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 Park Avenue ORBT Station (see map on page 3).

Within this document you will find:

1. Area Characteristics - Facts from the 2017 Census ACS and Douglas County Assessor
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

Many different contexts exist within 1/2 mile of the Park Avenue ORBT station.

Creighton University, The Atlas Apartments, and Boys Town National Hospital are three major land uses that exist in the northern extent of the station area. Smaller commercial properties exist from Dodge Street to Harney Street, closest to the ORBT stations. Historic, urban neighborhoods exist south of Harney Street. The Park Avenue area in general does not have one cohesive character or style. But, the importance of the Park Avenue area cannot be overlooked - it provides a vital introduction to midtown and downtown from the interstate. The boundaries between different contexts is very important giving the significant changes in building type, scale, and form within such close proximity.
The Park Avenue ORBT Station Location (study area) already exhibits attributes reflective of typical Transit Oriented Development areas and populations.

The population of the study area is slightly over 10,000 persons. Population density of the area is twice that of the City of Omaha at 11 people per acre. The median home value and median household income are both lower than the City as a whole. 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 nearby presence of Creighton University does skew certain data - such as automobile ownership, median age, mode of transportaiton to work, rent, and income. The following facts relate to TOD regulations or recommendations.
The Park Avenue ORBT station area varies from national signifcants given the proximity to Creighton University and presence of I-480 to very small grain signifcants given the 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, 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. The Future Land Use for the majority of the area west of North 30th Street is Low Density Residential, but the zoning is for Office or High Density Residential. South of Harney, the Future Land Use recommendation is High Density, which is consistent with the majority of the zoning. However, what exists is more medium density development. A closer analysis is needed to determine the right fit.

Although not currently listed, the building above is thought to be eligible for historic status.
1. Context Summary
Context varies greatly throughout the Park Avenue station area. From Mutual of Omaha, Creighton University, Boy Town National Hospital to 700 Sq Ft single family homes. Physical attributes, such as streets, better separate areas of character than distance to the station. West of North 30th Street exhibits the similar neighborhood characteristics as described in the 35th / 33rd Street station area. Turner Boulevard from Dodge Street to Harney separate Midtown Crossing from the smaller block character east of Turner Boulevard. South of Harney, the character is historic urban neighborhood.

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 building to the left “acceptable” or “excellent.” Voters like the brick, trees, traditional style, windows, and thought it would hold its value over time.

The majority of public meeting attendees and online voters found the residential building above “acceptable” or “excellent.” The main appeal was the accessory dwelling unit above the garage. The appeal is the different housing type and price point the accessory dwelling unit provides. The main structure was thought to be a little large, but an overall stylistic fit for the neighborhood.

The majority of public meeting attendees and online voters found the residential building above “acceptable” or “excellent.” Voters like the small size and recessed garage, but would prefer a larger porch and more trees.
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 with focus on pedestrian orientation and comfort. 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 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).
- 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.
- Utilize buildings on edges (North 30th Street, South 29th Street, Harney Street, etc.) as transition elements with style, grade, setbacks, etc. consistent with adjacent residential properties.

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