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 42nd 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 42nd Street area is diverse - from historic neighborhoods to a nationally recognized medical center.

The north side of Dodge Street is made of of small scale residential uses and boardered by two commercial corridors (Saddle Creek Road and Dodge Street). The south side of Dodge Street includes development formed around former streetcar stop (Blackstone) and the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Dodge Street is developed with predominately automobile oriented commercial development.
The 42nd Street ORBT Station Location (study area) already exhibits several attributes reflective of typical Transit Oriented Development areas and populations.

Portions of four census tracts are within 1/2 mile of the 42nd street ORBT stations. The population of these four census tracts is nearly 13,000 persons. Population density of the area is double that of the City of Omaha at 10 people per acre. The median home value, median rent, and median household income are all slightly lower than the City as a whole. 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.

- **% of Occupied Housing Units with No or 1 Vehicle**: 45% in Omaha, 67% in Study Area
- **Dwelling Units per Acre**: 5.37 in Study Area, 2.18 in Omaha
- **Housing Units exist within 1/2 mile of the 42nd Street ORBT station**: 3,151
- **Accessory Dwelling Units already exist in the area**: 12
- **Dwelling Units exist within 1/2 mile of the 42nd Street ORBT station**: 3,151
- **2,000 buildings in the area are LESS than 2,000 SQ FT**: The majority (56%) of buildings in the area are less than 2,000 square feet.
- **The majority (52%) of buildings in the area are 2 - 2.5 stories in height**: The majority (52%) of buildings in the area are 2 - 2.5 stories in height.

**Land Uses (by acreage) within 1/2 mile of the 42nd Street ORBT station location.**

A variety of land uses exist within the study area. The predominant use is single family residential, with institutional in a close second. Mixed-use and Park & Recreation uses both take up less than 1% of 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 42nd Street ORBT station area is home to historic, urban neighborhoods and mixed-use areas and a nationally recognized medical center.

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.

The Old Coast National Historic District and West Central-Cathedral Local Historic District are within 1/2 mile of the 42nd Street station location. Historic buildings exist throughout the area - most recognizable is the Joslyn Castle.
1. Context Summary

The 42nd Street ORBT station location provides many features of a pedestrian oriented mixed-use environment typical to early 20th century American development. Farnam and 40th Street was a historic streetcar stop, and the surrounding development reflects the transit oriented development principles we are aiming to achieve today. The scale of development is small, close grained with buildings positioned in relationship to the street and sidewalks offering a mixture of residential, office and commercial.

Historic charm, character, and walkability are priorities of the area. North of Dodge Street is predominantly single family detached and small scale multi-family residential. A variety of building types (single family to high-rise) are present south of Dodge Street. The University of Nebraska Medical Center is located south of Dodge Street and accounts for much of the new development in the area in recent years.

Commercial development along Dodge Street and Saddle Creek Road rarely reflect the historic context of the adjacent neighborhoods.

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 and online voters found the residential buildings below “acceptable” or “excellent.”
- Voters liked the scale, architectural detail, and materials of the above townhomes.
- Voters liked the scale, porches, and landscaping of the above duplex.
- The four accessory dwelling units at the bottom right of this page were favored by voters because they increased housing options and density while architecturally appropriate and in scale with the surrounding single family detached homes.
Voters like scale, setback from the street with landscaping, and public/private transition with the fenced in patio space.

Voters like the materials, setback, and landscaping of the multi-family building on the left.

Voters like the large windows, upper floor stepback, and variation in facade depth of the multi-family building to the right.

Voters thought the building on the right was acceptable in Tier 1 due to the height and overall scale of the building.

The majority of public meeting attendees and online voters found the residential buildings below “bad” or “close - but not acceptable.”

Voters did not like the prominent garages and wide driveway on the duplex on the left.

Voters did not like the solid wall on the ground level, narrow sidewalk directly adjacent to the street, and did not think an adequate transition was provided to the building to the right.

Voters did not like the garage doors, visible ground level parking, or “cold” materials of the building above.

Voters did not like the ground floor valet parking would create a traffic nightmare and did not like the screens on the remaining first floor facade.
2. Specific Recommendations

New development should be compatible with the existing context in which it is located. The appeal of older neighborhoods, like those surround the 42nd Street ORBT Station area, is that they exhibit time tested principles of design in an era of pedestrian-oriented development. 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 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.

All new development should be landscaped, connected, and prioritize walkability.

Specifically, new development should:

- Avoid creating walls or perceived boundaries within the area. These are typically created by long and / or tall walls and / or fences.
- Small pedestrian scale blocks should be utilized. Large “superblocks” and street and alley vacations should be avoided as they degrade walkability.
- If long blocks are unavoidable, they should include pedestrian cut-throughs, pocket parks, and architectural treatments to break up the large block size.
- On street parking provides a buffer between the pedestrian and moving traffic. It should be preserved, and added, whenever possible.
- Incorporate architectural features and detailing proportional to the scale of surrounding development on the block. Give equal design treatment and architectural consideration to all visible elevations - with particular attention to elevations adjacent to streets.
- Multi-story buildings should be designed with a variety of scales. Create a scale and level of detail at the street level - including windows, architectural details, entrances, signage, amenities, etc. - appropriate to the pedestrian.
- Additions to the public realm are encouraged, such as: outdoor dining, public plazas, pocket parks, alley activation, public art, etc.
- Parking should be located in a mixed use garage or at the rear of the property behind buildings. Where feasible, parking is encouraged in below grade structures. Additional surface parking lots in mixed use areas, particularly those with street frontage, are discouraged.
- Sharing parking among a variety of uses is encouraged.
- Prioritize the safety of pedestrians by installing wide sidewalks, minimizing the number and length of automobile - pedestrian conflict points, etc.
- Every effort should be made to retain existing mature trees.

Additionally, new development within or abutting residential areas should:

- Complement the shared characteristics of existing buildings on the block - setbacks, height, building footprint, grade, and transition from public to private space (typically in the form of a porch for residential properties).
- 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.
- In residential areas, locate garages behind residences and access from any alley when possible. If alleys are 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.