Transit Oriented Development Guide
35th / 33rd Street ORBT Station

The introduction of Omaha’s first bus rapid transit route, ORBT, brings the opportunity to facilitate Transit Oriented Development along the route. One goal of Omaha’s Transit Oriented Development initiative is to Respect Neighborhood Context. This document serves as a guide to neighborhood context. This document should be used to inform the design and form of new development within 1/2 mile of the 35th / 33rd Street ORBT Station (see map on page 3).

Within this document you will find:

1. Area Characteristics - Facts from the 2017 Census ACS, Douglas County Assessor, and Market Study by Enterprise Partners
2. Map - A map of the area showing recommend Tiers of development and other areas of note
3. Recommendations - Recommendations for new development within the area

The 35th / 33rd Street area varies in context from high-rise modern development to historic single-family neighborhoods.

Two general contexts of development exist within 1/2 mile of the 35th / 33rd Street ORBT station. One context has longer blocks, taller and newer buildings, with a much larger footprint - this context generally exists between Dodge Street and Harney Street from 36th Street to Turner Boulevard. The other is a context of established neighborhoods typically two to three stories in height, small footprint, predominately single family with a mix of duplexes, townhouses, and small apartment buildings. This context is typically north of Dodge Street, South of Harney Street or west of 36th Street. These neighborhoods are historic, walkable, affordable, multi-cultural, multi-generational, home to small local businesses, with green spaces and community gardens.
The 35th / 33rd Street ORBT Station Location (study area) already exhibits attributes reflective of typical Transit Oriented Development areas and populations.

The population of the study area is nearly 14,000 persons. Population density of the area is nearly 3 times that of the City of Omaha at 13 people per acre. The median home value and median household income are both lower than the City as a whole, and affordable housing is a priority for the community. The population is younger; fewer households have persons under the age of 18 years; the commute to work is shorter, and more persons travel by public transportation or walk to work - when compared to the City as a whole. The following facts relate to TOD regulations or recommendations.

- The majority of buildings in the area are LESS than 2,000 SQ FT²
- 29% are 1-1.5 stories
- 65% are 2-2.5 stories
- 4% are 3-3.5 stories
- 2% are 4+ stories

- The 2015 Median Household Rent in the area was $613 and an undersupply of units for extremely low-income households exists

- The 35th / 33rd Street ORBT station location.

A variety of land uses exist within the study area. The predominate use is single family residential. Also of note are the amount of 2-4 & townhouse, multi-family, institutional, office, and transportation uses. Mixed-use is desired within the area, but only makes up 1% of the land area.

Sources:
1. 2017 American Community Survey 5-year estimates
2. Douglas County Assessor
3. Housing Market Study for Omaha, November 2017, Enterprise
The 35th / 33rd ORBT station area is home to regional destinations (Mutual of Omaha and Midtown Crossing) and historic, urban neighborhoods.

Tiers guide the height and scale of development. Tier 1 is the most intense with unlimited height; 2-6 stories are appropriate in Tier 2; 1-3 story buildings including duplexes, townhomes, and small apartment buildings are appropriate for Tier 3; and Tier 4 is the least intense opening the door for accessory dwelling units in traditionally single family areas. The map to the left shows the appropriate Tier boundaries.

Historic buildings, whether officially designated or not, exist throughout the area. The West Central-Cathedral Local Historic District and the Gold Coast National Historic District are located along the western edge of the station area. Individual historic sites are scattered throughout the area, as shown on the map to the left.

Generally, amendments to the City’s Future Land Use map in alignment with the Tier map would be supported. One notable area is between Davenport Street and Dodge Street where the existing zoning is R7 and the Future Land Use is Low Density Residential.
1. Context Summary

Neighborhood context is stronger and of greater concern generally north of Dodge Street, south of Harney Street or west of 36th Street — where the majority of the historic neighborhood context is intact. Historic charm, character, walkability, affordability, and diversity are priorities of the area. Residential architecture that stylistically is similar to the area is preferred. Density and smaller setbacks are suitable, but boxy modern design is not. Seventy-eight percent of buildings in the area were constructed before 1940 — and residents want new buildings to last just as long, which requires quality materials and craftsmanship. Every effort should be made to retain existing mature trees. Areas south of Harney Street are suitable for more diverse architectural styles.

As part of the public participation process, feedback was gathered on a series of images. Those with the strongest reaction are shown below and on page 5, along with highlights of the feedback received.
The majority of public meeting attendees thought the above residential building was “bad” or “close - but not acceptable.” Voters disliked the lack of building entrance on the street, minimal windows, minimal landscaping, and “modern” materials.

The majority of public meeting attendees thought the above residential building was “bad” or “close - but not acceptable.” Voters were concerned about how the building would look over time, did not like the materials, and thought the setback was too large.

The majority of public meeting attendees thought the above residential building was “bad” or “close - but not acceptable.” Voters did not like the materials and repetition.

The majority of public meeting attendees thought the above residential building was “bad” or “close - but not acceptable.” Voters did not think this building stylistically fit into the area as a residential building (thought it looked too much like an office building).

The majority of public meeting attendees thought the above residential building was “bad” or “close - but not acceptable.” Voters like the height, but thought the facade was plain (balconies would help), and too much emphasis is placed on the car.
2. Specific Recommendations

New development should be compatible with the existing context in which it is located. The determination of context should include sorting the good and desirable characteristics from the undesirable. It should not be assumed that all existing physical features are desirable. The appeal of older neighborhoods, like those around the 35th/33rd Street ORBT Station area, is that they exhibit time tested principles of design in an era of pedestrian-oriented development. The ill-fitting infill typically was built during the 1950s-1980s, lacks a front entrance, and/or has parking in front of the building. This ill-fitting infill should not be the basis of desirable context.

Compatibility is evaluated based upon a building’s footprint, placement in relation to the street, massing, scale, and form of adjacent properties. Specifically, new development should:

• Complement the shared characteristics of existing buildings on the block - setbacks, height, massing, and transition from public to private space (typically in the form of a porch for residential properties).

• Incorporate architectural features and detailing proportional to the scale of surrounding development on the block. Give equal design treatment and architectural consideration to all elevations.

• Integrate into the predominant scale of the neighborhood and/or particular block and be sensitive to the height, scale, building footprint, etc. of adjacent uses. Use a combination of building setbacks, upper-story stepbacks, and articulated sub-volumes to sensitively and adequately transition to adjacent lower height buildings.

• Design the massing of buildings on combined lots to respond to the pattern and rhythm of both adjacent development and the prevailing development within the block.

• Residential projects should use building materials found in the neighborhood and avoid metal, concrete, concrete block, and vinyl siding as wall surfaces.

• Utilize existing alleys to access individual properties. If not functional, improve to functional status whenever possible.

• If alleys are not present, shared driveways are encouraged and driveway width should be limited to the minimum practical width.

• Add to the affordable housing stock, at a minimum replace 1:1. “Affordable” does not necessarily mean income restricted, but a price point reasonable to households making the area’s median income.

• Avoid creating walls or perceived boundaries within the area. These are typically created by long and/or tall walls and/or fences.