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# **Business & Economy Dialogue**

## **Community Committee Meeting**

### **September 24, 2020**

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**PLAN FORWARD 2050**  
**Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department**



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# Business & Economy

## Introduction

Over the next several months the Planning Department will be coordinating presentations with topic experts and discussions on various topics for the Community Committee meetings. This will be one of the key ways the Community Committee will have an opportunity to provide input on these topics. The discussion topic for the Community Committee meeting on September 24<sup>th</sup> will focus on business and economy. This document is being provided to you as a resource in advance of the September 24<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## Business & Economy in LPlan 2040

The current City-County Comprehensive Plan, LPlan 2040, contains many business and economy strategies and goals. All of these strategies and goals are found in [Chapter 5, Business & Economy](#). These strategies and goals lay a good foundation for development of PlanForward 2050. Some of these goals have been accomplished over the last 10 years whereas others may be removed or carried forward in the new Comprehensive Plan. While the Comprehensive Plan lists over 50 goals and strategies related to the economy, a smaller sample of the strategies and goals is provided below. These will continue to be discussed and examined as PlanForward 2050 is developed.

<b><i>Strategies for Economic Development</i></b>
Offer incentives for “primary” employers – that is for companies where the majority of their business and sales come from outside Lancaster County. The City should develop a policy on the use of incentives, such as Tax Increment Financing, for primary employers.
Apply design standards as a tool for economic development. They provide assurances for surrounding property owners as well as prospective developers.
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.
<b><i>Strategies for Downtown</i></b>
The City should 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
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.
Maintain and reinforce Lincoln’s successful Theater Policy; encourage new entertainment attractions to locate in the Downtown.
Encourage higher density development with parking areas at the rear of buildings or on upper floors of multi-use parking structures.
<b><i>Strategies for Lancaster County, Outside of Lincoln</i></b>
Locate all new commercial and industrial development within Lincoln or the incorporated communities.
Continue to encourage and permit accessory home businesses, and locate businesses within the commercial areas of incorporated towns as they expand beyond the definition of home occupation.
Continue efforts to preserve the viability of the county’s agriculture industry through zoning, easements, and other means.

<b><i>Strategies for Commercial and Industrial Development</i></b>
It is the policy that Commercial and Industrial Centers in Lancaster County 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 compatible 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.
Revise the Zoning Ordinance to provide more flexibility, particularly in commercial districts. Provide a mechanism for adjustments in older zoning districts to lot area, height, setbacks, and parking standards, similar to the provisions already available for newer districts.
Consider opportunities for centralized, shared public parking lots and structures beyond the downtown area.
<b><i>Strategies for Commercial Centers</i></b>
Disperse Commercial Centers throughout the community to support convenience of access and to lessen impacts on infrastructure.
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.
Discourage single use centers. Office parks should include supporting retail and residential components, while shopping centers should include supporting office and residential uses.
Develop Commercial Centers as compact clusters or mixed use nodes with appropriate site design features to accommodate shared parking and ease of pedestrian movement, to minimize impacts on adjacent areas, and encourage a unique character.
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.
<b><i>Strategies for Commercial Infill</i></b>
Discourage auto-oriented strip commercial development and seek opportunities for residential mixed use redevelopment and/ or transit oriented development of existing commercial strips.
Maintain and encourage businesses that conveniently serve nearby residents, while ensuring compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods.
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, are properly screened, fulfill a demonstrated need and are beneficial to health and safety.
Ensure the priority in older areas is on retaining areas for residential development. Prior to approving the removal of housing in order to provide for additional parking to support existing centers, alternatives such as reduced parking requirements, shared parking, additional on-street parking, or the removal of other commercial structures should be explored.
Encourage efforts to find new uses for abandoned, under-utilized or “brownfield” sites that are contaminated, through redevelopment and environmental mitigation.

## 2018 Downtown Master Plan

[The 2018 Downtown Master 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 Downtown stakeholders for the next ten-year investment cycle. The previous 2005 Lincoln Downtown Master Plan and 2012 Update have both served their purpose to guide the evolution of Downtown Lincoln guiding over \$1 billion dollars' worth of investment. The 2018 Downtown Master Plan is not an update to previous plans but is a standalone document that will guide public and private investments to elevate Downtown Lincoln as the Center of Opportunity.

Section 4.4 of the Downtown Master Plan discusses economic development opportunities for downtown. The section includes almost 40 strategies across the following topic areas:

- Jobs & Office
- Technology & Innovation
- Linkages with UNL
- Linkages with the State
- Retail, Dining, & Entertainment
- Hospitality & Convention Space

## Staff Discussions

Planning Department staff began engaging with various City and County Departments in 2019 to discuss the upcoming Comprehensive Plan Update. Below is a summary of staff comments that relate to the economy.

The Comp Plan should include discussion of opportunity zones
We should have commercial property maintenance requirements
Look into addressing uses in the county that are murky today, such as event facilities, landscaping businesses
Strategies to get graduates to stay in Lincoln
Factors related to early childhood – early childhood component to plan
Alcohol policy – will we also be regulating other substances by 2050?
Theater policy
How much industrial to include on future land use map?
Evaluating commercial center designations – neighborhood centers and walkability
Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development items
Additional explanation of some of our policies that draw criticism from the development community such as the four corners development policy
Address abandoned gas stations
Commercial feed lots – stronger language to protect agriculture related uses, large feed lots are agriculture, explain local food
Stronger language and policies about improving our older commercial areas
Minimum FARs for commercial centers, higher density
Address underemployment of immigrant population
Remove parking requirements from all non-residential uses
Bike parking

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## Business & Economy in Other Cities

Planning staff have been researching innovative practices in other cities. Some sample goals and priorities from other cities' comprehensive plans are listed below. You can also view the full documents by clicking on the links that are provided.

### Minneapolis, MN Comprehensive Plan

The Minneapolis 2040 Comprehensive Plan includes a section on [economic competitiveness](#). This section focuses on workforce development and achieving equitable economic outcomes for Minneapolis residents. This is an aspect that is largely absent from the current LPlan 2040 and something we plan to add for the 2050 update. The plan includes [35 policies](#) (and 100+ action items) relating to increasing the economic competitiveness of Minneapolis.

The logo for the Minneapolis 2040 Comprehensive Plan. It features the word "minneapolis" in a lowercase, sans-serif font, followed by a vertical line and the year "2040" in a larger, bold, blue font. The entire logo is set against a dark blue rectangular background.

### Oklahoma City, OK Comprehensive Plan

The Oklahoma City Comprehensive Plan, planokc, includes a section on economic development, called [strengthenokc](#). The plan focuses on further diversification of Oklahoma City's economy, which is currently dominated by the energy sector. The plan includes [six topic areas](#) that need to be addressed.



- Development-Ready Land: A previous needs assessment completed by the city suggests that they should maintain an inventory of 1,000 acres of development-ready land for industrial and large commercial uses.
- Quality of the City: Employees and businesses are putting increasing emphasis on quality of life when selecting where to live and locate.
- Education: The importance of educational achievement to create a quality workforce and entrepreneurial environment.
- Jobs: Addressing mismatches between workforce and job opportunities.
- Public Safety: Perceptions of public safety impact investment confidence of both businesses and employees.
- City Revenues: Addresses the role that government spending and revenue collection impact economic development.

These topic areas feed into the [eight initiatives](#) identified to achieve the city's economic development goals.

- Facilitate commercial and industrial development to grow and diversify our economy.
- Boost educational achievement through incentives and neighborhood diversification.
- Improve community appearance.
- Invest in place-making efforts in special districts and throughout the city.
- Foster stable, attractive neighborhoods and commercial districts through infill and good design.
- Improve public safety.
- Increase efficiency of city services provision.
- Increase and stabilize tax revenues.

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## Madison, WI Comprehensive Plan

The Madison Comprehensive Plan, [Imagine Madison](#), includes a chapter on “Economy and Opportunity.” The chapter has two overall goals:

- Madison will have a growing, diversified economy that offers opportunity for businesses and residents to prosper.
- Madison will have equitable education and advancement opportunities that meet the needs of each resident.



Within these goals there are eight strategies:

- Retain existing employers and attract new employers to ensure residents have access to jobs.
- Ensure an adequate supply of sites for a wide variety of employers to operate and grow.
- Support jobs that pay a family-supporting living wage.
- Close the educational opportunity gap.
- Remove barriers to achieving economic stability.
- Support small businesses and cultivate entrepreneurship, especially businesses owned by underrepresented groups.
- Support efforts for businesses and consumers to produce and buy local food, products, and services.
- City government should lead and encourage other employers to develop a diverse workforce best able to serve an increasingly diverse population.

## Additional Resources

Below are links to two articles from Michael Berne, an economic development consultant who had involvement with the city’s Downtown Master Plan. The articles discuss both the short-term impact of COVID-19 on businesses along with long-term retail trends.

[Greedy While Others Are Fearful  
Where Retail Recovers First](#)

The Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development (LPED) has a collection of detailed reports about Lincoln’s economy on their website.

[LPED Research & Reports](#)

NAI FMA Realty in Lincoln released their First Half 2020 Market Report which includes initial COVID-19 impacts.

[First Half 2020 Market Report](#)