets Plan, procedures, guidelines, and project review process.
3. Establish department policy statements affirming the value of Complete Streets and the structural and non-structural design elements that will achieve the objectives of Complete Streets when making program and project review decisions within the traveled way and ROW.
4. Publish an annual Complete Streets Report that includes a record of projects that were reviewed, summarizes any design standards that conflicted with best practices, and lists exceptions that were approved from adopted design standards.
5. Add safe and accessible connections to transit, multiuse trails, sidewalks and bicycle facilities.
6. Complete demonstration projects based on advisory input from Complete Streets Committee to accomplish Complete Streets objectives and gain public input by implementing lower cost solutions that address identified infrastructure challenges.
7. Incorporate green infrastructure into Complete Streets where feasible.
8. Identify supplemental funding sources for Complete Streets projects.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G5: Equity and Inclusion

G6: Healthy, Active, and Connected People

G15: Transportation

Elements Related to this Policy

E9: Transportation

P66: Transportation and Managing Growth

Integrate land use and transportation decisions to ensure transportation infrastructure can support travel demands associated with growth.



Lincoln is expected to add approximately 48,000 households by 2050, creating both opportunities and challenges for transportation planning. Accommodating this growth will require strategic investments that serve existing residents, while supporting future development. Infill development can maximize the value of existing infrastructure, support transit and active transportation, reduce travel distances, and create more connected communities. At the same time, continued growth at the community's edges will require targeted investments to expand and connect the transportation network.

Transportation and land use decisions should be coordinated to provide safe, reliable, and efficient access to jobs, services, schools, parks, and other community destinations. As the community grows, new developments should incorporate multimodal transportation options to expand travel choice, improve connectivity, and optimize the long-term performance of the transportation system.

Action Steps

1. Increase multimodal connections within and between all neighborhoods and commercial centers.
2. Support transportation options near infill development projects by developing Mobility Nodes as recommended in the Lincoln Mobility Plan.
3. Continue roadway project coordination between the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County so roadways within Lincoln growth Tiers 1 & 2 are in good condition and meet design standards when transferred to the City.
4. Implement the Access Management Policy on internal transportation routes (e.g., State highways and City arterials) to support efficient access to adjacent businesses and external transportation connectors (e.g., Interstate highways and freeways) to minimize disruption to future land uses.
5. Program new construction that supports growth areas and increased corridor density for residential and commercial growth as city limits expand in support of the PlanForward growth scenario.
6. Identify supplemental funding sources for Complete Streets projects.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G10: Effective Government

G15: Transportation

Elements Related to this Policy

E9: Transportation

P67: Congestion Management

Manage an efficient and reliable multimodal transportation network.



Transportation congestion occurs when travel demand exceeds available system capacity, resulting in delays, reduced reliability, and increased emissions. Effective congestion management improves the efficiency of the multimodal transportation network and helps people and goods move more reliably throughout the region.

Congestion can vary by time of day, location, and special events, requiring a range of operational and infrastructure solutions. Through its Congestion Management Process, the Lincoln MPO identifies congestion challenges and prioritizes strategies that optimize system performance, improve reliability, and maximize the value of existing transportation investments.

Action Steps

1. Implement the Congestion Management Process by programming multimodal transportation projects, traffic signal, coordination, and other Process recommendations.
2. Encourage infill and mixed-use development that aligns with the PlanForward growth scenario.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G15: Transportation

Elements Related to this Policy

E9: Transportation

P68: Transportation and Economic Health

Foster economic health through transportation investments that improve access to education, employment, and services and reduce transportation costs.



A well-connected multimodal transportation network supports economic prosperity for both the community and individual households. Reliable transportation infrastructure provides access to jobs, education, services, and cultural opportunities, while helping businesses attract employees, move goods, and grow. Lincoln and Lancaster County support economic development through coordinated transportation investments and strong partnerships with the private sector.

As technology continues to influence how people work, learn, and conduct business, investments in transportation and digital infrastructure will play an increasingly important role. Transportation decisions should support innovation, expand opportunity, and ensure that economic benefits are shared throughout the community.

Action Steps

1. Seek opportunities to implement conversion of identified Downtown streets to two-way traffic.
2. Provide well-maintained infrastructure for all modes of transportation that support existing businesses and services inside the city.
3. Encourage redevelopment that adds a mix of uses that diversify the economic potential and access to jobs within neighborhoods.
4. Continue to eliminate or reduce minimum parking requirements where land use and active transportation infrastructure plans support zero or limited-vehicle households and businesses.
5. Seek funding opportunities to implement conversion of identified Downtown streets to two-way traffic.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G15: Transportation

Elements Related to this Policy

E3: Business, Economy, and Workforce

E9: Transportation

P69: Transit

Enhance the community's public transportation operations to support the local economy and expand travel choice.



StarTran seeks to maximize available resources by providing efficient, reliable, and accessible transit service that meets the community's mobility needs. Together with Lancaster County Public Rural Transit, the transit network provides broad access to destinations throughout the region and serves a critical role for transit-dependent populations.

Service levels, frequencies, and coverage remain important considerations as the community continues to evaluate how best to meet evolving travel needs. Expanded transit use can reduce household transportation costs; improve access to jobs, education, and services; and support broader environmental and mobility goals. Future transit investments and operational decisions should be guided by community priorities, coordinated regional planning efforts, and opportunities to increase ridership, connectivity, and system efficiency.

Action Steps

1. Incorporate more paratransit, flex route, and demand-response support, advanced technology integration, and off-peak service hours where feasible.
2. Broaden transit development public input and validate priorities, alternatives, and plans with diverse stakeholders.
3. Improve the transit experience by reducing the distance between the transit stop and traveler's destination (known as first/last mile connections) and adding amenities at transit stops as recommended by the Lincoln Mobility Plan.
4. Use decision support tools recommended by StarTran's Transit Asset Management Plan (TAMP) to optimize lifecycle planning of capital public transportation assets.
5. Support the study of new regional and/or Lincoln-to-Omaha intercity transit options.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G5: Equity and Inclusion

G15: Transportation

Elements Related to this Policy

E9: Transportation

P70: Active Transportation

Support active transportation through implementation of recommendations in the Lincoln Mobility Plan.



Active transportation plays an important role in creating a connected, healthy, and accessible community. Walking, bicycling, rolling, and shared mobility options expand transportation choice, provide affordable travel opportunities, and connect residents to jobs, schools, parks, services, transit, and other destinations throughout the region.

Investments in sidewalks, trails, bicycle facilities, crossings, and shared mobility programs support a transportation network that serves people of all ages and abilities. Lincoln's trail system, bicycle network, and shared mobility services provide both transportation and recreation benefits. Safe and connected active transportation facilities can reduce reliance on personal vehicles, improve public health, reduce congestion and emissions, and strengthen access to transit by addressing first/last mile travel needs.

Developed alongside this LRTP update, the Lincoln Mobility Plan provides a framework for expanding active transportation opportunities throughout the city. Together, these plans support a more connected transportation system that increases mobility choice, improves access to opportunity, and enhances quality of life for current and future residents.

Action Steps

1. Establish and maintain a dedicated annual funding pool for standalone bicycle and pedestrian projects that improve safety, close network gaps, and strengthen multimodal connectivity.
2. Develop planning tools to support implementation of Mobility Oriented Development (MOD).
3. Build upon the existing trail and on-street bicycle and pedestrian network by focusing on: first- and last-mile connections; critical gaps in connectivity; facilitation of multimodal connections; high-risk corridors and intersections; overcoming major physical barriers such as arterial roadways and rail crossings; transitions from on-street facilities to trails.
4. Maintain and upgrade existing facilities.
5. Include natural resources in active transportation planning to the greatest extent possible.
6. Establish mobility nodes to support multimodal travel: Use redevelopment node concept from Comprehensive Plan to establish mobility nodes in existing city areas. Prioritize transit routes and bicycle routes to provide connections to key destinations (schools, employment centers, parks, healthcare facilities); Integrate mobility nodes into areas of new growth; Use mobility nodes to facilitate transit use and Mobility Oriented Development (MOD), i.e., compact and walkable; Use street typologies to plan effective connections between mobility nodes; Incorporate cultural resources into mobility node planning and advance placemaking.
7. Invest in sidewalks to improve the pedestrian environment and support Mobility Oriented Development (MOD).
8. Integrate shared mobility/micromobility options, e.g., bike, scooter, into Mobility Oriented Development and incentivize such integration

9. Incorporate wayfinding and sustainable lighting into pedestrian facilities.
10. Consider emerging technologies such as e-bikes, e-scooter, and other micromobility devices and how they might interact with and be used on the transportation network.
11. Support driver education and awareness campaigns about the risks of speeding, as well as driving distracted, preoccupied, emotionally upset or fatigued.
12. Support walking and bicycling education for elementary, middle and high school students, including content on electric/electric assist micromobility devices.
13. Enhance connectivity for bicycle and pedestrian travel by prioritizing low-stress facilities, e.g., bicycle boulevards.
14. Align efforts with programs and policies that support active transportation, such as Complete Green Streets, development and redevelopment regulations, and design standards.
15. Coordinate with other departments to optimize resources and integrate active transportation improvements into street resurfacing and reconstruction projects, utility upgrades and infrastructure projects, redevelopment projects and streetscape enhancements.
16. Partner with business improvement districts and institutions (e.g., universities) to plan for maintenance of bicycle and pedestrian facilities and connections. View active transportation facilities as opportunities for placemaking and economic development.
17. Incorporate cultural and natural resources within the network of active transportation corridors.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G6: Healthy, Active and Connected People

G15: Transportation

Elements Related to this Policy

E9: Transportation

P71: Public Right-of-Way and Access

Manage public ROW and access to balance multimodal mobility needs and protect the value of adjacent property.



Public spaces within transportation corridors can enhance both individual travel experiences and community identity. Elements such as landscaping, public art, pedestrian-scale lighting, and wayfinding help create attractive, welcoming, and navigable environments. The public right-of-way can also serve multiple functions, accommodating utilities, stormwater management, shared-use paths, and transit facilities alongside transportation needs. Transportation design standards provide the framework for coordinating these uses, while flexible design approaches should be leveraged to maximize the value, functionality, and character of public spaces.

Action Steps

1. Monitor the relative cost-benefit analysis of programmatic roadway design standards for sidewalks, stormwater management, lane sizes, trails, culverts and ROW widths currently required.
2. Study ROW needs for future major roads, as shown in the Comprehensive Plan, and recommend adjustments based on the study findings.
3. Encourage flexible and performance-based geometric design processes and best practices that address challenges to transportation agencies created by funding and ROWconstraints.
4. Require public and private development to abide by required design standards and make flexible decisions based on the value of investment.
5. Review and update access management standards to support an efficient transportation network that is safe for active transportation users as well.
6. Preserve or provide adequate ROW space for healthy street trees and separation between vehicles and pedestrians.
7. Consider strategies that reduce the impacts of transportation projects on existing neighborhoods.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G15: Transportation

Elements Related to this Policy

E9: Transportation

P72: Freight

Preserve and enhance the efficiency of the freight system to support the local, regional, and national economy.



Freight transportation is essential to the region's economy, supporting jobs, businesses, and the movement of goods that sustain daily life. A reliable, efficient, and safe freight network strengthens economic competitiveness and attracts investment. Freight movement relies on an integrated system of roadways, traffic operations, rail corridors, pipelines, and air transportation facilities. Prioritizing freight movement on freeways and major highways improves reliability while reducing congestion and conflicts on local streets. Transportation planning will continue to support coordination of a future East Beltway to enhance regional mobility and efficient movement of freight.

Action Steps

1. Maintain a network of truck routes that provides for the safe, efficient, and reliable delivery of goods.
2. Continue to use the Railroad Transportation Safety District (RTSD) in reducing the number of conflicts between traffic and railroads, improving railroad crossings, and implementing quiet zones.
3. Continue corridor preservation, funding, and planning for the East
4. Coordinate with State and County partners to consider expansion of freight parking and electric refueling.
5. Implement the East Beltway Sinking Fund from City and County sources recommended in the LRTP and track other potential financing sources such as the NDOT Regional Infrastructure Accelerators (RIA) grant.
6. Support the freight demands associated with Lincoln Airport-based distribution with quality roadway infrastructure

Goals Supported by this Policy

G15: Transportation

Elements Related to this Policy

E9: Transportation

P73: Advanced Mobility

Support the orderly deployment of advanced mobility technologies that preserve and enhance the safety of all road users.



Advances in technology will continue to shape mobility options and travel behavior. Emerging technologies, including autonomous vehicles, connected transportation systems, and drone delivery, have the potential to improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the transportation network. Investments in transportation technology and operations can further enhance system performance and user experience.

As these technologies evolve, the community will prioritize safety and accessibility outcomes when evaluating and implementing new mobility solutions. While the long-term effects on travel demand and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) remain uncertain, trends such as telecommuting and flexible work arrangements will continue to influence transportation needs. Technology investments should support community goals and deliver broad public benefits through a safer, more efficient, and more accessible transportation system.

Action Steps

1. Study parking and development strategies that reimagine the use of public right-of-way and transportation corridors to accommodate automated vehicles, including the incremental replacement of on-street parking with curbside pick-up areas and drop-off zones.
2. Develop strategies to accommodate future advanced mobility options and vehicle technologies such as for the Delivery Economy and vehicle communication (V2X).
3. Revise rules and regulations that currently prohibit or deter advanced mobility technologies.
4. Study opportunities to capture the value of autonomous vehicles to equitably distribute the cost across all community members.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G15: Transportation

Elements Related to this Policy

E9: Transportation

P74: Transportation Partnerships

Seek partnerships with both public and private entities to finance mutually beneficial transportation projects.



Effective multimodal transportation planning and implementation depend on strong coordination among public agencies and community partners working toward the shared vision ofthe LRTP. The City of Lincoln, Lancaster County, and the State of Nebraska play critical roles in developing, operating, and maintaining the roadway and bridge network. Integrating a transit system coordinated by StarTran and trail development supported by the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District expands mobility options to create a more connected and resilient transportation network. Community organizations help share information and engage residents, while private development can leverage and enhance public transportation investments. These partnerships strengthen the region's ability to secure funding, align investments, and deliver a coordinated multimodal transportation system that supports community goals.

Action Steps

1. Scope projects to advance multiple adopted plans whenever feasible by including recommendations from the Vision Zero Action Plan, the Lincoln Mobility Plan, and corridor and other planning studies.
2. Bundle projects whenever possible.
3. Continue planning for development of the East Beltway to complete a freeway system that efficiently and safely moves regional and thru traffic without using arterial roadways.
4. Support education campaigns that promote safe driving, sharing the road, and reducing car dependence to ensure safety and security for all users of the transportation system.
5. Maintain proactive working relationships with railroad operators to facilitate effective processes for planning and constructing at-grade and grade separated crossing improvements.
6. Leverage the University of Nebraska and the Nebraska Clean Cities and Communities Coalition for more opportunities to research safety, integrating active transportation, shared mobility, and advanced mobility.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G15: Transportation

Elements Related to this Policy

E9: Transportation

P75: Safety

Strive to reduce transportation-related deaths and serious injuries



Safety is a fundamental consideration in all transportation planning, design, operations, and investment decisions. Transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries have lasting impacts on individuals, families, and the community. Improving safety requires understanding the factors that contribute to crashes across all modes of travel and applying data-driven strategies to reduce risks.

The City of Lincoln, Lancaster County, and the State of Nebraska will continue to work collaboratively to improve the safety of roadways, intersections, railroad crossings, transit facilities, and active transportation networks. Through ongoing evaluation, design improvements, education, and targeted investments, transportation partners will strive to create a safer transportation system for all users.

Action Steps

1. Evaluate roadway width for collectors and design streets for slower speeds.
2. Reference the Lincoln Vision Zero Action Plan, the ongoing Lancaster County Safe Mobility- Supplemental Safety Action Plan, the City of Bennet Transportation Safety Action Plan, the City of Waverly Vehicular and Pedestrian Connectivity Study, and other safety plans during project scoping.
3. Incorporate safety countermeasures where feasible.
4. Prioritize projects that reduce fatal and serious injury crashes.
5. Prioritize the protection of vulnerable road users such as bicyclists and pedestrians.
6. Generate community support to establish and reach specific goals for reducing transportation-related deaths and injuries.
7. Prioritize transportation resources based on evidence of the greatest needs and impacts for safety.
8. Support updates to state and local regulations that make the multimodal transportation network safer.
9. Provide safety improvements for on-street bicyclists based on safety countermeasure best practices and available crash data as recommended in the Lincoln Vision Zero Action Plan and Lincoln Mobility Plan.
10. Implement incident management planning to help the transportation system recover swiftly from incidents.
11. Study and recommend policies that prioritize walkability and safety near mobility nodes, employment centers, commercial corridors, and high-density residential areas.
12. Provide intersection crossings that are safe for bicyclists and pedestrians.
13. Review crash history and systemic risk factors.
14. Reanalyze access management during initial development of vacant properties or after substantial land use changes, as travel patterns change, and at the time of roadway widening or reconstruction to reduce trip delay and congestion, facilitate walking and biking, and enhance safety for all modes of transportation.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G15: Transportation

Elements Related to this Policy

E9: Transportation

P76: Transportation Maintenance

Optimize the maintenance of transportation infrastructure through data-driven asset management.



Transportation infrastructure is one of the largest public assets maintained by local agencies, making preservation and maintenance critical to community mobility and quality of life. Poorly maintained roadways, bridges, transit facilities, trails, traffic control devices, and sidewalks can increase costs, reduce safety, and create barriers to travel. Ongoing maintenance and replacement are necessary to keep the transportation system in a state of good repair, while new infrastructure investments add to future maintenance obligations. Prioritizing asset preservation and addressing deferred maintenance protects public investments and ensures reliable system performance.

Action Steps

1. Continue to implement Lincoln on the Move rehabilitation projects, based upon its forecasted maintenance plan, and funding parameters.
2. Advance system preservation (e.g., filling potholes, repairs and crack sealing) to extend the lifecycle cost of existing streets and program rehabilitation of major and residential streets annually with priority for resolving deferred maintenance equitably throughout the community.
3. Continue to strive for methods that use durable and resilient materials for all new construction and assets.
4. Continue annual programming for the sidewalk replacement and rehabilitation program to meet the safety, access, and connectivity needs of residents within the city.
5. Establish methods for trail segment evaluation to guide and program maintenance needs.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G10: Effective Government

G15: Transportation

Elements Related to this Policy

E9: Transportation

P77: Transportation Funding

Seek innovative finance and funding methods to support continued investment in transportation infrastructure projects that benefit the community.



City, county, and state partners collaborate to fund and maintain the multimodal transportation network by leveraging federal, regional, and local resources, along with developer contributions, transit fare revenues, and private investment. Community members value a transportation system that is well maintained, safe, and capable of supporting continued growth and development. While available funding is strategically directed toward these priorities, projected revenues are insufficient to fully address identified multimodal transportation needs. To close this gap, the community must explore innovative funding approaches that maximize the impact of existing resources while identifying new and sustainable revenue sources.

Action Steps

1. Establish dedicated and sustainable funding sources for pedestrian and bicycle projects and programs.
2. Implement and track the flexible funds recommended for allocation in the LRTP Preferred Fiscally-Constrained Scenario.
3. Implement the funding program and construct the committed and priority projects per the Fiscally Constrained Plan in the LRTP.
4. Coordinate with state and federal agencies on developing new and updated transportation funding opportunities to meet transportation needs of the community.
5. Capitalize on opportunities to leverage alternative funding sources, such as public-private partnerships, for roadway improvements and transit services.
6. Coordinate with NDOT to program funding solutions for constructing the East Beltway.
7. Continue to support the Railroad Transportation Safety District (RTSD) in its mission to reduce the number of conflicts between roadway traffic and railroads, improve safety for pedestrian and bicycle crossings, and study, design, and construct railroad crossing improvements that have the greatest economic and safety return on investment to the overall community.
8. Maintain a quality and equitable transportation system in all areas of the community by distributing funding to those areas of greatest need.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G10: Effective Government

G15: Transportation

Elements Related to this Policy

E9: Transportation

P78: Airport

Ensure the Lincoln Municipal Airport is efficient, accessible, and environmentally sound.



The Lincoln Airport is a key gateway to the region, meeting local air transportation needs while connecting residents, businesses, and visitors to destinations around the country. The airport's location supports a range of critical functions, including private aviation, industrial distribution, and national security operations. Efficient and accessible landside transportation infrastructure connects air travelers to personal vehicles, ride-sharing services, public transit, and active transportation networks, creating a seamless multimodal transportation system. Preserving and improving these connections is essential to sustaining economic competitiveness, expanding mobility options, and supporting the region's continued growth and prosperity.

Action Steps

1. Support the development of landside transportation infrastructure as recommended by the Airport Master Plan.
2. Improve multimodal access to the Lincoln Airport and business park campus.
3. Maintain compatible land uses and zoning within the 60 DNL and 75 DNL noise contour lines.
4. Continue to enforce zoning restrictions for building and structure height in the approach and turning zones.

Goals Supported by this Policy

G15: Transportation

Elements Related to this Policy

E9: Transportation

PLAN forward

Lincoln-Lancaster County
2050 Comprehensive Plan

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

Implementation

CITY of LINCOLN

LANCASTER COUNTY
EST. 1859

Once adopted by the City and County, PlanForward becomes the community's guide for directing its resources and efforts toward making the common vision a reality. The ways to achieve this objective are further described in the sections below.

Land Use Administration

The planning process has long had at its disposal a number of administrative and regulatory tools for implementing comprehensive plans. Many of these reach back eighty to one hundred years. Some of the land use administration approaches to be used in plan implementation include:

Zoning. Zoning is a legal means cities and counties use for deciding how land can be used, the intensity of those land uses, and the relationships between various land uses. Nebraska State law, as with most states, requires zoning to be developed in accordance with the community's adopted Comprehensive Plan. This is one of the primary reasons cities and counties have Comprehensive Plans. As a legal document, zoning is reflected both as a map showing the geographic boundaries of each district and a written ordinance detailing the uses and conditions of each district. For the City of Lincoln, the zoning ordinance is presented in Title 27 of the Lincoln Municipal Code; while the County's zoning standards are contained in the County Zoning Regulations.

Subdivision. A subdivision is the process of dividing land into lots and/or streets. While a variety of standards apply to where, when, and how the subdivision of land can happen, having an approved subdivision plat is a basic step in the development process. The City's subdivision code is found in Title 26 of the Lincoln Municipal Code. For the County, these regulations can be found in the County Subdivision Regulations.

Design Standards. Special site design or other conditions not otherwise covered in the zoning ordinance or subdivision standards are contained in a series of design standards. These standards spell out unique characteristics that may apply to a type of development proposal. These include, for example, design considerations for childcare centers, trails, new construction in older, established neighborhoods and the Downtown Lincoln/Antelope Valley area.

Five Year Tasks

The Comprehensive Plan includes many policies that contain specific action steps to be completed in the near term. The table below summarizes the specific action steps and work items to be completed within the next five years. This table only includes a small number of the total action steps found in the Comprehensive Plan, and it focuses on items related to land use administration and Planning and Development Services Department activities. Completion of these action steps will be reviewed at the next five-year plan update.

Table I.a: Five Year Implementation Tasks

	Priority Action Steps Over Next Five Years
-----	**Expand opportunities for residential infill, including affordable and "missing middle" housing.**
P1.1	Implement the housing and neighborhood strategies as embodied in the Affordable Housing Coordinated Action Plan, City of Lincoln Consolidated and Annual Action Plans and subsequent housing and neighborhood plans. These plans provide the core for affordable housing and neighborhood preservation actions for public and private agencies. An example would be continuing to develop affordable housing zoning text amendments that support the goals of the Affordable Housing Coordinated Action Plan and other documents and community input.
P1.14	Examine building code updates that could support affordable housing while maintaining the safety of occupants. An example would be allowing single-stair egress in certain types of multi-family buildings if other fire safety conditions are met.
P2.4	Implement the neighborhood edges concept as discussed in E2: Infill and Redevelopment.
-----	**Examine new ways to promote high-quality redevelopment within Mixed Use Redevelopment Nodes and Corridors.**
P6.1.a	Consider updates to the zoning ordinance that support mixed-use redevelopment of nodes and corridors and streamline the development process across various zoning districts. For Primary Mixed Use Redevelopment Nodes, updates should focus on the B-5 Planned Regional Business zoning district. Zoning updates would address items such as: allowed uses, density, site layout, and building scale.
-----	**Evaluate expansion of design standards from a menu of options.**
Nodes and Corridors	
P34.1b	Implement design standards for mixed use nodes and corridors as discussed in *E2: Infill and Redevelopment*. Incorporate Mobility Oriented Development (MOD) into design standards to support implementation of the mobility nodes concept as discussed in *E1: Great Neighborhoods and Housing* and the *Lincoln Mobility Plan*. These mixed use nodes and corridor standards could be incorporated into the overall commercial design standards or be their own standard.
P34.1.c	Implement design standards that support the O Street Redevelopment Corridor as discussed in *E2: Infill and Redevelopment*.
Commercial Areas	
P34.1a	Implement commercial design standards that could apply to any commercial area or corridor.
Neighborhoods	
P34.2	Update Neighborhood Design Standards to provide improved clarity and flexibility while supporting high-quality redevelopment within the neighborhood context. As part of that update, expand the Neighborhood Design Standards area to apply for residential districts within the 1970 city limits boundary. Neighborhood Design Standards currently apply within the 1950 city limits boundary.

-----	**Develop enhanced standards for new developing and redeveloping neighborhoods.**
P2.5, P3.2	Review the Community Unit Plan (CUP) and Planned Unit Development (PUD) requirements and consider revisions to support high quality growth. CUPs and PUDs should be used to support appropriately-placed density, optimize infrastructure costs, encourage creativity, protect valuable natural or cultural features, and help lower the overall cost of property development. A maximum CUP size should be considered in order to support mixed use design in suburban growth areas. Additional consideration should be given to minimum densities and a minimum mix of housing types for developments that utilize the CUP or PUD zoning tools.
-----	**Implement Conservation Design best practices.**
P18.2	Conduct a comprehensive review of natural and cultural resources in Lancaster County to identify locations that may be appropriate for protection with low impact development standards. The review would include suggested resources to be buffered, buffer size needed to mitigate impacts to the identified resources and required development practices within the buffers.
P18.3	Incorporate conservation design principles into development regulations. The update process should include extensive coordination with community stakeholders and the development community.
	Increase access to bicycle parking.
P11.3	Amend the zoning ordinance to require bicycle parking citywide. Consistent and reliable bicycle parking would make bicycle transportation more convenient, encouraging more people to choose bicycles for non-recreational trips.
-----	**Continue subarea planning efforts.**
	Potential subarea plans for the next five years include Airpark / NW 48th Street, Bethany, Downtown, Stevens Creek, and the Wilderness Park subarea.
Transportation	
Complete Streets	**Plan, design, build, and maintain streets to provide travel mode choice and to accommodate people of all ages and abilities.**
P.65.1	Implement and track the 3 percent multimodal investment requirement for street improvement projects, with progress evaluated annually and over the first five years following LRTP adoption.
Transportation and Economic Health	**Foster economic health through transportation investments that improve access to education, employment, and services and reduce transportation costs.**
P.68.5	Seek funding opportunities to implement conversion of identified Downtown streets to two-way traffic.
Active Transportation	**Support Active Transportation through implementation of recommendations in the Lincoln Mobility Plan.**
P.70.1	Establish and maintain a dedicated annual funding pool for standalone bicycle and pedestrian projects that improve safety, close network gaps, and strengthen multimodal connectivity.
P.70.2	Develop planning tools to support implementation of Mobility Oriented Development (MOD).

Advanced Mobility	**Support the orderly deployment of advanced mobility technologies that preserve and enhance the safety of all road users.**
P.73.1	Study parking and development strategies that reimagine the use of public right-of-way and transportation corridors to accommodate automated vehicles, including the incremental replacement of on-street parking with curbside pick-up areas and drop-off zones.
Partnerships	**Seek partnerships with both public and private entities to finance mutually beneficial transportation projects.**
P.74.1	Scope projects to advance multiple adopted plans whenever feasible by including recommendations from the Vision Zero Action Plan, the Lincoln Mobility Plan, and corridor and other planning studies.
P.74.2	Bundle projects whenever possible.
Safety	**Strive to eliminate transportation-related deaths and serious injuries.**
P.75.1	Evaluate roadway width and design streets for slower speeds.
P.75.2	Reference the Lincoln Vision Zero Action Plan and other safety plans during project scoping.
P.75.3	Incorporate safety countermeasures where feasible.
P.75.4	Prioritize projects that reduce fatal and serious injury crashes.
Transportation Funding	**Seek innovative finance and funding methods to support continued investment in transportation infrastructure projects that benefit the community.**
P.77.1	Establish dedicated and sustainable funding sources for pedestrian and bicycle projects and programs.
P.77.2	Implement and track the flexible funds recommended for allocation in the LRTP Preferred Fiscally-Constrained Scenario.

Financial Resources

The provision of services is one of the primary responsibilities of City and County government. Financing these services without creating an undo financial burden for the taxpayer is, and will continue to be, a challenge. There needs to be a balance between new infrastructure in developing areas and the improvements and maintenance needs of the existing community. It is also important to remember that the initial cost of improvements does not reflect the ongoing maintenance and operations of those facilities.

Strategies for Financing Rural Infrastructure

Group new acreages in limited areas. This will enable services to be provided more efficiently, such as minimizing the amount of paved roads, reducing and shortening school bus routes and providing more cost effective rural water district service.

Direct growth to cities and towns. Direct and support residential, commercial, and industrial growth to incorporated cities and towns in order to maintain a tax base for the services and utilities in the towns, as well as to economize on the costs of services and utilities.

Strategies for Financing Urban Infrastructure

Take a Balanced Approach. The community at large should provide more financing of maintenance and improvements in existing areas. Both new and existing developments should pay their fair share of improvement costs due to growth and maintenance. In general, improvements which are of general benefit to the whole community should be paid by the community, while improvements which are of special benefit to a specific area should be paid by that area.

Develop a Fair and Predictable System. Distribute infrastructure costs fairly among all property owners who benefit from the improvements. The goal of the financing system is that costs should be known in advance of development. Property owners should participate in funding improvements in new areas at generally the same rate.

Encourage Higher Densities. Maximize the community's investment in infrastructure through well-designed and appropriately placed density in residential and commercial development. Both for new development and redevelopment, an increase in well-designed and appropriately placed density will decrease the amount of infrastructure necessary overall in the community.

Minimize Impact on Affordable Housing. Infrastructure financing should not increase the cost of affordable housing in Lincoln, particularly housing that is targeted for residents making less than 80 percent of the area median income.

Minimize Impact on Those Who Are Not Developing Land. As much as possible, property owners should only be assessed or pay the improvement costs at the time they seek approval of development proposals or building permits. Financing mechanisms should be sensitive to property owners in an area under development who don't want to develop their land at that time, but should not encourage them to hold their property out of development indefinitely. Property owners need to be educated about growth and infrastructure plans to reduce the element of surprise and to foster more informed personal planning decisions.

Maintain Expanding System. The addition of infrastructure and growth of the City requires attention to provide an adequate level of service. Expanding facilities adds financial maintenance needs for all city services.

Capital Improvements Programming

Capital improvements have historically been financed by general revenues, special assessments, user fees, revenue bonds, grants from Federal and State government, other local and state taxes and general obligation bonds. Capital projects can be broadly defined as new projects to meet additional needs of the community and rehabilitation of the built infrastructure. It is imperative that timely maintenance of capital improvements occurs to protect the City's and County's investment and minimize future maintenance and replacement costs. As an implementation tool, the capital improvement programming process plays a vital role in guiding when and where the city, and even to some degree rural areas, grow. Capital improvements programming can be separated into two broad areas:

Public Sector Contributions

Capital improvements are generally defined as any improvements with a useful life in excess of 15 years. The direction and timing of these improvements have a powerful influence on the development of a community. Arterial roads, major water mains, trails, wastewater treatment and transmission lines, parks, recreational facilities, street lights, fire and police stations, libraries, government administration buildings, schools, electrical facilities, and sanitary landfills are all basic elements of what makes up a city. Hundreds of millions of public tax dollars and user fees are invested each year in these facilities. The public process used to determine where and when such investment occurs plays a fundamental role in determining how PlanForward is achieved.

The City of Lincoln designates those capital improvements it plans to build over the next six years through the development of a six-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The first two years of the City's CIP is termed the "Capital Budget," and it represents the list of projects formally approved and funded by elected officials.

The City of Lincoln's Charter requires that before the City Council can approve a capital project it must undergo a test of "Comprehensive Plan conformity." This means that the Planning Commission or Planning and Development Services Department must issue a report stating whether the proposed capital expenditure is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Should the project be found to be not in conformance with the Plan, the City Council can still

approve the project. No equivalent Plan conformity standard is applied in the County's CIP process, however the Lancaster County Road and Bridge Construction Program is reviewed for conformance with the Comprehensive Plan and Long Range Transportation Plan

A companion document to the City's CIP, called the Transportation Improvement Program or TIP, is prepared on an annual basis. This task is assigned to the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization, a policy making board comprised of representatives from local government and transportation authorities that reviews transportation issues and develops transportation plans and programs for Lincoln and Lancaster County. The TIP gathers together in a single document those local, State and Federal transportation capital projects proposed for the next four years. These include improvements for streets and highways, airports, railroad support facilities, trails, and public transit. Transportation projects must have a finding of substantial conformity to the Long Range Transportation Plan before they can be included in the TIP. The MPO's fiscally constrained Long Range Transportation Plan requires that all projects programmed must fall within the limits of funding that can be reasonably expected.

Lancaster County prepares an annual Road and Bridge Construction Program, commonly referred to as the "County 1 and 6 Program" because it includes the projects and programs for the first year and a more generalized list of projects going out 6 years in the future. The County 1 and 6 Program supports the projects identified on the Lancaster County Future Road Improvements map, which is a part of the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan. This program identifies not only capital improvements but also maintenance projects such as grading and graveling of roads. Projects that use federal funding or are part of a regional system are included in the TIP.

Private Sector Contributions

Private investment is a significant part of the funding used to construct infrastructure in new developments. Most local streets, sidewalks, water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater facilities are built and paid for by the private developer, and impact fees contribute to the larger infrastructure components. Decisions made in the private sector play an important role in managing and guiding the expansion of the urban area. Expenditures from private sources are critical to furthering the growth of the community. Privately funded projects are also expected to conform to the goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Strategies for the Capital Improvement Program

- The CIP should be utilized to provide a systematic and predictable forum for determining the timing of infrastructure improvements.
- Infrastructure improvements should continue to be implemented only in areas identified for development in the Lincoln/ Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan. One of the most important tools in financing is adherence to the physical plan for the community. Following the Plan for development and systematic improvements throughout Lincoln increases efficiency in construction and maximizes the community's investment.
- The top priority for the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is to maintain existing infrastructure.
- Fully serving Tier I, Priority A areas is a priority.
- Infrastructure funding to serve the growing community relies upon adequate revenue from all sources, including gas tax allocation, wheel tax, impact fees, and water and wastewater fees. It is a priority to explore innovative funding strategies and new sources to fund infrastructure projects.
- Use the CIP as a planning and programming guide.

On-Going Comprehensive Plan Activities

While the Comprehensive Plan may have received formal approval, certain long-range planning tasks remain to be completed or continued as part of the Plan's implementation. These include:

I**nteragency Cooperation and Coordination**. Broad involvement of numerous public agencies and departments were used in the Plan's formulation. The cooperation and coordination of efforts with these groups needs to remain in place during the Plan's implementation.

Joint Planning Commission and Planning and Development Services Department. The City and County created a joint City-County Planning Commission and a single City-County Planning Department more than fifty years ago. This structure has served the community well over this period. In 2025 the Planning Department merged with the Building and Safety Department to form the Planning and Development Services Department. The new Planning and Development Services Department streamlines the development process and will assist with efficient implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

City-County Common. The City Council, County Board, and Lincoln Mayor may hold a joint meeting to discuss issues of common concern to them. This group is known as the City-County Common. The Common provides a regular opportunity for the elected officials to discuss planning issues of joint interest to them.

MPO Officials Committee and Technical Committee. Through the Metropolitan Planning Organization structure, the Officials and Technical Committees lend additional policy and technical oversight to the transportation planning process. These standing groups meet on a regular basis to review, discuss, and approve matters relating to the area-wide transportation planning process. This includes the annual MPO Unified Planning Work Program, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Annual Certification, Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and other related studies and programs.

Design Review Boards. Design review is coordinated through three boards, each with specific responsibilities: Urban Design Committee, Historic Preservation Commission, and Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission.

Complete Streets Committee. This staff committee is tasked with discussing how to implement Complete Streets within the community. The committee is an interdepartmental group comprised of representatives from Planning and Development Services, Lincoln Transportation & Utilities, StarTran, Urban Development, Parks and Recreation, and the Health Department.

Strategic Planning. Strategic plans outline priorities and actions to help guide decision-making for governments and departments. While they are often not formally adopted into the Comprehensive Plan, they are informed by the Comprehensive Plan and may contain some overlapping action steps.

In 2025, the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners approved the *2026–2028 Strategic Plan*, which was developed through extensive interdepartmental collaboration and robust public input. The plan outlines five priority areas, each with associated action steps:

- Climate-smart and resilient infrastructure
- Public safety
- Community health
- Economic prosperity
- Governmental stewardship

Implementation progress for each of these priorities will be tracked and reported on a biannual basis.

Neighborhood Focus Area Plans. The City had a past practice of conducting smaller neighborhood focus plans across the community. This planning practice has been recently reactivated as an effort to engage with neighborhood residents and identify priorities for neighborhoods across Lincoln.

Subarea Planning and Other Studies. The Comprehensive Plan provides broad guidance for achieving the community's stated Vision. Putting details to the Plan takes additional effort. One means of doing this is through the preparation of subarea plans. Subarea plans offer greater details about the intended future of an area of the community — including land uses, infrastructure requirements, and development policies and standards. Many of these subarea plans are prepared by the City-County Planning and Development Services Department, while some are prepared by other agencies and departments.

Subarea Plans are typically approved through the Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) process and are reviewed by Planning Commission, City Council, and County Board. Potential subarea plans in the next five years include Airpark / NW 48th Street, Bethany, Downtown, Stevens Creek, and the Wilderness Park subarea.

The redevelopment process, coordinated through the Urban Development Department and utilizing Tax Increment Financing (TIF), is associated with subarea planning but does not require an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. Items that may be part of the redevelopment process include blight & substandard studies, redevelopment plans, and focus area plans. These items are required to be in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

Recently, subarea plans and redevelopment plans have been coordinated between the Urban Development Department and the Planning and Development Services Department. Additional analysis of ways to coordinate these planning activities should be conducted with a goal of making the overall planning process more efficient and understandable by the general public.

Subarea plans and other studies that relate to this Comprehensive Plan are listed below. Plans that have been formally adopted into the Comprehensive Plan include their Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) number.

- *Wilderness Park Subarea Plan; February 2000*
- *NRGIS Greenprint Challenge, August 2001*
- *Lincoln Airport F.A.R. Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study, 2003 (CPA04002)*
- *Lincoln Wastewater Facilities Master Plan November 2015*
- *South Haymarket Neighborhood Plan, December 2015 (CPA15003)*
- *Nebraska's Eastern Saline Wetlands Conservation Plan, 2018*
- *Downtown Lincoln Master Plan, December 2018 (CPA18003)*
- *Lincoln Public Schools 10 year Plan, December 2019*
- *Lincoln Water System Facilities Master Plan, July 2020*
- *Lincoln Affordable Housing Coordinated Action Plan, December 2020 (CPA20001)*
- *33rd and Cornhusker Subarea Plan, December 2020 (CPA20002)*
- *City of Lincoln Climate Action Plan, March 2021 (CPA21001)*
- *Transit Development Plan, August 2022*
- *Comprehensive Watershed Master Plan, October 2022 (CPA22005)*

- *City of Lincoln Strategic Plan for HUD Entitlement Programs; FY 2023-2027, Urban Development*
- *Local Food System Plan. October 2023 (CPA23009)*
- *Parks and Recreation 10 Year Facilities Plan, 2023*
- *University Place Subarea Plan, May 2025 (CPA25001)*
- *Belmont Neighborhood Subarea Plan, September 2025 (CPA25004)*
- *Age Friendly Three-Year Action Plan, 2026*
- *Lincoln Mobility Plan, December 2026*

The Planning & Development Services Director should complete a regular review of all subarea plans that become five years of age and older. This review would be for the purpose of determining the continued viability and relevance of those subareas plans to the Comprehensive Plan and the long range planning process.

Plan Amendments

The Plan is the community's collective vision. Yet, change is inevitable. New technologies and new community needs will arise during the planning period which were not foreseen during the Plan's development. Jobs, housing, transportation, goods and services will shift over time. The amendment process to the Plan must accommodate and help manage the inevitable change in a way that best promotes, and does not compromise, the community's core values, health and well being. The Plan amendment process must be an open and fair process, utilizing sound planning, economic, social and ecological principles.

Amendments to the Plan may be submitted in writing to the Planning Director by any group or individual at any time during the year. The Planning Director may elect to forward the Plan amendment request to the Planning Commission upon submission, or wait to include the request in a compilation that is reviewed by the Planning Commission once each year.

Plan Update Process

An important and unique planning process for Lincoln and Lancaster County is that development of the Comprehensive Plan and the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan, and their respective updates, are aligned in time and process. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requires that communities maintain a fiscally constrained Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) that is updated every 5 years and embodies at least a 20-year planning horizon in order to receive federal transportation funds. The Lincoln MPO's 2050 LRTP is a companion to the Transportation chapter in the 2050 Comprehensive Plan. The established update process assumes that the Comprehensive Plan undergoes a major update every ten years with a minor update at five years. The next major update to the Comprehensive Plan and LRTP will conclude in 2031, and it is anticipated that the updates will extend the planning horizon to 2060.