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 49th 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 49th Street area is within the Dundee commercial and residential neighborhood.

The 49th Street area developed as part of Omaha’s original streetcar network. Therefore, it is walkable, contains a variety of uses, and the materials and craftsmanship have remained stable over several decades. Many of the attributes of the area are what we strive to see in new Transit Oriented Developments. As sites redevelop, they need to add to the walkable context of the area.
The 49th Street ORBT Station Location (study area) is more dense than the City as a whole, but is similar in many other characteristics.

 Portions of four census tracts are within 1/2 mile of the 49th street ORBT stations. The population of these four census tracts is nearly 14,000 persons. The 2015 population within 1/4 mile of the station was 1,727\(^3\). Population density of the area is more than two times that of the City of Omaha at 11 people per acre. The median home value, median rent, and median household income are all similar the City as a whole. Fewer households have persons under the age of 18 years; the commute to work is shorter, and surprisingly, fewer 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\(^1\)

\(\begin{array}{c}
\text{Omaha} & 45\% \\
\text{Study Area} & 60\%
\end{array}\)

Dwelling Units per Acre\(^1\)

\(\begin{array}{c}
\text{Study Area} & 5.35 \\
\text{In Omaha} & 2.18
\end{array}\)

2,945 Housing Units exist within 1/2 mile of the 49th Street ORBT station\(^2\)

Of the 885 Housing Units within 1/4 mile of the 49th Street station...

- Owner 52%
- Renter 41%
- Vacant 7%

2,000 The majority (54%) of buildings in the area are LESS than 2,000 SQ FT\(^2\)

4 Accessory Dwelling Units already exist in the area\(^2\)

The majority (67%) of buildings in the area are 2 - 2.5 stories in height. Only 8 buildings are 5 stories or taller\(^2\)

Land Uses (by acreage) within 1/2 mile of the 49th Street ORBT station location.

A variety of land uses exist within the study area. The predominate use is single family residential. The majority of the institutional area is the Holy Sepulchre Cemetery. 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 49th ORBT station area is located in an urban neighborhood between the University of Nebraska Omaha and University of Nebraska 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.

Historic buildings, whether officially designated or not, exist throughout the area. The majority of the area is within the Dundee / Happy Hollow National Historic District, as shown on the map to the left.

The Dundee Neighborhood Conservation / Enhancement District Plan covers the Dundee commercial area along Underwood Avenue from 49th Street to 51st Street.
1. Context Summary

The 49th Street ORBT station location is within the Dundee neighborhood residential and commercial district. The district provides many features of a pedestrian oriented mixed-use environment typical to early 20th century American development. This commercial district developed as part of the original streetcar network providing many of the general services for the neighborhood and retains much of the character of that period. 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.

Neighborhood context is strong and a main appeal to the the 49th Street ORBT station area. Historic charm, character, and walkability are priorities of the area. A variety of residential building types (single family, duplex, multi-family) are present north of Dodge Street, but south of Dodge Street is predominently single family detached residential. The majority buildings south of Dodge Street that are not single family detached are almost indistinguishable from single family detached.

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.
Recommendations

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 like scale, setback from the street with landscaping, and public / private transition with the fenced in patio space.

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 prominent garages and wide driveway on the duplex on the left.

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.

Voters thought the building on the right was acceptable in Tier 1 due to the height and overall scale of the building.
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 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 on several factors, including 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:

• 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).

• 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.

• 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.

• 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. New residential buildings with 1-4 units should have a similar building footprint, height, and architectural detail as traditional single family detached 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.

• 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.

• 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.

• Prioritize the safety of pedestrians by installing wide sidewalks, minimizing the number and length of automobile - pedestrian conflict points, etc.

• Additions to the public realm are encouraged, such as: outdoor dining, public plazas, pocket parks, alley activation, public art, etc.

• Every effort should be made to retain existing mature trees.

• Predominant roof forms along a block face should be consistent, as well as features such as overhangs, dormers and bay windows.