

the North Omaha development project

October 2007

A strategy for community investment

North Omaha Development Project Steering Committee

Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce

RDG Planning & Design

Robert Peters Company

Economics Research Associates

Alexander Garvin & Associates

AHL Consulting, Inc.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank the following organizations and people for their involvement in this study

NORTH OMAHA DEVELOPMENT PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Reverend Leroy E. Adams, Jr., Morning Star Baptist Church
Reverend Selwyn Bachus, Salem Baptist Church
Cathy Banks, SAC Federal Credit Union
Jerry Banks, Lozier Company
Robert Braun, Lozier Company
David G. Brown, Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce
Frank Brown, Omaha City Council
Dr. Richard Brown, Charles Drew Health Center, Inc.
Shawn Buchanan, All American Meats, Inc.
Susan Buffett, The Sherwood Foundation
Dan Burkey, Creighton University
Roger Christianson, Omaha Public Power District
Pat Corrigan, 3MV Bancorp
Brenda Council, Whitner Law Firm, P.C., L.L.O.
Frank Dailey, Stage II

Dick Davis, Davis Companies
Calvin Dunn, Asphalt Maintenance, Inc.
Mayor Mike Fahey, City of Omaha
Rex Fisher, Qwest
Bishop John O. Ford, Second Advent Christian Church
Dell Gines, District 2 Neighborhood Coalition
Michael Green, EverGreen Capital Management, Incorporated
John Griffith, 3MV Bancorp
Jim Grotrian, Metropolitan Community College
Frank Hayes, Hayes & Associates, L.L.C.
Amanda Jedlicka, Habitat for Humanity of Omaha, Inc.
Steve Jensen, City of Omaha Planning Department
Tim Kenny, Nebraska Investment Finance Authority
Percy Kirk, Cox Communications
David Kramer, Wells Fargo Bank Nebraska, N.A.
Celann LaGreca, BlueCross BlueShield of Nebraska
Jim Landen, Security National Bank
Kay Leflore, Leflore's New Look Fashions
Ken Lyons, New Community Development Corporation
Michael Maroney, Omaha Economic Development Corporation
JoAnn McDowell, Metropolitan Community College
Thomas McGowan, McGowan Family Foundation
Dennis O'Neal, First National of Nebraska
Judy Pearl-Lee, Frontier Bag Company, Inc.

Vicki Quaites-Ferris, City of Omaha
Herb Rhodes, American Harvest Company
Chris Rodgers, Douglas County, Commission
Ted Schwab, Alegent Health
Michael Simmonds, Simmonds Restaurant Management
Ted Simpson, Nebraska Investment Finance Authority
Thomasina Skipper, State Farm Insurance
Dr. Thomas L. Smith, Sr., Paradise Baptist Church
Chief Thomas Warren, Omaha Police Department
Marguerita Washington, The Omaha Star
Ernest White, American National Bank
Cathy Wyatt, Midwest Geriatrics, Inc.

ADDITIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE PARTICIPANTS

Courtney Dunbar, Security National Bank
Paula Glassman, Simmonds Restaurant Management
Kenneth Johnson, City of Omaha
Deborah Keating, First National Bank
Lisa Laday-Davis, The Davis Companies
Cindy Nieves, Bank of the West
James Thele, City of Omaha

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank the following organizations and people for their involvement in this study

GREATER OMAHA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE STAFF

Shannon Snow, AICP
Pete Festersen
Tim Clark
Wendy Boyer
Winsley Durand
Karla Ewert
Justin Hardacre
Susan Hart
Alecia Hartwig
Jolie Koesters
RuthAnn Manley
Ellen Marshall
Patti McAtee
Kim Sellmeyer

CONSULTING TEAM

RDG Planning & Design
Martin Shukert, FAICP
Amy Haase, AICP
Gary Lozano, AICP
Paul Hunt
Ben Iwen
Cory Scott, AICP
Lea Schuster
Michelle Chamlee
Bobbi Jacobsen
Corey Green

ROBERT PETERS COMPANY

Robert Peters

ALEXANDER GARVIN & ASSOCIATES

Alexander Garvin
Anthony Goldsby
Michael Crockett

ERA

Richard Starr
Richard Lambert

AHL CONSULTING, INC

Dan Dube

OTHER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND PARTICIPANTS

Augustana Lutheran Church
Cox Communications
Creighton University
Family Housing Advisory Services
Gene Haynes, Omaha North High School (Omaha Public Schools)
Phyllis Hicks, Omaha Star
InPlay
KETV
Love's Jazz and Arts Center
Metropolitan Community College
Jim Nelson, Jim Nelson Media Services
Doug Parrott, Bailey Lauerman
James Robinson, The Urban Marketing Group
Salem Baptist Church
Shannon Sherman, Bailey Lauerman
Herb Thompson, Writer
The Urban League of Nebraska, Inc.



CONTENTS

Part 1	Page 09	NORTH OMAHA IN MAPS
Part 2	Page 37	MARKET ANALYSIS
Part 3	Page 53	VOICES OF THE COMMUNITY
Part 4	Page 69	THE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
Part 5	Page 95	THE PLAN DEVELOPED
Part 6	Page 135	IMPLEMENTING THE NORTH OMAHA DEVELOPMENT PROJECT



INTRODUCTION



Jewell Building

At the intersection of 24th and Grant in North Omaha stands the Jewell Building, built in 1923. The second floor of the Jewell Building was the home of the Dreamland Ballroom. The building and its historic ballroom, witnesses to almost 85 years of history, symbolize the richness and complexity of North Omaha. In a way, North Omaha has been a “land of dreams.” It is the place where Malcolm X was born and Whitney Young, who spoke at the Dreamland, worked to pursue the dream of justice. The great jazz musician Preston Love attended Long School and was one of many jazz greats (including Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Louis Armstrong, Lionel Hampton, and Nat King Cole) who performed at the Dreamland. North Omaha saw the beginning of the Hall of Fame careers of Bob Gibson and Gale Sayers, who continued to excel after their playing years were completed. Artists and professionals like Clarence Wigington, who was raised in North Omaha and designed Zion Baptist Church before becoming America’s first African-American municipal architect in St. Paul, Minnesota, began their careers in the community. Throughout its history, North Omaha has launched the dreams of many people.

Yet, the instances of dreams launched and fulfilled have been too infrequent for too many people. For much of its history, North Omaha has suffered from disinvestment and a scarcity of hope. Racism, despair and distrust have turned dreams to nightmares at different times in the community’s history. Now, in 2007, we see a North Omaha with signs of hope and opportunity, but also a North Omaha that still has too much poverty, too little investment, and too many acts of violence. Our community, which prides itself as a place that offers equal opportunity and an equal right to a safe and secure neighborhood to its citizens, finds this condition intolerable. And, perhaps for the first time, Omaha’s business and civic communities – both white and African-American – stand united to act.

It is emblematic that the Dreamland Ballroom now houses the offices of the city’s first economic development corporation, which is celebrating its thirtieth anniversary in 2007. The future of North Omaha and its people is tied to economic development, creating the opportunities that will help the community’s residents and businesses participate fully in the growth and dynamism of the metropolitan area. The critical importance of this goal has led the Greater Omaha Cham-

ber of Commerce, in association with an unparalleled alliance of corporate and community interests, to organize the North Omaha Development Project. This document is the first step in what will be both a long and rewarding journey for North Omaha and the entire Omaha community.

Many previous planning efforts have taken place in North Omaha; some have produced real results, while too many others have not. This effort is unprecedented for the breadth of its private and public sector support, the number of people who participated in the planning process, and the resurgence of Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. This document, designed to provide a strategic blueprint for the economic development of North Omaha, has six parts:

- Part One analyzes existing conditions and facts about North Omaha in maps and tables.
- Part Two examines markets for residential, commercial, office, and industrial development in North Omaha and discusses policy directions for each of these areas.
- Part Three summarizes the extensive process by which North Omahans and other interested people contributed their experience and insights and discussed their hopes for the neighborhood's future, defining the direction of this plan.

- Part Four presents a strategic framework for economic development, establishing the plan's overall philosophy and identifying the locations and focuses with the best chance of propelling North Omaha forward to the ultimate goal of a vibrant, self-sustaining economy.

- Part Five presents detailed plans for the Development Opportunity Areas identified by the framework, considers supporting systems, and discusses how the momentum established by the North Omaha Development Project grows throughout the neighborhood.

- Part Six examines the programs and techniques that will implement the North Omaha Development Project.

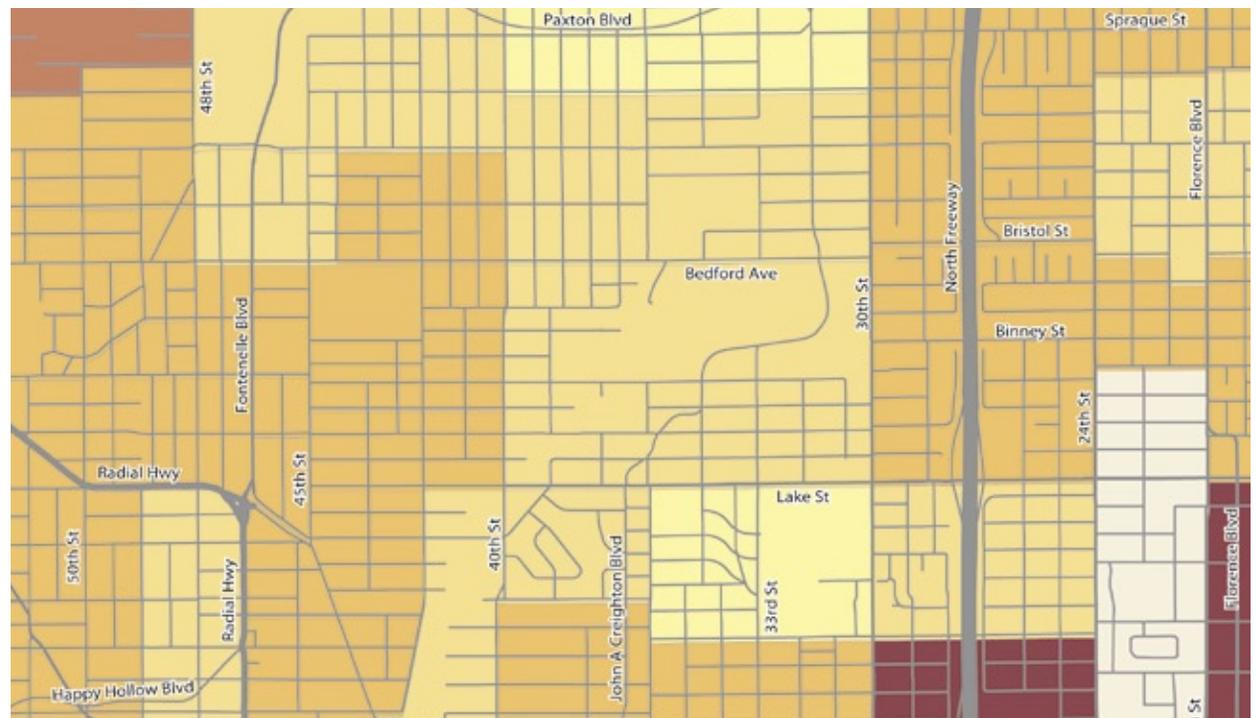
We dedicate this plan to the hundreds of people who came to meetings, participated in workshops, completed surveys, took part in discussions and interviews, and who have demonstrated their love for and commitment to the idea of North Omaha. A nineteenth-century visionary once said, "If you will it, then it is not a dream." Our hope is that this, realistically visionary plan, representing the joint efforts and best thinking of many people during the last seven months, provide North Omaha with the means and will to move beyond dreams, fulfilling its promise as the heart and soul of a community.

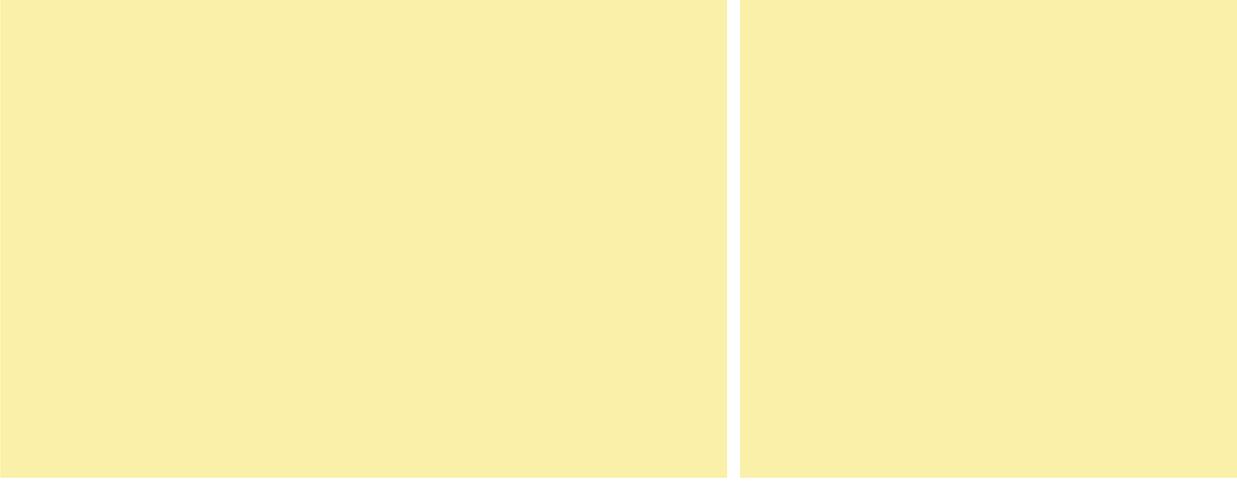


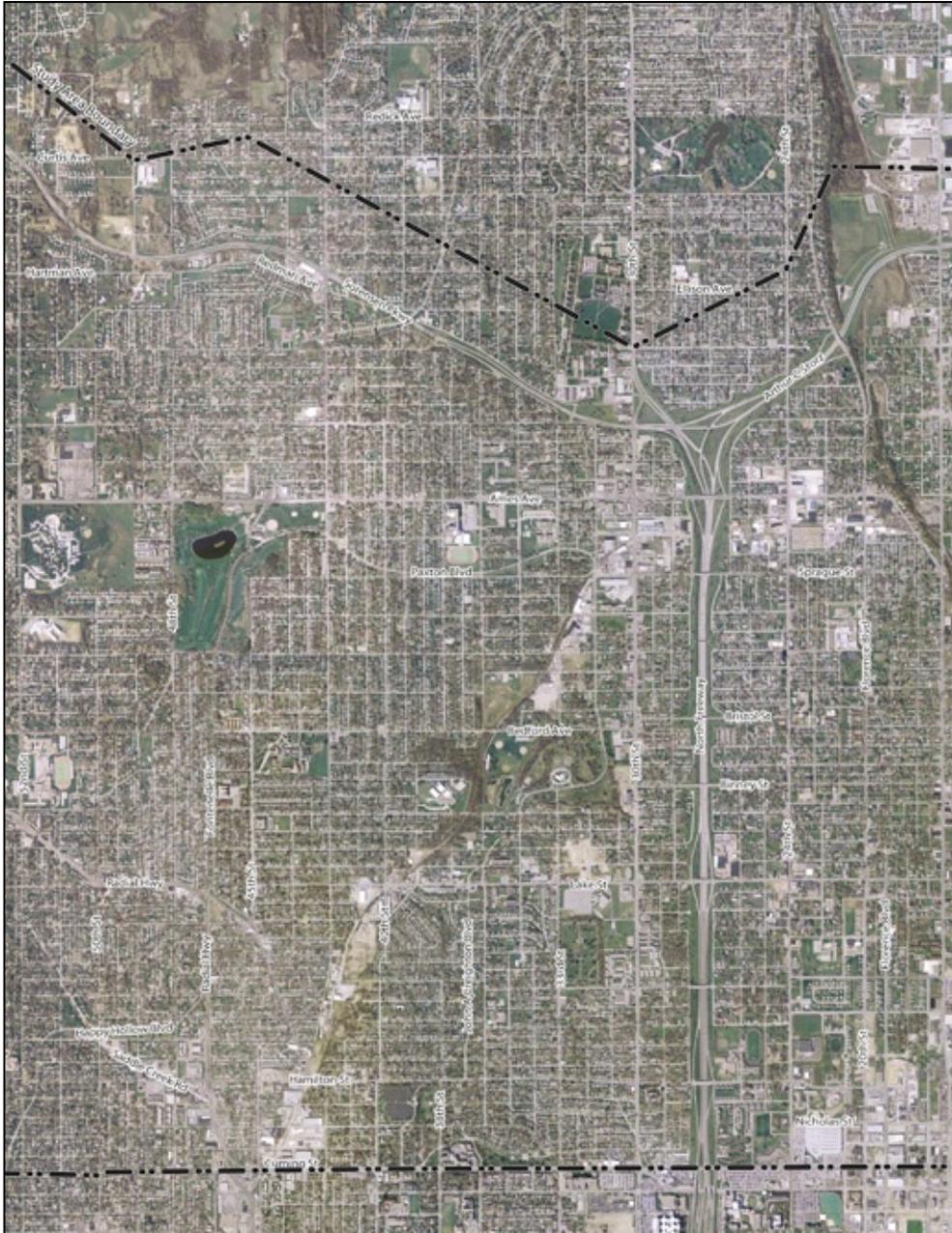


PART 1

NORTH OMAHA
IN MAPS:
A Neighborhood
Atlas







North Omaha is a dynamic neighborhood, rich in history, people, and potential. North Omaha Development Project will show ways in which North Omaha can harness these assets to create a self-sustaining, growing economy.

This first section provides a snapshot of North Omaha's people, economics, physical structure, and services, using maps to illustrate these features. These maps, along with accompanying tables and analysis, can tell us a great deal about the forces at work in the neighborhood – how population has changed, where development has taken place, how people move around, where major community institutions are clustered, and other important facts. This information, in turn, provides a basis for some of the approaches and ideas that this plan presents.

This section concentrates on the project study area, bounded by 16th Street on the east, Sorenson Parkway and Storz Expressway on the north, Cuming Street on the south, and 52nd Street on the west. It's information uses a number of sources, including the U.S. Bureau of the Census, City of Omaha, Douglas County, national research consultants, and field analysis.

Population and Population Change

Like other older city neighborhoods, North Omaha's population has declined slowly since 1990. The study area still includes over 40,000 people and has an increasingly young population.

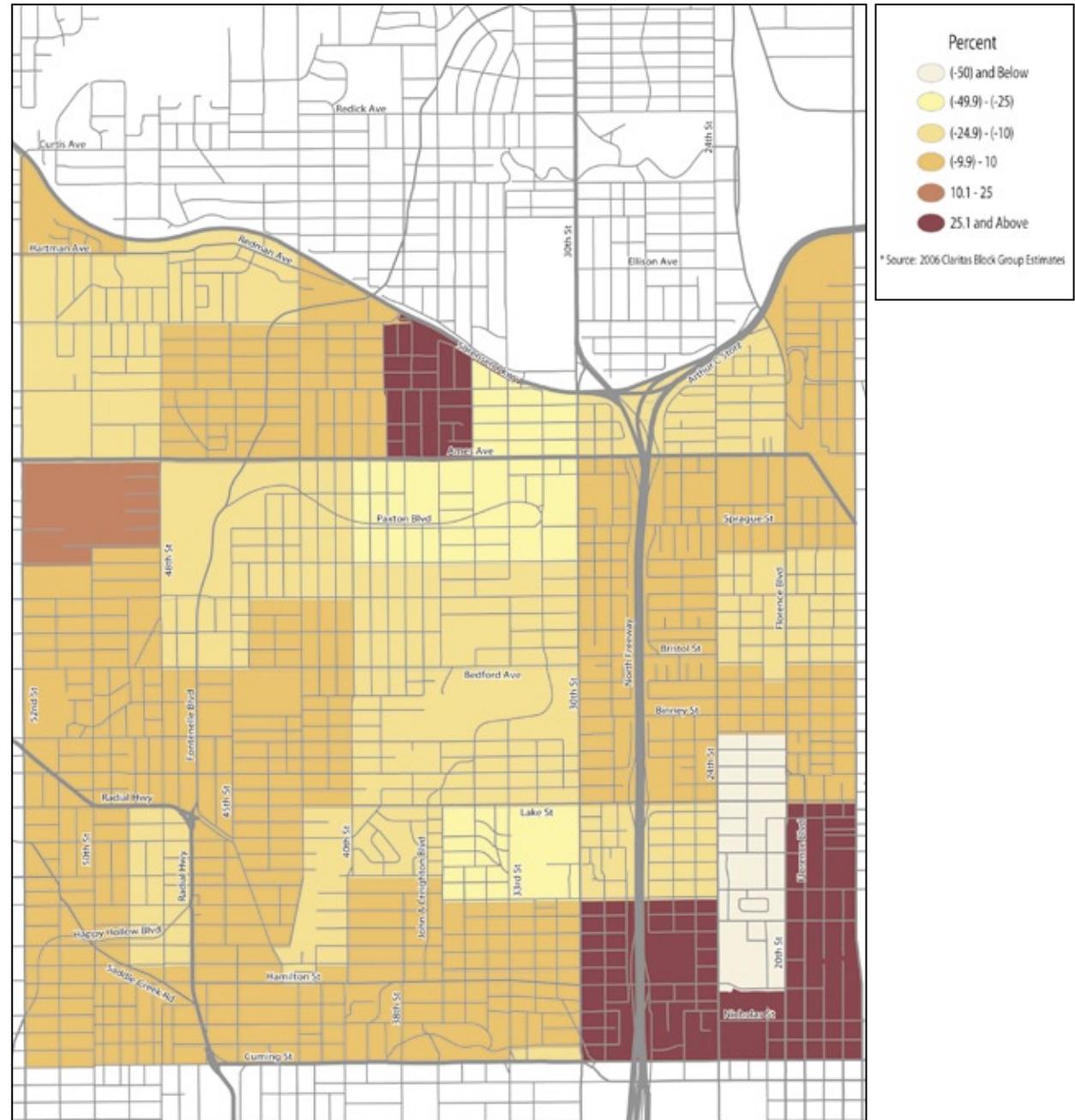
North Omaha has an estimated current population of about 41,000, and has declined by an annual average of 0.5% since 1990. The population of the rest of the city has grown to about 386,000, or an annual growth rate of 1.2% during the same period. However, most of this growth results from annexation of new development areas.

The population of North Omaha's neighborhoods have changed at different rates. Population has increased significantly in the southeast, where new housing construction has been concentrated. The area of largest apparent decrease actually reflects the replacement of the Logan Fontenelle public housing development by new single family houses.

North Omaha's population is younger than the city as a whole. In 2006, the neighborhood had a median age of 30.4, compared to 33.6 for Omaha as a whole. 26.57% of the neighborhood's population is under the age of 15. Those areas with the highest percentage of residents under the age of 15 correspond to Omaha Housing Authorities larger properties. This includes Pleasantview Homes near 30th and Lake streets.

Seniors are another important population group, representing about 9.4% of the neighborhood's population. The northwest corner of the study area, north of Ames and west of 48th Street has the highest percentage of residents over the age of 65. The areas around Adams Park and south of Ames between 16th and 30th streets also have higher percentages of older residents.

POPULATION CHANGE 1990-2006



POPULATION CHANGE, 1990-2006

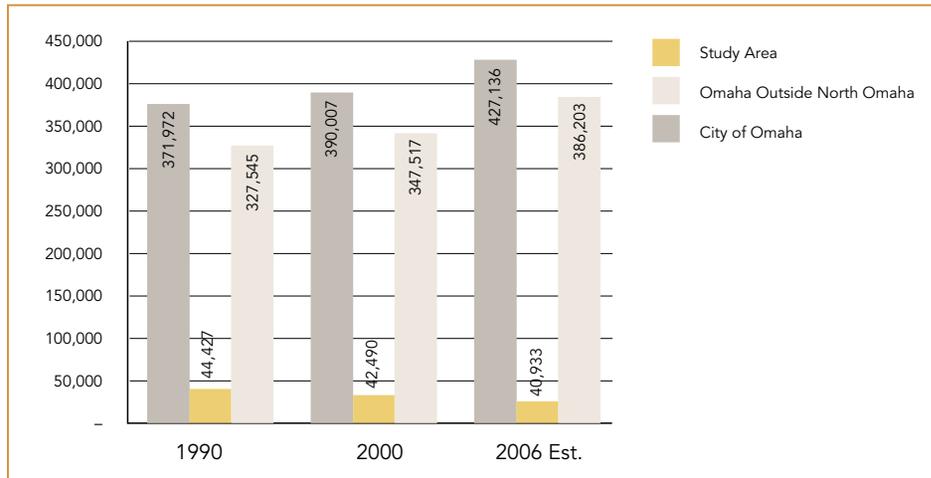
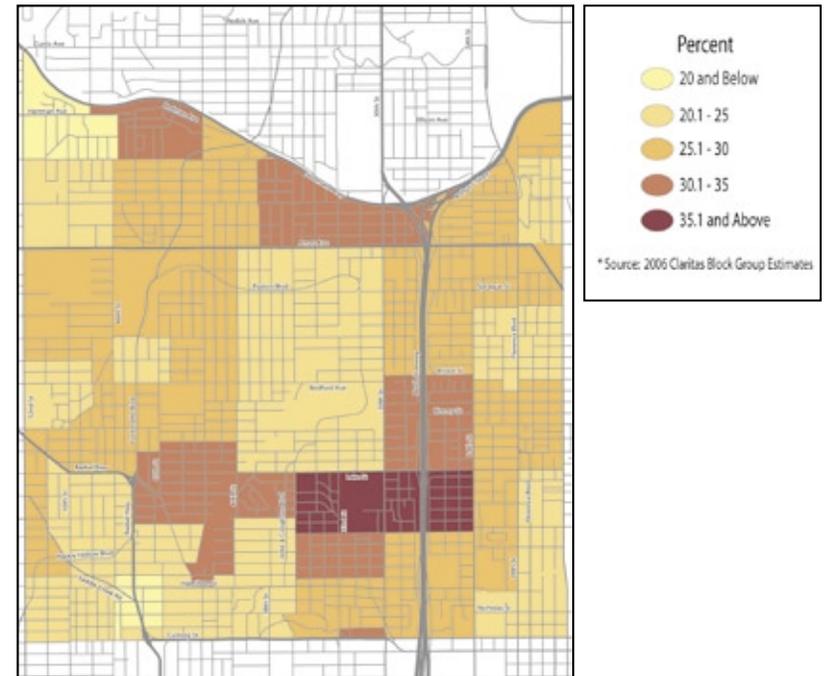


TABLE 1: 2007 AGE DISTRIBUTION

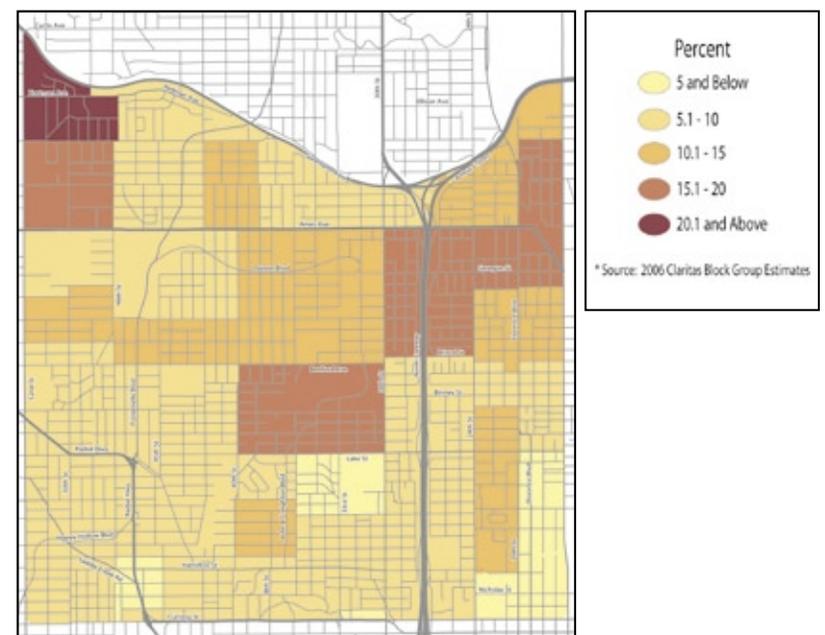
	Study Area		City of Omaha	
	Count	Rate	Count	Rate
Age 0 - 4	3,807	9.30	29,918	7.57
Age 5 - 9	3,529	8.62	27,250	6.89
Age 10 - 14	3,539	8.65	26,292	6.65
Age 15 - 17	2,143	5.24	15,906	4.02
Age 18 - 20	1,847	4.51	16,799	4.25
Age 21 - 24	2,358	5.76	23,042	5.83
Age 25 - 34	5,871	14.34	61,036	15.44
Age 35 - 44	5,627	13.75	56,119	14.19
Age 45 - 49	2,797	6.83	28,022	7.09
Age 50 - 54	2,363	5.77	26,149	6.61
Age 55 - 59	1,856	4.53	21,846	5.52
Age 60 - 64	1,372	3.35	16,451	4.16
Age 65 - 74	2,000	4.89	23,073	5.84
Age 75 - 84	1,308	3.20	16,622	4.20
Age 85+	517	1.26	6,879	1.74
Total	40,934		395,404	
Median Age	30.53		34.58	

Source: Claritas, Inc. 2007

POPULATION UNDER AGE 15



POPULATION OVER AGE 65



Household Income

North Omaha’s median household income is about 63% of the average for the rest of Omaha.

North Omaha’s median household income is just under \$30,000, about 63% of the average for the rest of Omaha.

Redeveloped areas like Concord Square and areas with traditionally strong neighborhoods like Bemis Park have higher household incomes than surrounding areas.

The percentage of single-parent households is over twice that of the rest of the city.

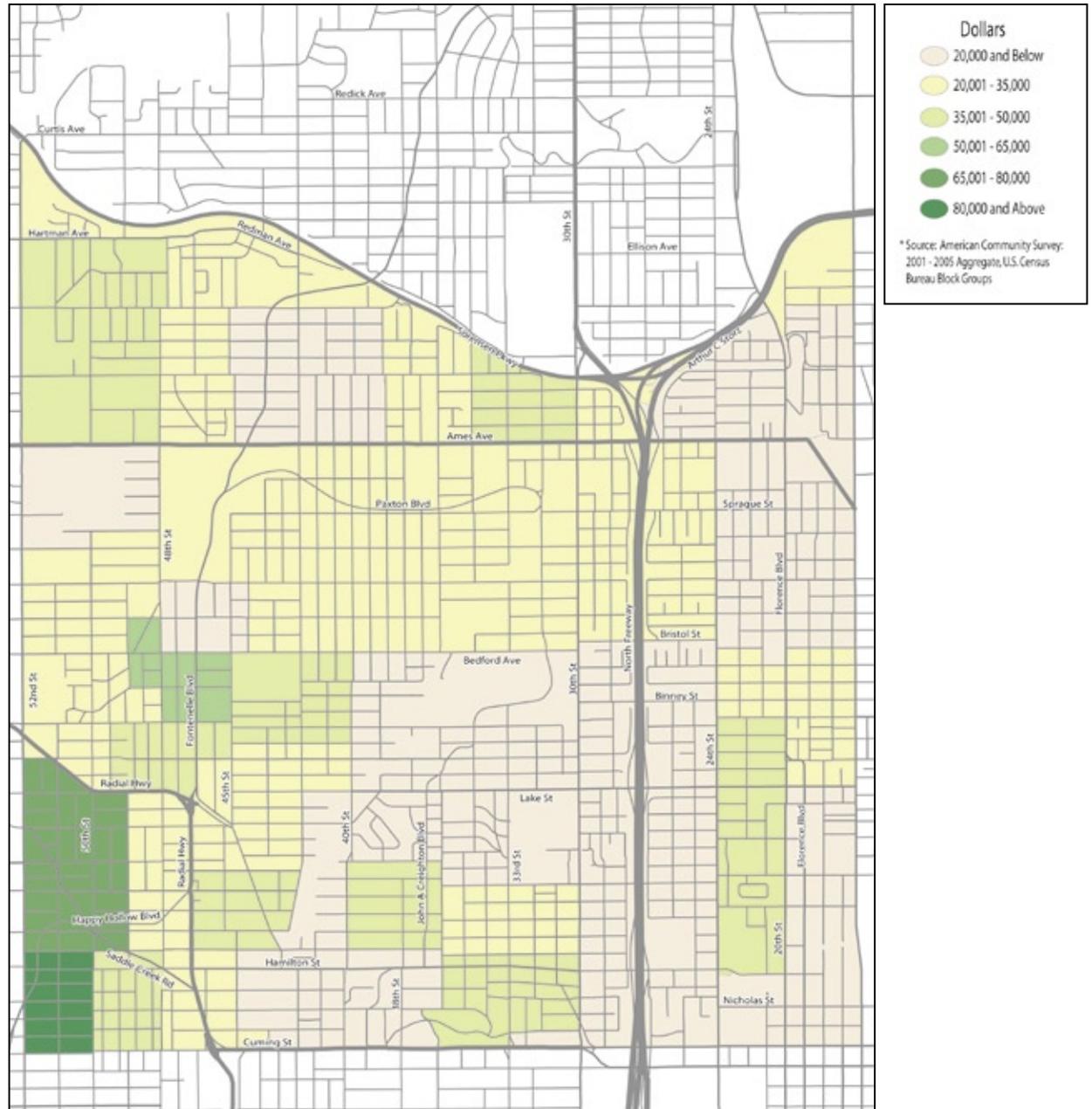
About 75% of North Omahans over the age of 25 have at least a high school diploma.

Table 1.3: Economic Trends

	Study Area	Rest of Omaha
Median Household Income	\$29,543	\$46,769
Per Capita Income	\$14,207	\$22,743
Families Below Poverty	21.8%	6.3%
Female Headed Households Below Poverty	16.5%	3.7%
Single Parent Households	21.56%	8.4%
High School Diploma or Higher	74.86	87.4%
Less than a High School Diploma	26.13	12.6%

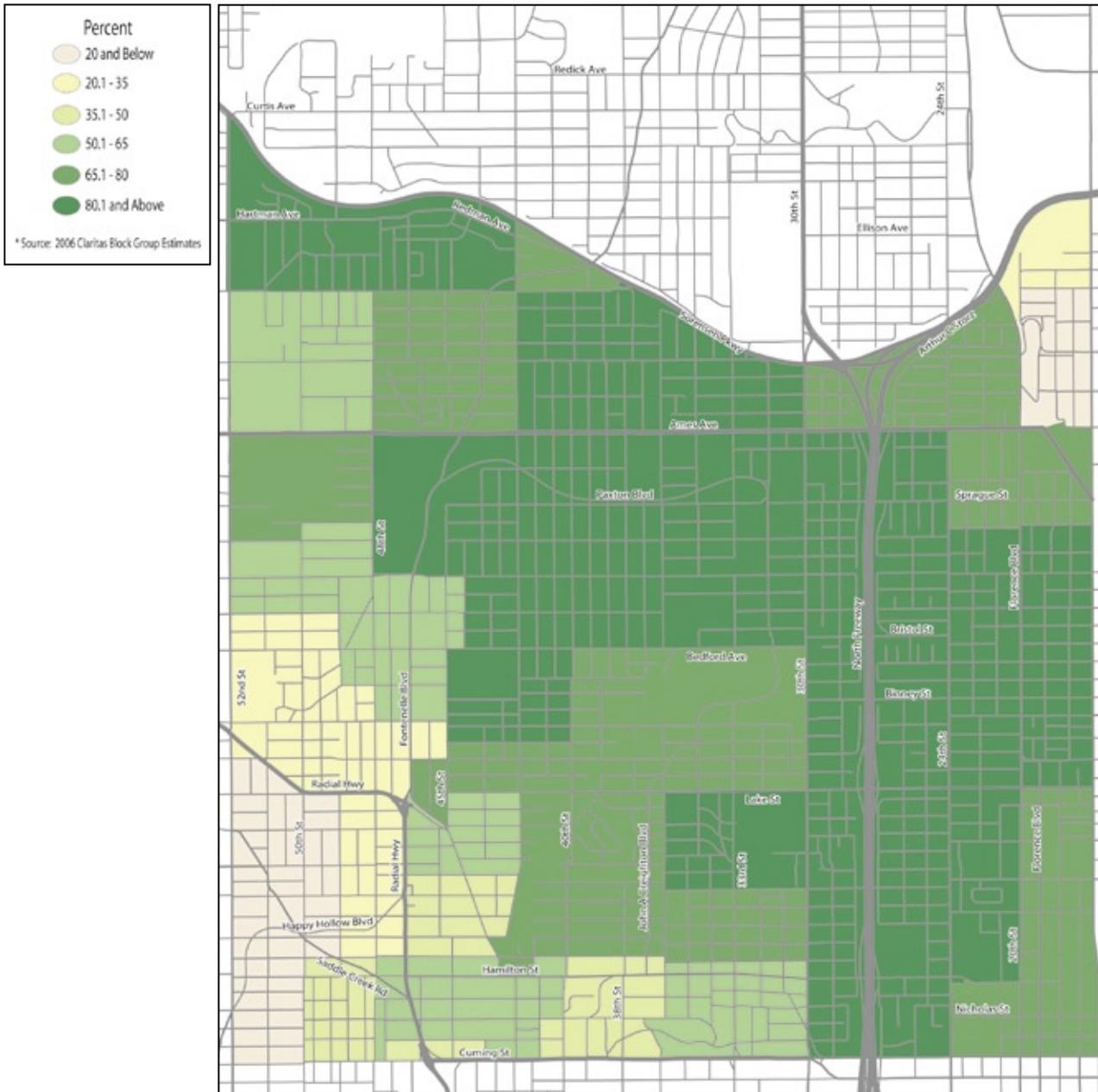
Source: Claritas, Inc. & U.S Census Bureau

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



Race and Ethnicity

MINORITY POPULATION



North Omaha has historically been the heart and soul of the African American community. While Omaha's African-American population has dispersed somewhat during the last 30 years, the neighborhood remains the dominant center of this community.

African-Americans make up 8% of the population living outside the North Omaha study area and 58% of the study area population.

58% of the metro area's African-American population lives outside the study area boundaries. A large percentage of the population lives just beyond the study area boundaries in the north-central sector of the city.

The central and eastern parts of the study area have the largest percentage of African-American residents, while the southwest and northeast corners of the study area have the lowest minority percentage.

Table 5: Race & Ethnicity, 2000

	Study Area		Omaha (Excluding North Omaha)	
	Total	%	Total	%
White Alone	14,821	34.88	290,924	83.7%
Black or African American Alone	24,823	58.42	27,094	7.8%

	African American Population	% of Total Metro Area
North Omaha	24,823	42%
Metro Area (Douglas, Sarpy, & Pottawattmie County) Excluding North Omaha	34,518	58%
Total Metro Area	59,341	

Employment

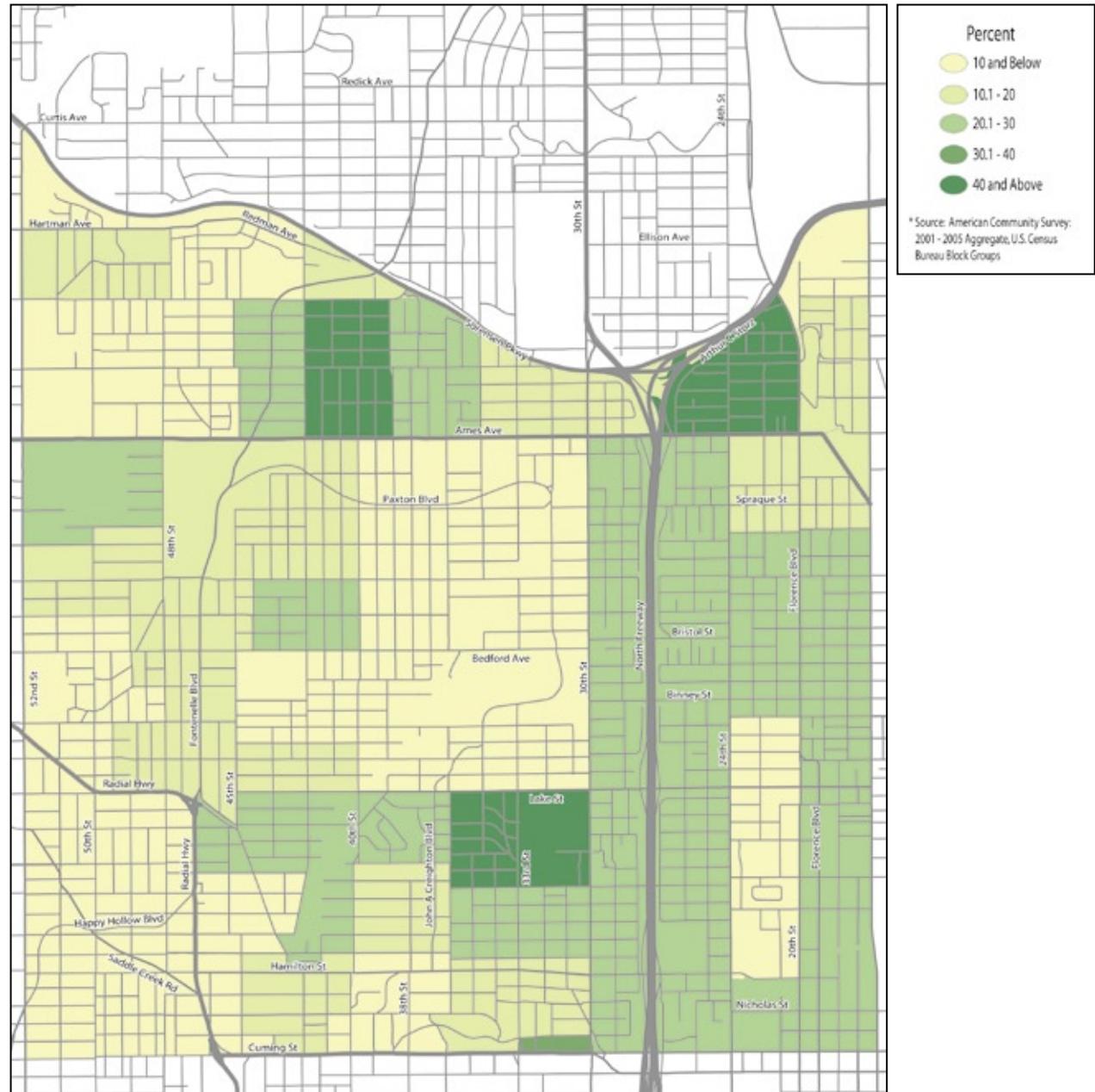
North Omaha's unemployment rate is substantially higher than that of the rest of the city. Over 1 in 4 African-American members of the workforce are unemployed.

The estimated 2006 unemployment rate for the study area is nearly 11%, almost three times that of the rest of the city.

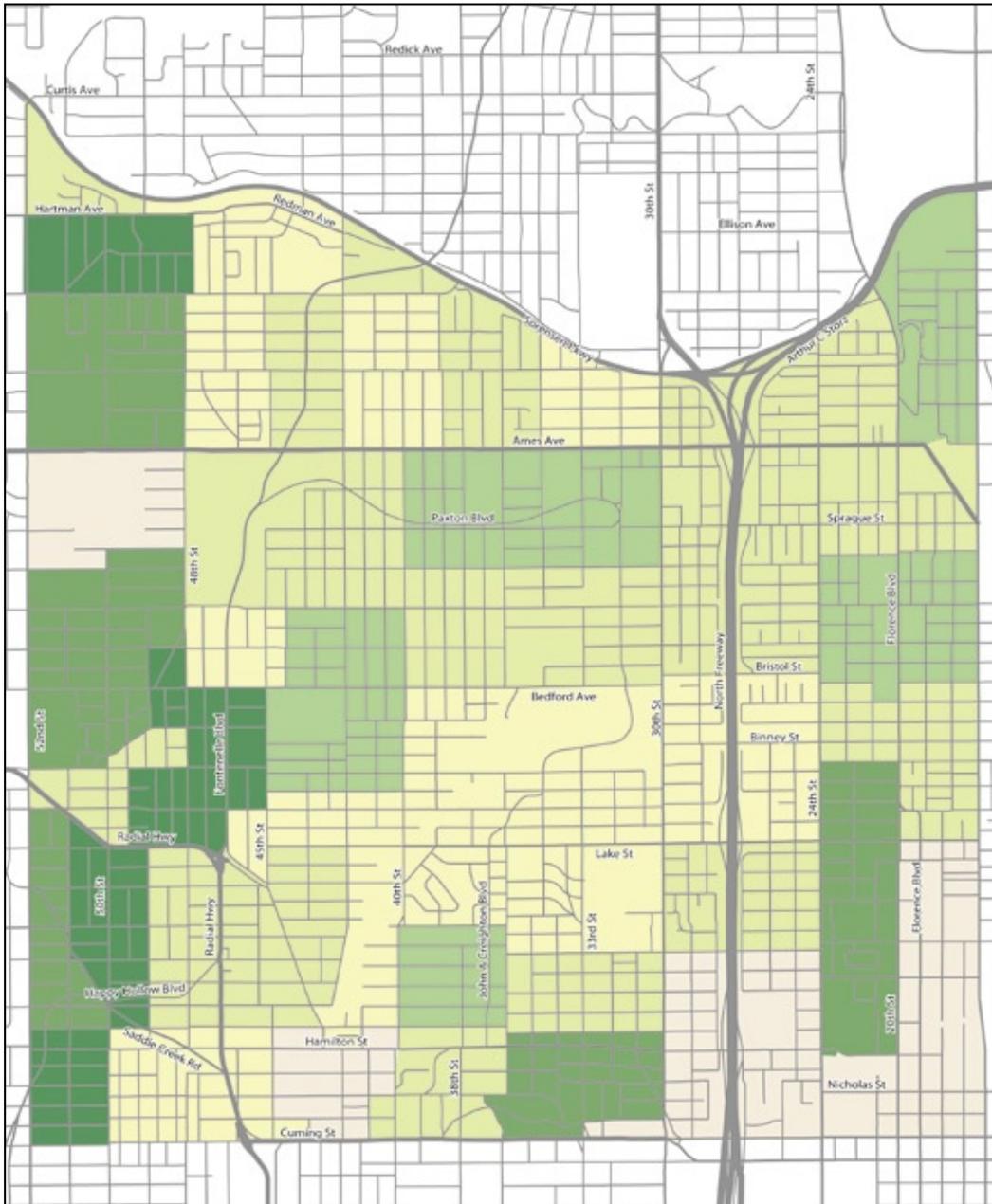
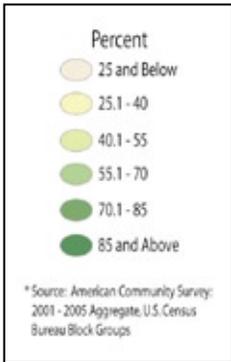
The unemployment rate among African Americans exceeds 11% in both Omaha and especially within the study area. Census data in 2000 and 2005 indicate that the African-American unemployment rate in the study area is eight times greater than that of the rest of the city.

Unemployment rates in 2005 were highest in the areas around Pleasantview Homes and in neighborhoods near Saratoga and Central Park Elementary Schools. The development of new neighborhoods in the south-eastern part of the study area are changing the amount of unemployment here.

UNEMPLOYMENT



OWNER OCCUPANCY



Housing Occupancy

The percentage of households who own their own homes is lower in North Omaha than in the rest of the city. Still, over half of all North Omaha households own their homes.

About 52% of North Omaha households own their own homes, somewhat lower than the average of 60.5% for the rest of the city.

Owner-occupancy is generally lower in the southern and eastern parts of the study area. Reinvestment areas like Bemis Park, Concord Square and Conestoga Place run counter to this general trend.

The western parts of the neighborhood have the most consistently high levels of owner occupancy.

Land Use

Single-family residential use accounts for over half of North Omaha's land area. Commercial and industrial development generally follow traditional and sometimes obsolete patterns along transit line and abandoned railroad corridors. A large amount of neighborhood land is vacant or underused.

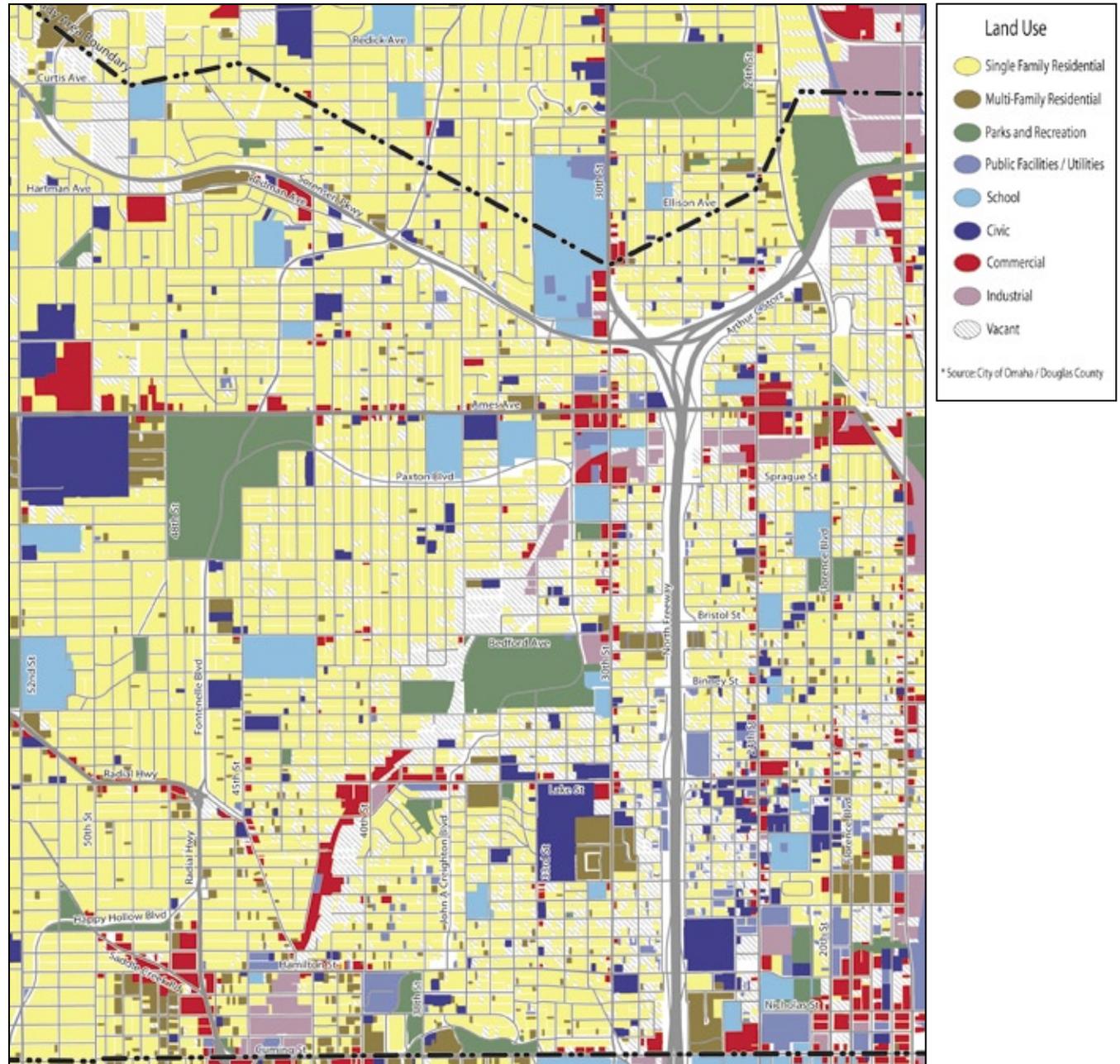
The study area is dominated by residential use and the vast majority of residential land is occupied by single-family urban development. The area's three square miles house about 41,000 people. Taken alone, North Omaha would be Nebraska's fifth largest city.

A relatively small part of the neighborhood's land is in commercial use, and much of that land follows old patterns – linear commercial development following former transit corridors.

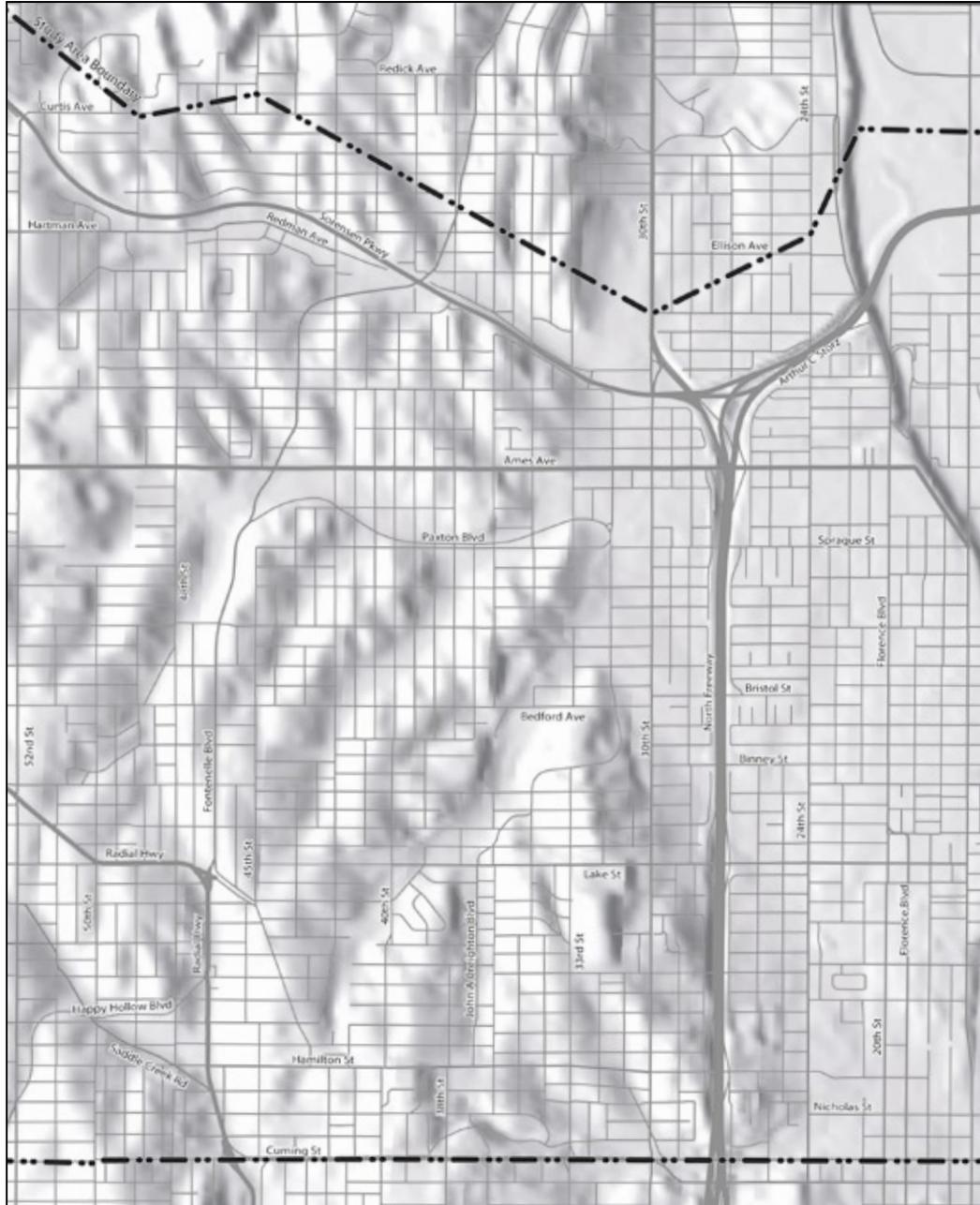
Similarly, much of the neighborhood's industrial use follows obsolete patterns, typically along the abandoned Omaha Belt Line railroad or adjacent to Omaha's downtown core. These sites do not offer competitive transportation access, amenities, or room for growth.

The study area has roughly 3,400 vacant lots, making a substantial part of the neighborhood unproductive.

EXISTING LAND USE



TOPOGRAPHY



Topography

North Omaha rising above the Missouri River valley includes a variety of landforms. The eastern part of the neighborhood, north of Hamilton and east of the North Freeway, is relatively level, situated on a step above an escarpment that roughly follows the east edge of 16th Street. Relatively steep grades mark the edge of this step. This line of hills and heights from northwest from about 24th and Cuming to about 31st and Bedford, and continues north to about 31st Avenue and Sorensen Parkway. Some areas on the leading edge of this formation have steep hills and commanding views.

Much of the study area to the west of the Missouri River valley follows a pattern of ridges and ravines. Land rises to a ridgeline that generally follows 40th Street, Hamilton, and Military Avenue/Northwest Radial toward Benson. Because of its visibility, this path once traced the military route to the northwest.

Farther north, the pattern of hills and valleys runs in a northeast to southwest direction, opposite the prevailing pattern of the Papillion Creek system. These drainage corridors eventually flow southwest into the Saddle Creek system. The Belt Line Railroad ran through one of the largest of these Saddle Creek tributaries.

Some of North Omaha's transportation system was defined by neighborhood topography. The city's grid was platted over these landforms, sometimes producing very steep hills and interrupted local streets. Railroad corridors, including the Belt Line and the Chicago and North Western route that eventually became the Sorensen parkway right-of-way, followed major drainage ways, while some major streets, like Fontenelle Boulevard and Military Avenue, followed higher ridges.

Commercial and Industrial Districts

While commercial and industrial activities are distributed throughout the neighborhood, their locations follow obsolete patterns that are not competitive with other metro area sites, have little room for expansion, and have high impact on neighboring residential areas.

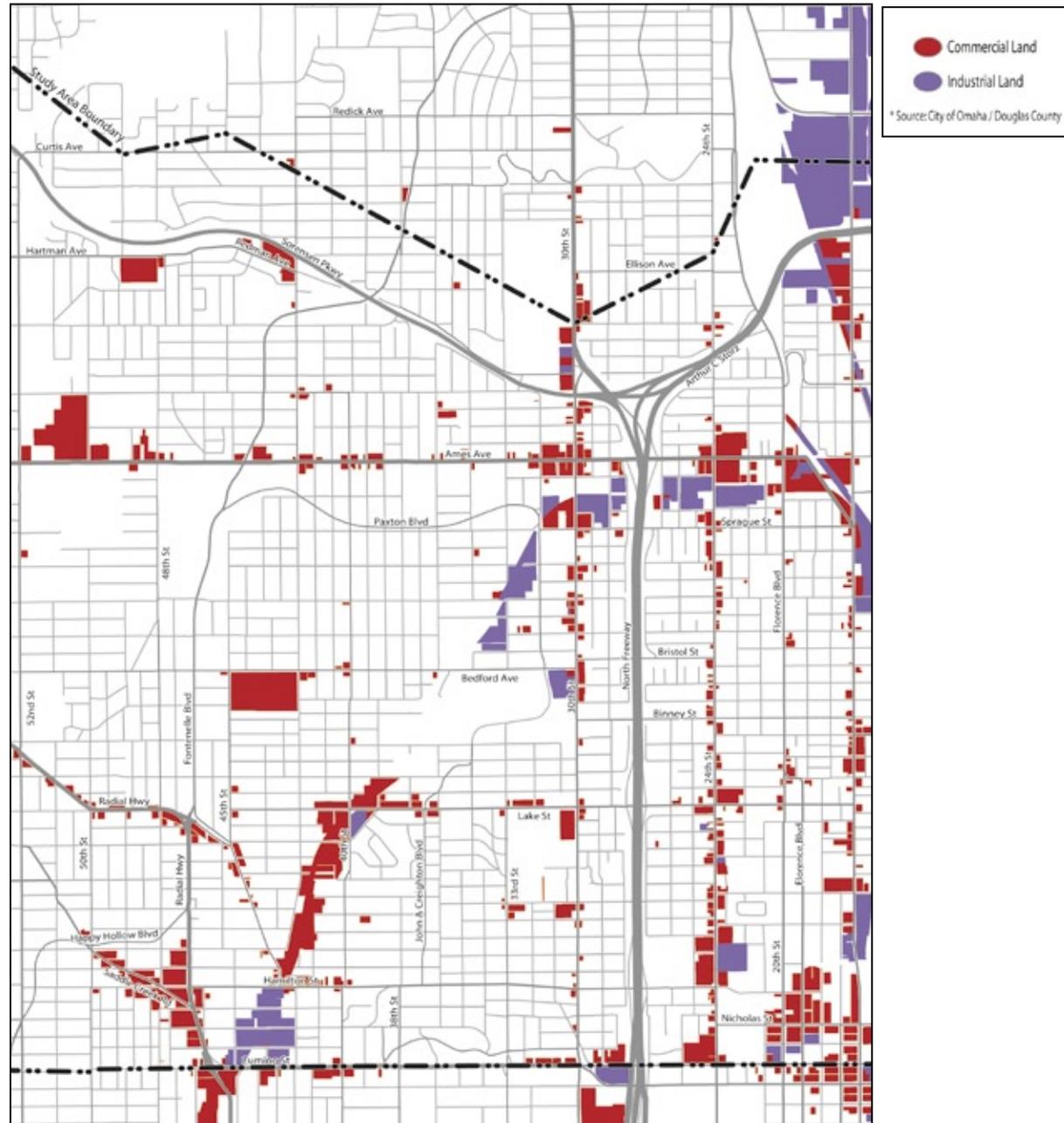
Many of North Omaha's commercial corridors follow former streetcar lines, with clusters located along major transit stops. This pattern scatters retailers and service providers throughout the neighborhood, as opposed to clustering in centers, more typical of contemporary retailing.

These traditional corridors include 24th Street, 30th Street, Ames Avenue, and Military Avenue/Hamilton Street. The neighborhood's largest commercial cluster is located at 30th and Ames, a transit-oriented center that also enjoys good automobile access.

Only 2% of North Omaha's land is used for industrial purposes, but a far larger amount of land is zoned industrial. Much of this land is vacant.

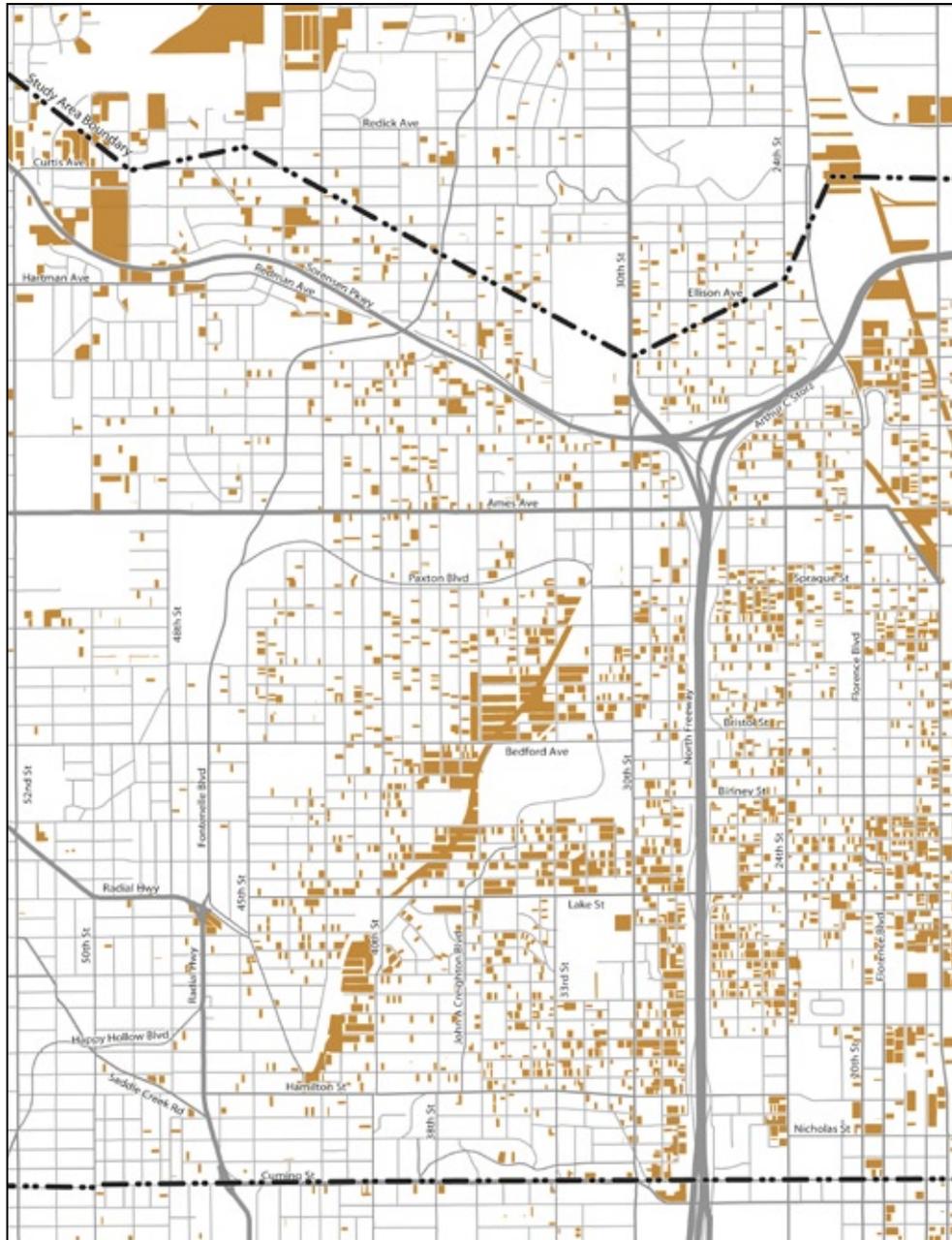
Industrial zoning and land use also follow patterns that do not respond to contemporary demands. For example, industrial uses grew along railroad corridors that no longer exist. When transportation needs changed, these poorer sites deteriorated, creating blight that spread to nearby residential neighborhoods.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL AREAS



VACANT LOTS

 Vacant Parcel
* Source: City of Omaha / Douglas County



Vacant Land

Vacant parcels pervades North Omaha, and is most often found in areas of relatively low land value.

North Omaha has about one square mile of vacant land, out of a total area of 3 square miles.

While vacant lands are scattered throughout the neighborhood, they are concentrated in specific, strategic areas. These include:

- The Belt Line corridor, including industrial properties along the abandoned railroad line.
- The Adams Park vicinity.
- Sites adjacent to the North Freeway, mostly south of Lake Street.
- Deteriorated residential areas between 16th and 20th from Lake to Locust streets.

Far from being a liability, these vacant sites may be viewed as an enormous potential resource for growth in North Omaha.

Neighborhood Heritage

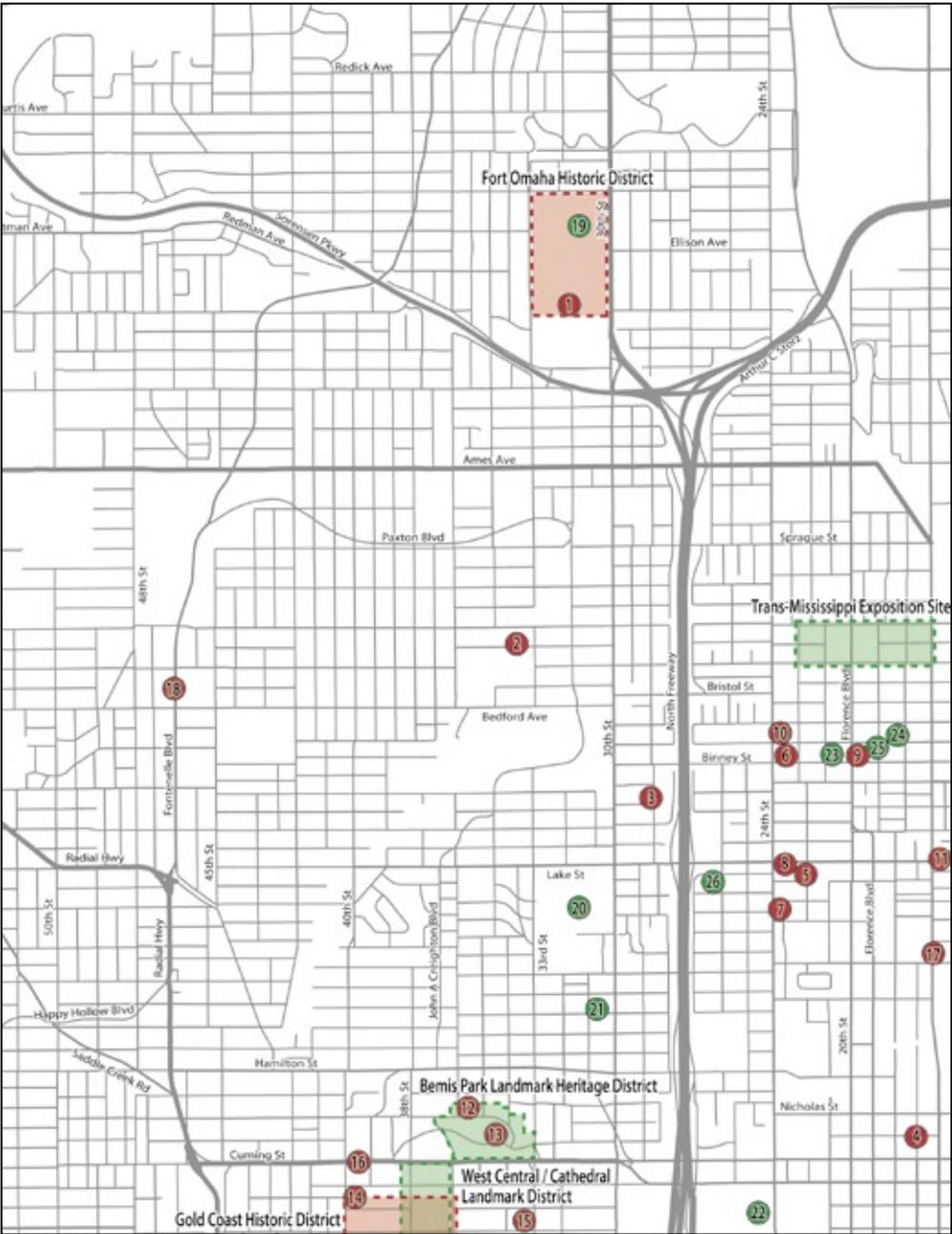
North Omaha's many historic sites and districts underscore its rich heritage.

- National Register Sites
 - 1 General Crook House
 - 2 Malcom X Birthsite
 - 3 Lizzie Robinson House
 - 4 Holy Family Church
 - 5 St. John's A.M.E. Church
 - 6 Sacred Heart Church / Complex
 - 7 Jewell Building
 - 8 Webster Telephone Exchange Building
 - 9 Kelly House
 - 10 Calvin Memorial Presbyterian Church
 - 11 Sherman Apartments
 - 12 Zabriskie House
 - 13 Porter House
 - 14 St. Cecilia's Cathedral
 - 15 Melrose Apartments
 - 16 Mercer House
 - 17 Strehlow Terrace
 - 18 Old People's Home (Leo Vaughn Manor)

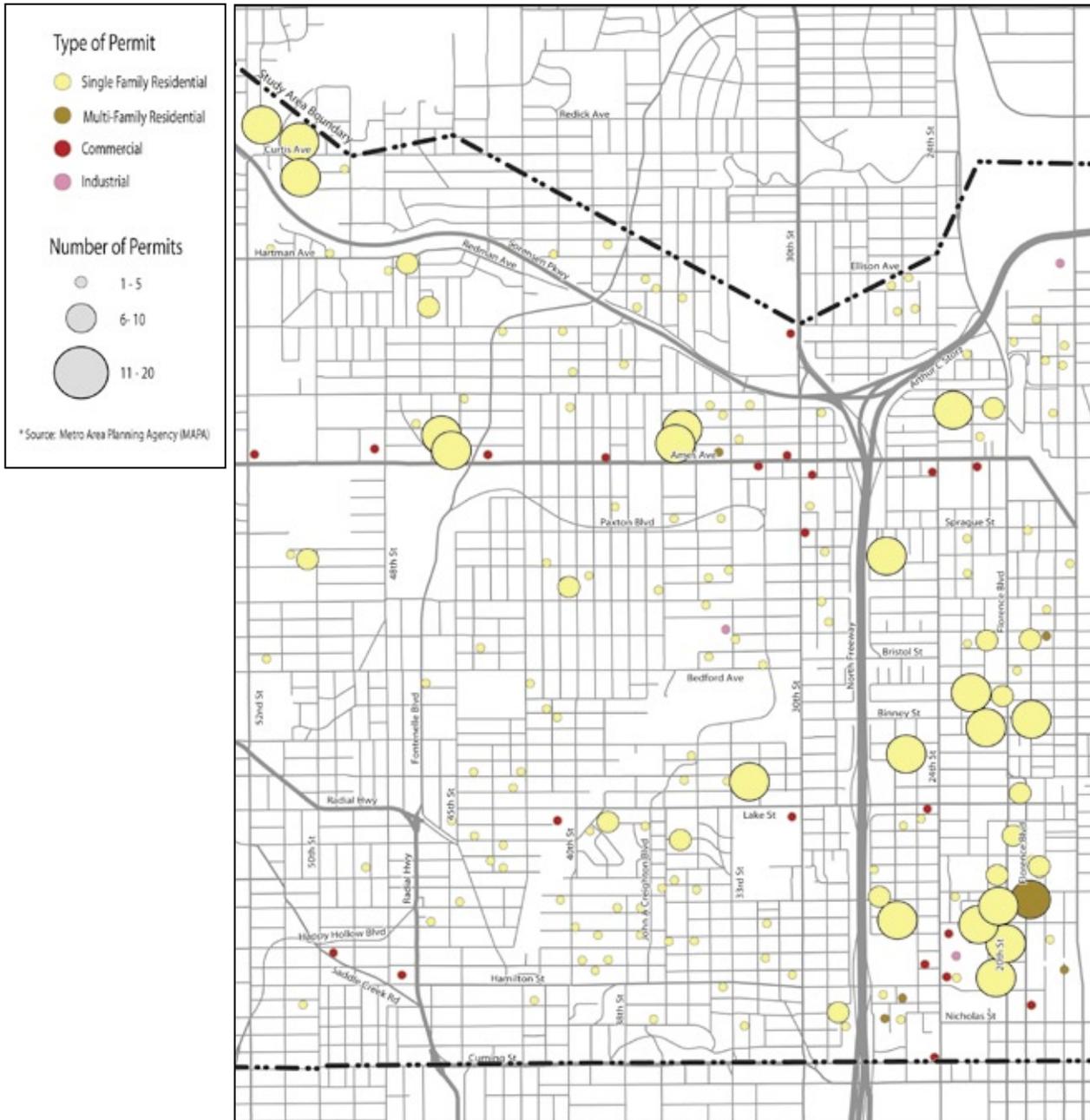
- Landmark Sites (Local Designation)
 - 19 Fort Omaha Guardhouse
 - 20 Prospect Hill Cemetary
 - 21 Buford House
 - 22 St John's Collegiate Church
 - 23 Bay House
 - 24 Shepard House
 - 25 Storz House
 - 26 Robinson Memorial Church of God in Christ

- National Register Historic Districts
- Landmark Districts (Local Designation)

* Source: National Register of Historic Places / City of Omaha's Landmark Heritage Preservation Commission



1990-2006 BUILDING PERMITS



Development Activity

Construction has occurred throughout the neighborhood during the last fifteen years. The greatest amount of construction took place in several redevelopment project areas.

About 45,000 housing units were built between 1990 and 2006 in the Omaha planning jurisdiction, an average of about 3,000 units each year.

Over 1,200 new units were built in the North Omaha study area during this period, the best performance since the 1920s. While North Omaha makes up 9.6% of the city's population, it accounts for only about 2.6% of all new units.

New residential construction focused on several community development areas, involving either clusters of houses built on vacant lots or new subdivisions on redevelopment sites. These clusters included Conestoga Place, Concord Square, Kountze Place, Fontenelle View, Monmouth Park, and Miami Heights.



New Residential Development at Logan Fontenelle East

Assessed Value

Higher assessed values in North Omaha relate to neighborhood stability and high owner-occupancy, pockets of significant commercial development, and redevelopment activity.

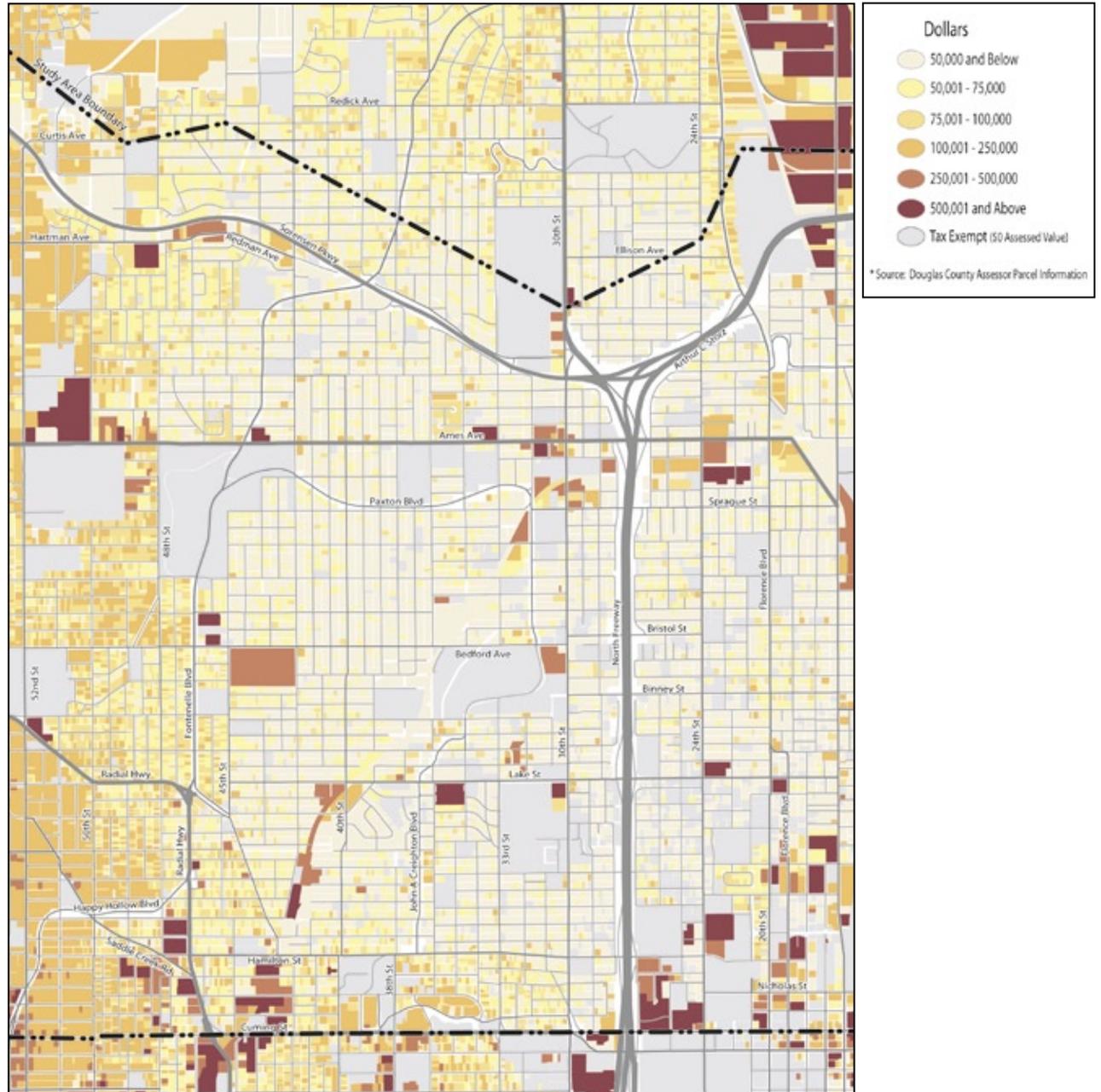
Relative property values are highest on the western and southern edges of the study area. The west edge corresponds to more stable residential areas with higher owner-occupancy. The southern edge includes neighborhoods with high homeownership, including Bemis Park and Mercer Park, major multi-family developments like Kellom Heights, and some commercial and industrial establishments.

Areas with relatively low overall assessed values have large amounts of vacant land.

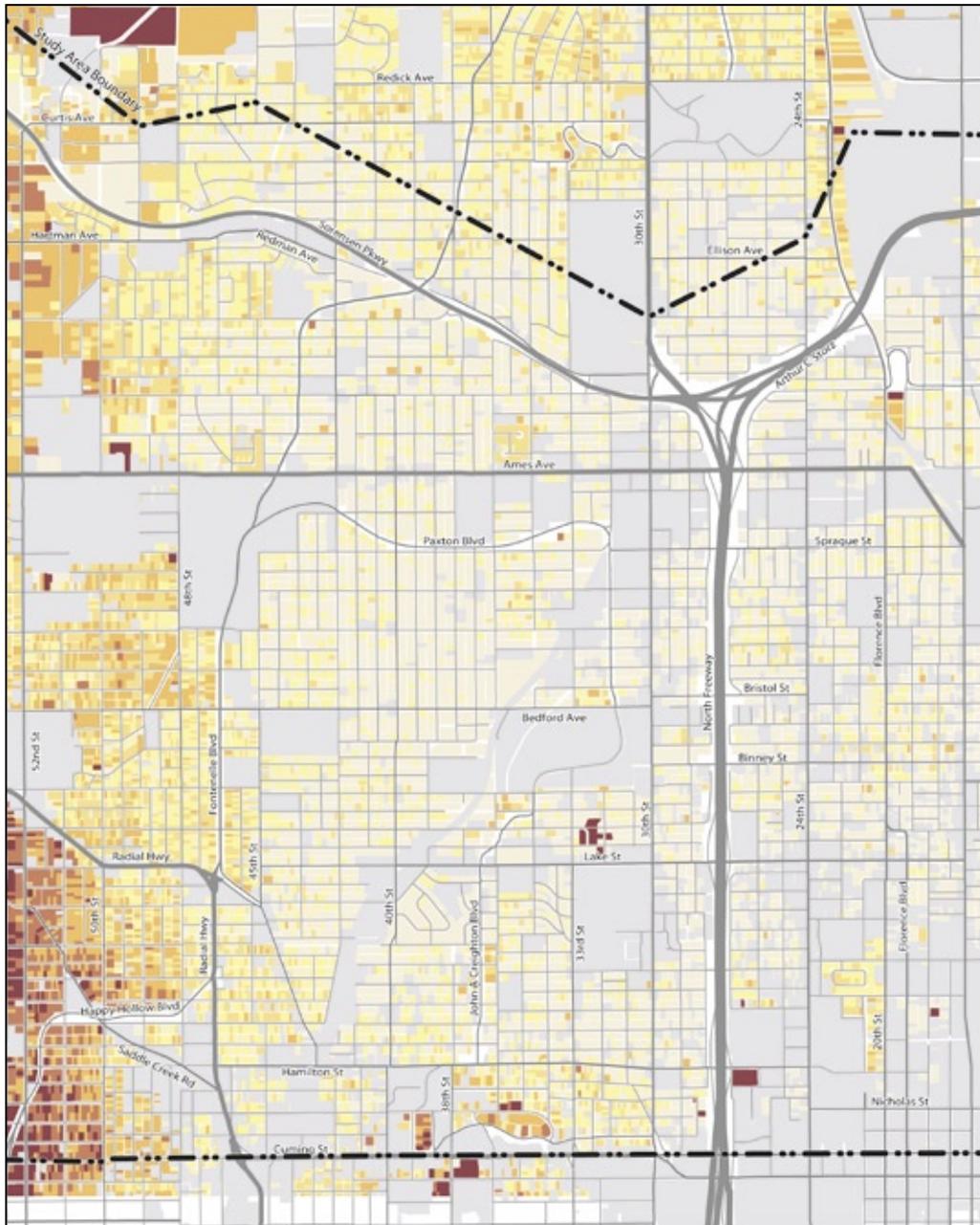
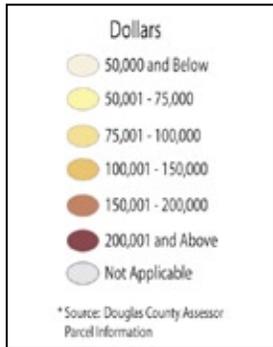
Pockets of higher assessed value correspond to long-term redevelopment efforts that have replaced older housing stock or vacant or underused sites with new residential construction.

The North Omaha study area has a surprisingly large amount of tax-exempt property. Major tax-exempt parcels include large parks (Adams and Fontenelle Parks), educational properties (Metro Community College, North High School, King Science Center, and elementary schools), institutional uses (Omaha Home for Boys), and governmental agencies (Metro Area Transit, City of Omaha).

ASSESSED PARCEL VALUES



RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY VALUES



Residential Property Values

Average home value in the study area is about half that of the city as a whole. But parts of North Omaha, including established neighborhoods on the west and residential redevelopment projects, have residential values typical of those found elsewhere in the city.

The median home value in the North Omaha study area is about \$60,000, compared to an estimated city-wide median of \$117,000.

Stable residential areas, characterized by distinctive housing stock and high homeownership, display residential values typical of those of the rest of the city.

Areas that have experienced substantial, comprehensive redevelopment also have residential values consistent with those of the rest of the city. These areas include Miami Heights, Concord Square, Monmouth Park, Fontenelle View, and infill areas in Kountze Place.

These patterns suggest that North Omaha sustains market property values in areas that undergo comprehensive and transformational change.

Street Network

North Omaha's street system is most complete around the edges of the neighborhood, but less continuous in the neighborhood's interior.

North Omaha has 219 miles of streets within the study area, most of which are local streets.

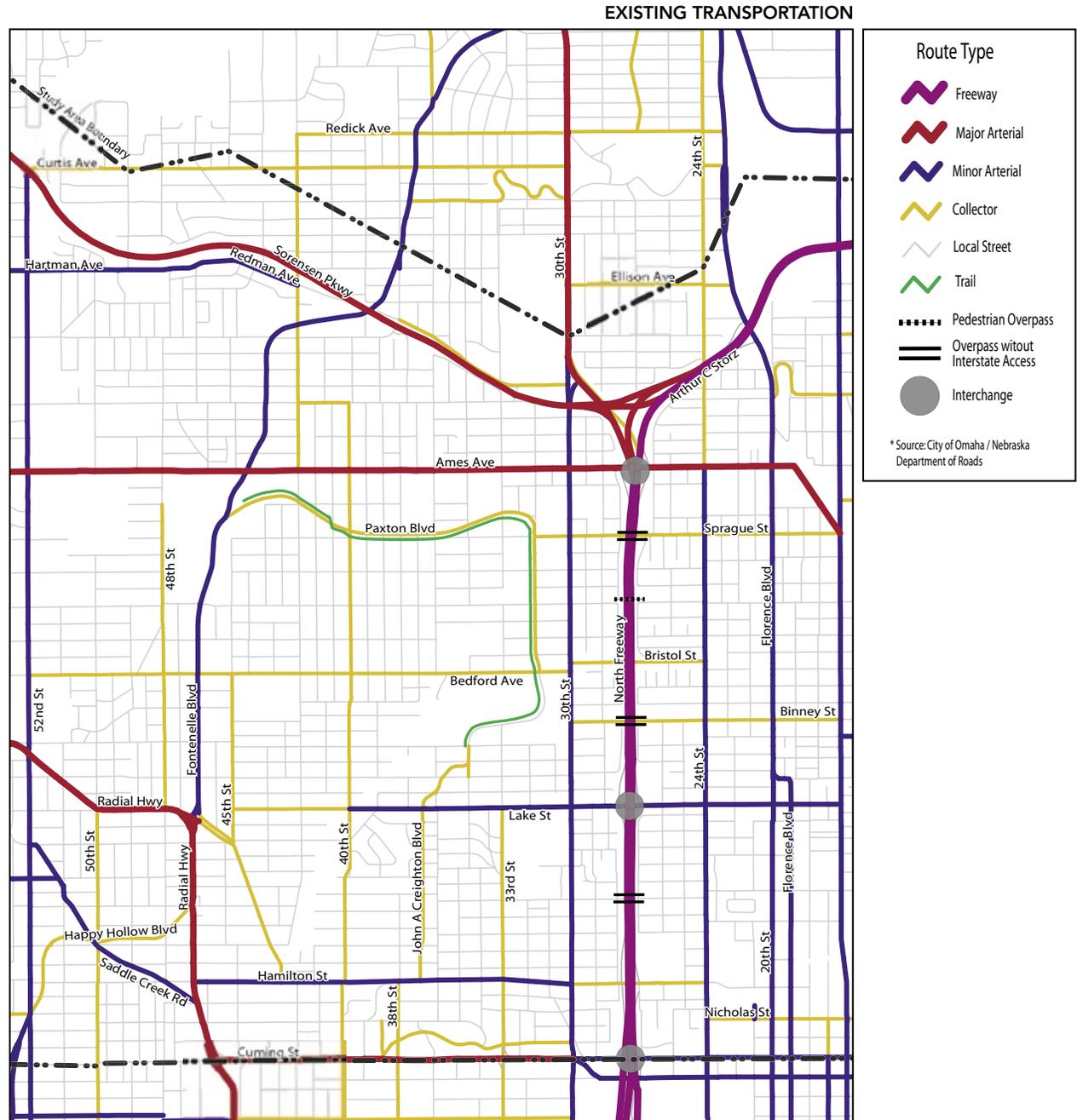
The eastern part of the study area has good north-south through streets. However, topography and development patterns make north-south circulation in the middle of the neighborhood more difficult.

North Omaha lacks good east-west connections in a city that is oriented east and west. This reduces connections between North Omaha and employment and commercial destinations in other parts of the city. The best east-west street connections are at the neighborhood edges: Cuming Street and Ames Avenue.

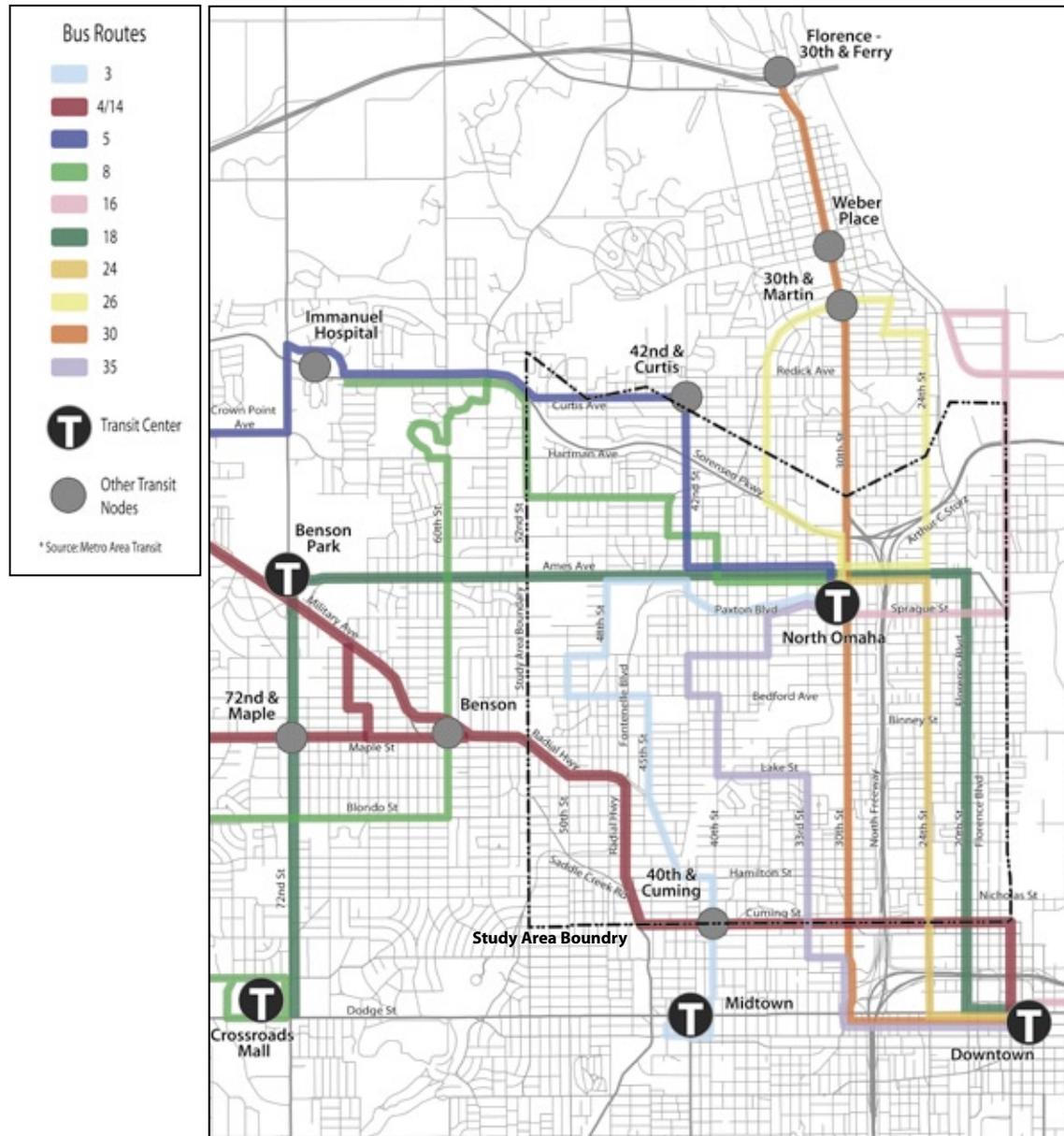
Interruptions to the street grid are caused by transportation barriers, both past and present. For example, the now-abandoned Belt Line interrupted east-west street connections, while the North Freeway reduced the number of east-west local street links.

Increasing neighborhood mobility through better street connections is important to North Omaha development.

The neighborhood's pedestrian and trail system is not complete, reducing mobility for many. Poor sidewalk connections make it difficult for people to walk to transit lines or neighborhood destinations. A trail was developed between Fontenelle and Adams Park, but its design is outdated and lacks links to other parts of the regional trail system.



METRO AREA TRANSIT ROUTES



Public Transportation

North Omaha is Omaha's largest single public transportation market. In common with streets, however, connections are best at the periphery and weakest in the interior of the neighborhood.

North Omahans use public transportation for their commute to work at about four times the rate of Omahans as a whole. In addition, North Omahans are more likely than other city residents to use transit for other purposes, including shopping, services, and medical care.

The Downtown to Crossroads "belt line," using Florence Boulevard, Ames Avenue, and 72nd Street, is one of MAT's most heavily used routes. MAT's North Omaha Transit Center provides transfers to a number of destinations in the north and northwestern parts of the city. North Omaha's transit connections will increase with the opening of the Benson Park Transit Center.

East-west bus service is provided only at the edges of the neighborhood, along Cuming Street and Ames Avenue. There is currently no "crosstown" service through the neighborhood's interior.

Two collector routes provide north-south service between neighborhoods, the Midtown Transit Center, and Downtown. Portions of these routes follow original streetcar lines.

Civic Facilities

North Omaha has a variety of civic facilities, with the largest concentrations in the eastern part of the study area and along Lake Street.

North Omaha has many civic facilities including a number of recently updated schools and two large community parks – Adams and Fontenelle Parks.

Adams Park, the neighborhood’s most central open space, lacks a public face to surrounding streets. Homes backing onto the park, a lack of 30th Street exposure, and a large hill make the park seem inaccessible and under used.

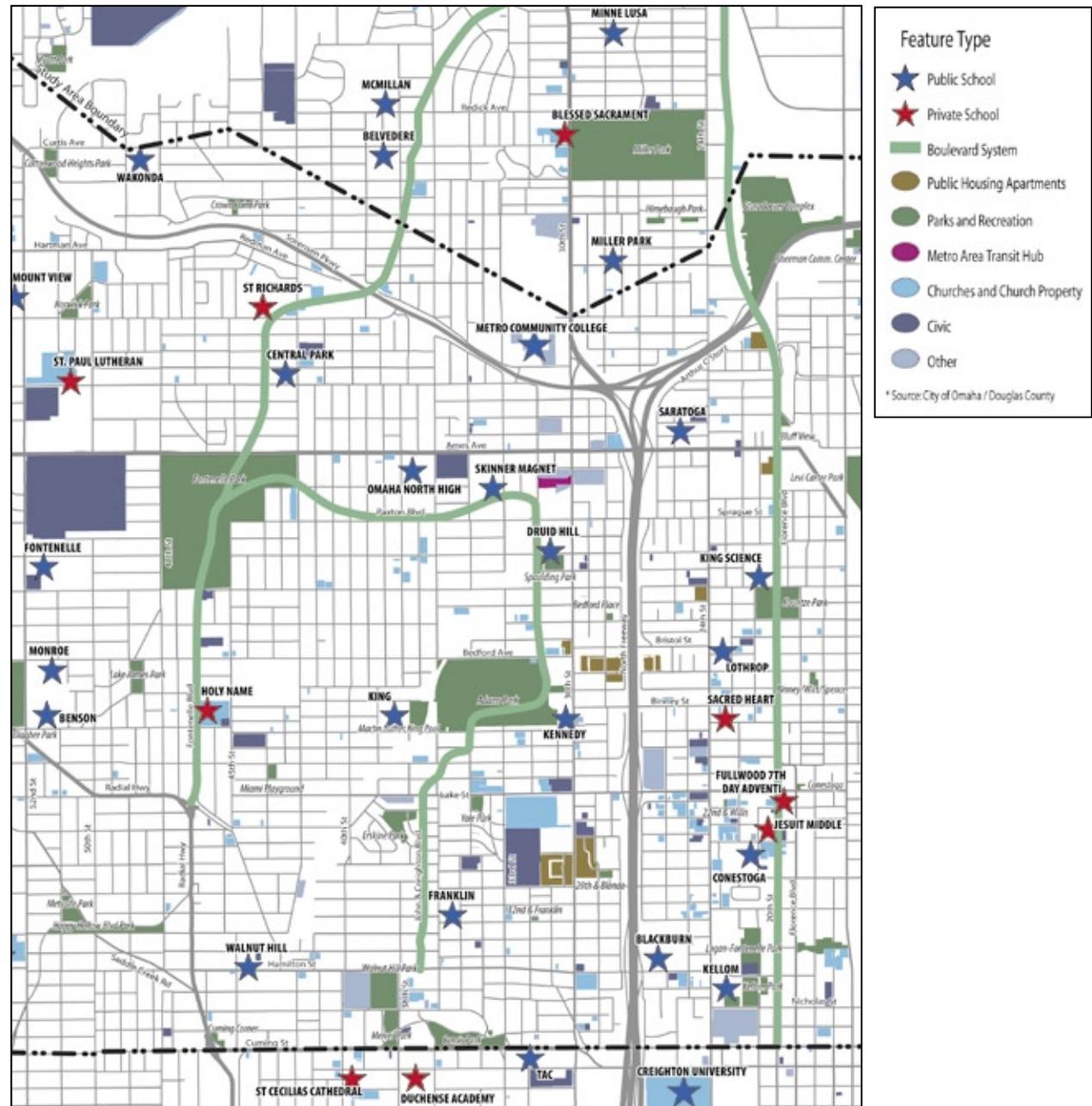
Many of the neighborhood’s civic facilities and churches are in the eastern part of the neighborhood along or near 24th and 30th Streets or west along Lake Street. More recently, a cluster of important civic resources developed between Ames and Paxton Boulevard, east of the rehabilitated North High School.

Access to neighborhood facilities is complicated by a lack of crosstown bus service, interrupted local streets, and poor pedestrian connections.



Charles B. Washington Library

PUBLIC AND CIVIC FACILITIES

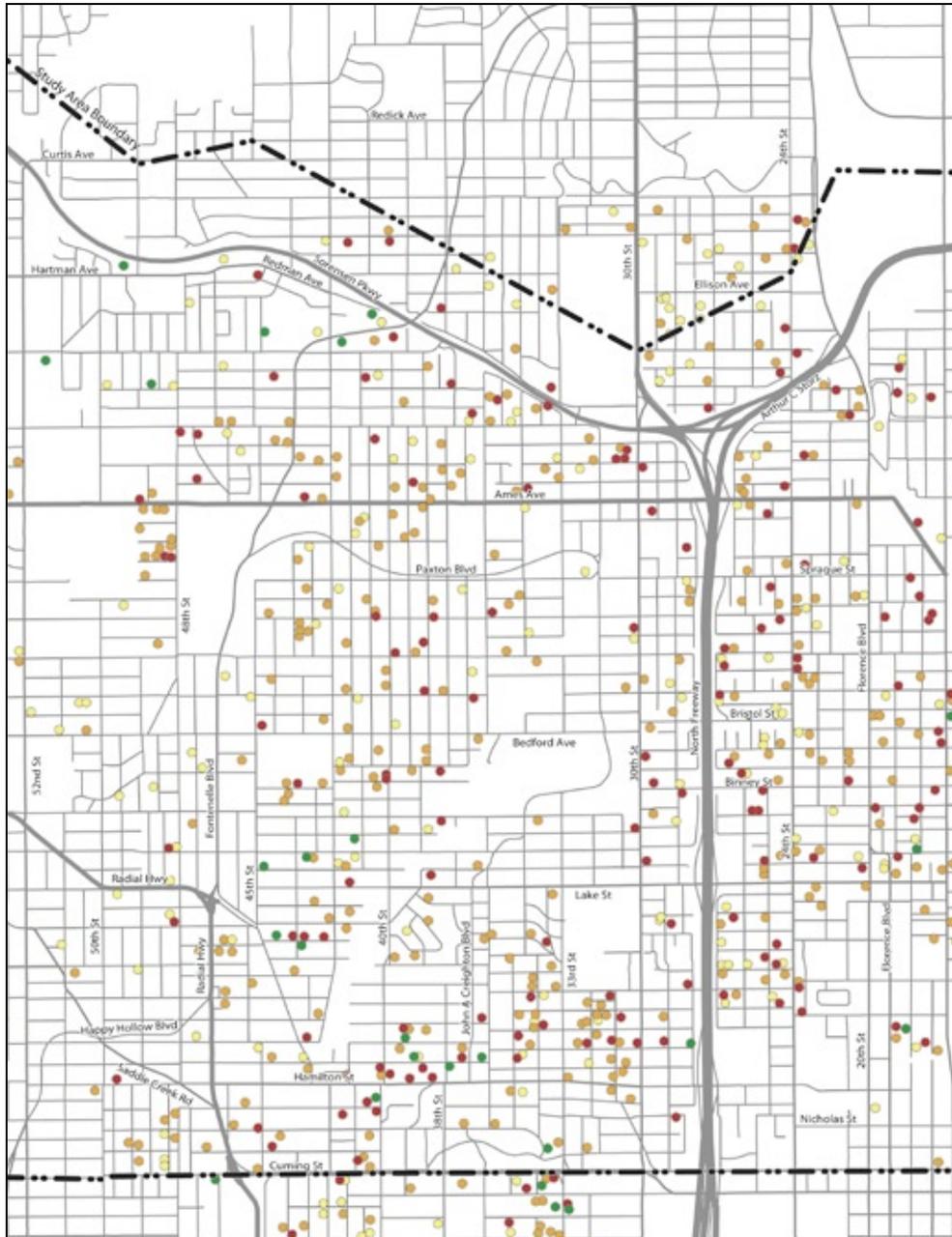
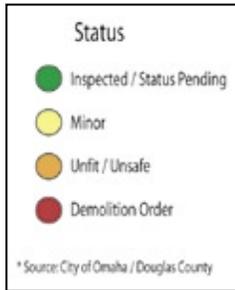


Feature Type

- ★ Public School
- ★ Private School
- Boulevard System
- Public Housing Apartments
- Parks and Recreation
- Metro Area Transit Hub
- Churches and Church Property
- Civic
- Other

* Source: City of Omaha / Douglas County

CODE ENFORCEMENT



Code Enforcement

City code enforcement actions, designed to bring residential properties into compliance with the minimum dwelling standards ordinance, are scattered throughout the neighborhood, but have been somewhat more focused in several areas.

Code enforcement actions have been scattered throughout the neighborhood, with the highest percentage of cases occurring in:

- The traditional Near North Side between 24th Street and the North Freeway.
- Orchard Hill and surrounding neighborhoods, between Hamilton and Lake, 30th to 40th.
- Multi-family areas west of Fontenelle Park.
- The Sorensen Parkway/Redman Avenue corridor.

Blocks with the highest owner-occupancy also tend to have the fewest code enforcement cases.

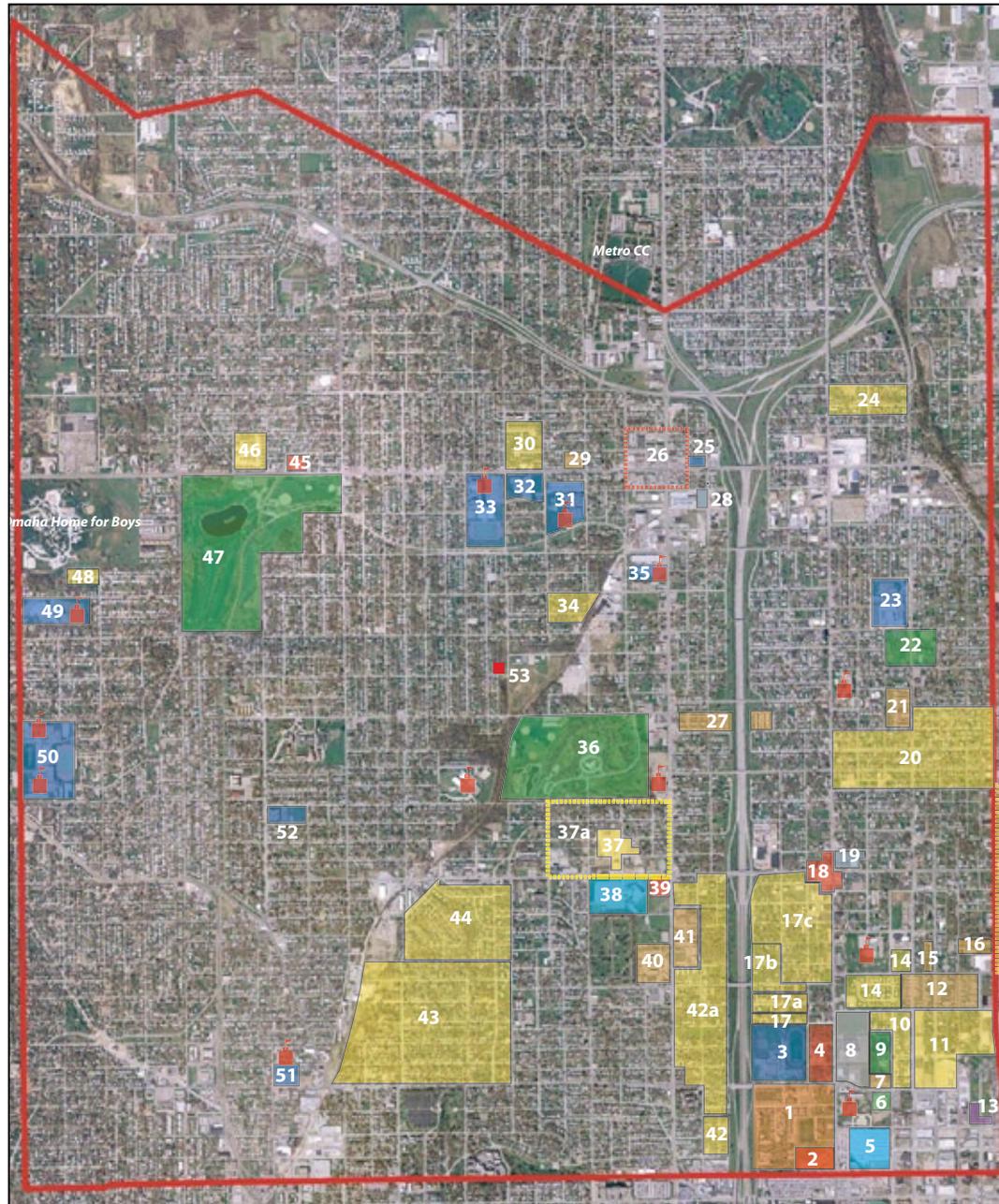
Community Development Projects

Omaha has had an active community development and reinvestment program since the beginning of Community Development Block Grants in 1975. A specific focus on North Omaha and other city neighborhoods began in 1980-81 and has continued since then.

Omaha's community development program has had a primary focus on neighborhood housing programs, including rehabilitation and new construction. It has also included some commercial and economic development projects most notably along the 24th Street corridor between Cuming and Ohio. However, most funds have been spent on housing improvement and development.

A concentrated, multi-year effort has occurred in the southeastern part of the study area, between 16th and the North Freeway from Cuming to Lake Streets. In some areas, this effort has transformed formerly deteriorating areas into high quality residential neighborhoods.

Large projects, such as Kellom Heights, Concord Square, Monmouth Park, Conestoga Place, and Fontenelle View, have dramatically changed neighborhoods through the comprehensive redevelopment of vacant or underused properties.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

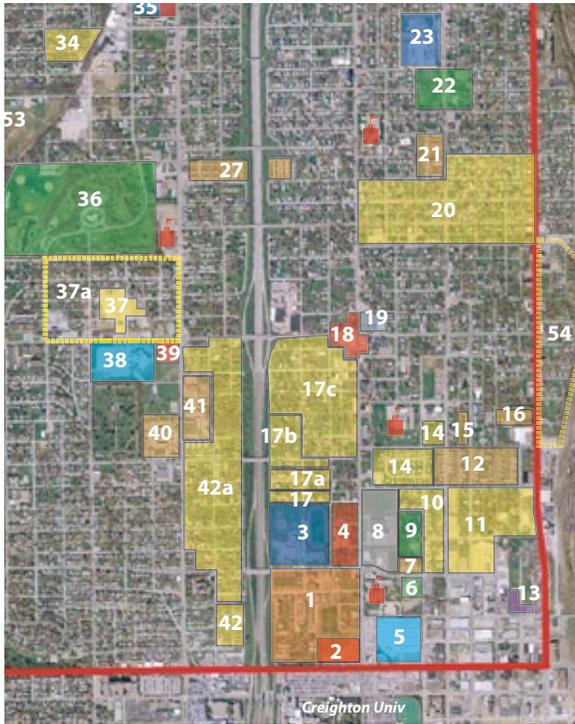
Map Key	Project Name	Project Description
1	Kellom Heights	A 25-year mixed housing redevelopment effort. Completed project includes initial 132-unit apartment project, rowhouse units, attached duplexes, senior housing, and playing fields. The project is now complete except for the northeast part of area.
2	Kellom Heights Shopping Center	The commercial portion of Kellom Heights redevelopment project. Occupancy is now primarily restaurants and Creighton facilities, including student health center.
3	Flanagan High Redevelopment Area	A six block assemblage completed during 1980s for an urban alternative high school, built and operated by Boys Town. Boys Town discontinued the program and sold the site to the Boys and Girls Club of Omaha. The building also houses Omaha Public School's alternative high school (Blackburn High).
4	Long School Marketplace	A retail and office project being developed by Omaha Economic Development Corporation (OEDC). One building has been developed on the site, with Family Dollar as major tenant.
5	Metro Area Transit	The operations and administrative facility, built by transit authority during late 1970s/early 1980s. Also houses other governmental offices, including Metropolitan Area Planning Agency.
6	Educare Child Development Center	An innovative child development facility, funded largely with a grant from the Buffett Family Foundation.
7	Senior Housing	A senior housing developed as part of reuse of the Logan-Fontenelle public housing site.
8	North Omaha Business Park	A 15-acre business park, part of the reuse of the former Logan-Fontenelle public housing site.
9	Logan-Fontenelle Park	A neighborhood park, improved as part of the Logan-Fontenelle redevelopment project. The park separates the business park and residential components of the project.
10	Concord Square	A market-rate, single family residential development, part of the Logan-Fontenelle redevelopment project.
11	Logan-Fontenelle East	A redevelopment area combining single-family residential with a planned business park along 16 th Street. Phase I, encompassing the western part of the area, is built out.
12	Grace Plaza	Approximately 110 rental multi-family units, largely using tax credits, in two- to four-plex configurations. Project is complete, largely built out during the 1990s.
13	Campus for Hope	New facilities for several of Omaha's major facilities for homeless people, including Siena Francis House.



Kellom Heights Shopping Center



Logan Fontenelle Park and Concord Square Housing



Long School Marketplace

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Map Key	Project Name	Project Description
14	Conestoga Place	A 1980s era single-family ownership development, including about 50 homes. Remains strongly owner-occupied. When built, it neighbored the Logan-Fontenelle Homes project.
15	Anathoth Place	Ten units, developed as a housing cooperative by Wesley House during mid 1980s.
16	Chambers Court	A historic apartment complex, originally built as Strehlow Terrace. Rehabilitated several times, most notably during the 1980s. Buildings went into default, and were eventually acquired and restored by Omaha Housing Authority, reopening in 2005 as Chambers Court.
17	Long School Phase 1	Single-family infill development on vacant lots.
17a	Long School Phase 2	Single-family infill development on vacant lots.
17b	Long School Phase 3	Single-family infill development on vacant lots.
17c	Long School Phase 4	Planned single-family infill development on vacant lots, possibly including senior housing and townhomes proposed along 24 th Street.
18	24th and Lake Redevelopment Area	A long-term redevelopment project in the traditional core of the African-American community. Key features include Blue Lion Center, originally conceived as a neighborhood-owned retail center and now the home of the city's job training agency; the Business and Technology Center, a business incubator opened in 1986; the Preston Love Jazz Museum; other commercial space; a new building for Family Housing Services; and a renewed streetscape, completed during 2005/06.
19	Business and Technology Center	A business incubator developed in former Safeway store. Facility opened in 1986.
20	Kountze Place	A historic neighborhood that has been a focus of rehabilitation and infill development efforts. Area includes a concentration of new owner-occupied and rent-to-own single-family development.
21	Horizon Townhomes	A 1980-81 conversion of a dilapidated 1950-era apartment complex into 50-unit townhouse condominiums. Financed through a consortium of local lenders, CD funds, and a target area UDAG. When completed, it was the first significant ownership project built in North Omaha since the 1920s.
22	Kountze Park	A two square block park, once part of the site of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition in 1898. Recently renewed by the city's neighborhood park rehab program.
23	King Science Center	Comprehensively rehabilitated Omaha Public Schools science magnet school.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

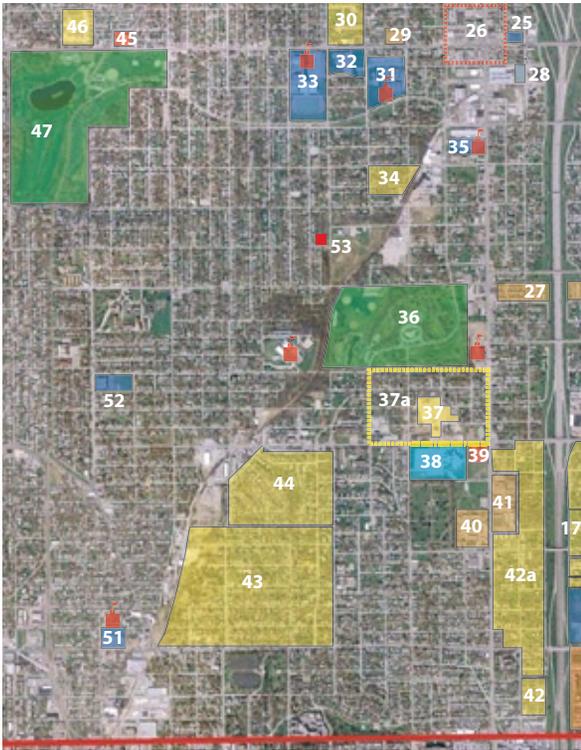
Map Key	Project Name	Project Description
24	Saratoga Place	Single-family infill development area.
25	Charles B. Washington Library	Public library completely restored and re-opened in 2006.
26	30-Ames	Major commercial intersection, often studied with limited results.
27	Spencer Homes	Public housing project rehabilitated during 1980s as part of the development of the North Freeway.
28	Silverstone	Reuse of an industrial building, creating an estimated 35 jobs.
29	Meredith Manor	Senior residential project on site of Monmouth Park School. Previous school building was closed and reused for apartments. Project failed because of management issues, and was demolished, replaced by new construction.
30	Monmouth Heights	A new single-family owner-occupied subdivision on former site of Immanuel Hospital.
31	Eugene Skinner Magnet School	New Omaha Public Schools magnet, developed as part of a string of civic facilities. City of Omaha participated in land assembly for the project, completed during the 1990s.
32	Butler-Gast YMCA	New North Omaha YMCA with a neighboring community health center, part of a string of educational and civic facilities between Ames Avenue and Paxton Boulevard. City of Omaha participated in assembly for the project, completed during the 1990s.
33	North High school	Complete rehabilitation and expansion of major urban high school, with positioning of the school as a math and science magnet. High school restoration project was completed during the 1990s.
34	33-Spaulding Redevelopment	New single-family infill development.
35	Druid Hill Elementary School	New Omaha Public Schools facility, connected to a leg of the city's boulevard system.
36	Adams Park	A major city park, includes a community recreation center. Investment during the 1990s included a new pond, paths, and other park site repairs and improvements.



30th Street & Ames Avenue



24th Street & Lake Street



Miami Heights Phase 1

Community Development Projects

Map Key	Project Name	Project Description
37	Miami Heights Phase 1	A new single-family development, featuring high-cost "urban pioneer" homes to establish a high comparable value for the neighborhood. Houses were custom-built for highly motivated owners with a strong social and economic commitment to the project.
37a	Miami Heights Redevelopment Area	Master planned neighborhood development, encompassing future phases of the project. Plan includes infrastructure improvement, infill housing, senior multi-family, and rehabilitation of sound existing houses.
38	Salem Baptist Church	A major community anchor, nationally famous for its gospel choir. New church was developed on land sold by Omaha Housing Authority (OHA) after demolition of Hilltop Homes public housing project.
39	Walgreen's	A new store developed on site sold by Salem Baptist as part of the OHA sale to the church.
40	Pleasantview Homes West	Existing OHA-owned public housing project. OHA is examining possible development options.
41	Pleasantview Homes East	Existing OHA-owned public housing project. Authority is examining possible development options.
42	Highlanders Redevelopment Phase 1	Completed first phase new single-family housing development on high site adjacent to the North Freeway.
42a	Highlanders Redevelopment Area	Continuation of single-family new construction.
43	Orchard Hill Redevelopment	Scattered infill single-family new construction.
44	Erskine Park	Early (late 1970s) city neighborhood renewal effort including urban homesteading and acquisition/rehab and expansion/resale of area of small, postwar prefabricated cottages.
45	Walgreen's	New store and reused small commercial building at Fontenelle Boulevard and Ames.
46	Fontenelle View	New single-family owner occupied subdivision on former site of Fontenelle View retirement home. Project incorporates characteristics of a traditional neighborhood.
47	Fontenelle Park	Major city park, including a 9-hole golf course, lagoon, baseball center, and pavilion. Lagoon and surrounding areas rehabilitated as part of the city's major park rehabilitation program.

Part 1 Offenses 2002-2007

	Jan - Mar 2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	% Change 2002-2006
Criminal homicide	11	33	31	20	35	26	27%
Forcible rape	31	187	199	187	179	173	8%
Robbery	171	848	682	824	896	998	-15%
Aggravated assault	338	1,437	1,415	1,577	1,517	1,632	-12%
Burglary	644	3,172	3,164	3,641	3,449	3,220	-1%
Larceny-theft	3281	15,172	15,079	15,490	16,869	18,490	-18%
Motor vehicle theft	972	3,443	3,813	3,405	4,194	4,242	-19%
Totals	5448	24,292	24,383	25,144	27,139	28,781	-16%

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	JAN - MAR 2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	% Change 2002-2006
Criminal and non-criminal incident reports processed	25,369	106,613	108,114	107,598	111,792	108,771	-2.0%

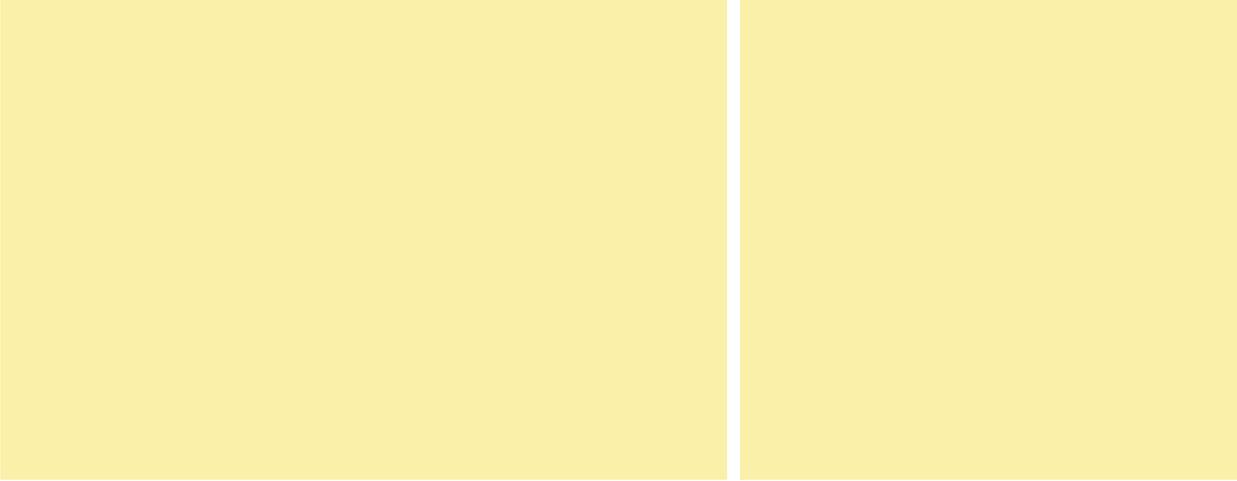
Incidence of Criminal Offenses

Public safety is the top concern of many members of the North Omaha community. Residents are concerned both about actual crime in the area and the perception in the broader community that North Omaha is unsafe.

Crime data are available only on a citywide level. However, Omaha Police Department staff indicate that trends over the past five years have applied to all parts of Omaha, including North Omaha.

Since 2002 the number of Part 1 offenses has decreased by 16%. Part I offenses are serious crimes against persons and crimes against property, including felonies. While some categories have fluctuated over the years, overall criminal activity has steadily declined.

Based on first quarter data for 2007 the overall pattern of decline is continuing. Part 1 offenses are 10% lower than the quarterly average for 2006.

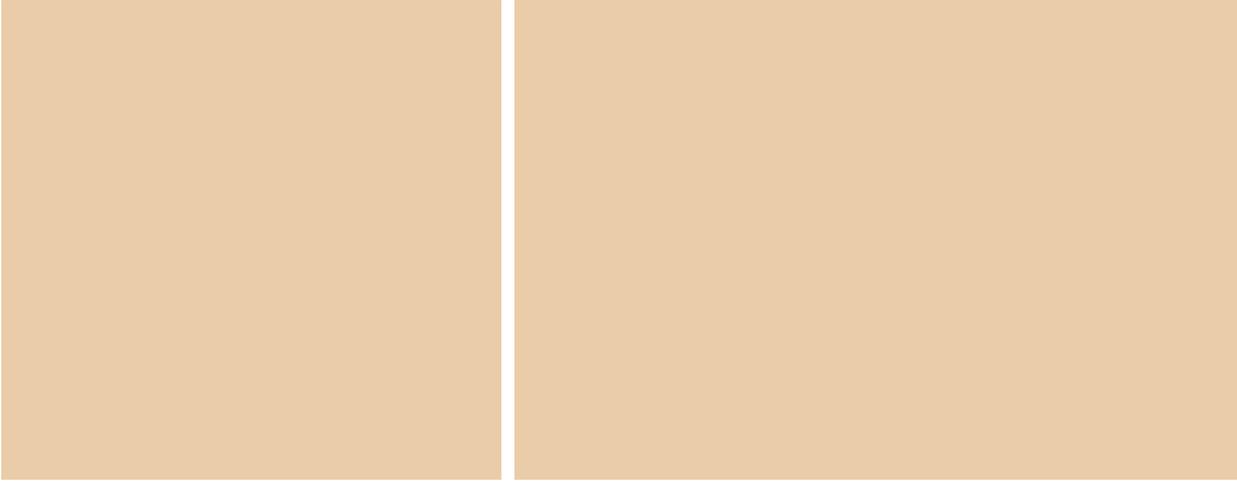




PART 2

MARKET
ANALYSIS





An understanding of the market forces at work in North Omaha helps frame a realistic development program for the neighborhood. This chapter analyzes North Omaha's existing markets and future potential, based on an analysis of the local economy; retail, residential, and office/industrial real estate markets; interviews with local stakeholder groups; and trends and dynamics of regional and national urban markets. Market research *guides* development policy by defining both constraints and opportunities. A neighborhood reinvestment effort, by definition, requires redirection of current trends. This analysis helps identify what the possibilities are for North Omaha and what conditions are necessary to create the greatest possibility of success and economic growth.

The North Omaha market analysis includes:

- **The Community Context**, discussing North Omaha's demographic and economic base in the context of the overall city.
- **Retail Markets**, considering existing retail conditions and future needs and possibilities.
- **Residential Markets**, investigating the study area's housing markets and suggesting directions for further growth.
- **Office and Industrial Markets**, identifying possibilities for development in these employment-generating sectors.

The full North Omaha Development Project market analysis is available in the Technical Appendix to this plan.

The Community Context: North Omaha's Demographic and Economic Base

Part One of this document presented factual information about North Omaha's people and economy in maps and tables. This information, supplemented by economic research, leads to the following findings:

Findings

North Omaha's economy performs at a lower level than the national, state, and city economies. In general, household incomes and housing values are lower and unemployment is higher in North Omaha than in Omaha and Nebraska. From a retail perspective, the neighborhood has a negative balance of trade – a significant share of consumer spending occurs outside the neighborhood.

Long-standing trends have pulled the center of new development, including housing, office, retail, and industrial investment away from the established city. This decentralization, fueled by many factors, is common to most American cities. But the resulting shift of these key areas away from the city center has had a major long-term impact on the North Omaha economy.

The North Omaha study area's population has declined slowly but steadily since 1990, while most metropolitan area growth has occurred in emerging areas in Sarpy and Douglas Counties. However,

in many areas, the rate of population decline has leveled. In addition, some of this loss is the result of revitalization policy, such as the demolition of the Logan-Fontenelle Homes public housing development and its replacement by the North Omaha Business Park and Concord Square single-family housing development.

The study area's population has decreased among its youngest and oldest residents, while the population between ages 40 to 60 years old has increased. These changes indicate a study area population that is aging but not elderly.

During the last decade, a base of features has emerged around the North Omaha study area, creating a new economic context for the neighborhood. These economic amenities include the Qwest Center, a resurgent Downtown with a strong housing market, the North Downtown District (NoDo), Creighton University campus development, growth in surrounding medical facilities, reinvestment in the Midtown area, Riverfront tourist and commercial development, and Metro Community College. The emergence of Cuming Street as a primary route to Eppley Airfield and the Qwest Center, has also increased overall community contact with at least the southern edge of the study area.

Omahans have displayed a growing affinity for urban living, evidenced by the rapid growth in Downtown housing and major new developments in the middle of the city. North Omaha is positioned to capture a share of the residential market attracted by urban amenities, employment centers, university communities, neighborhood quality and cultural heritage.

The demographic and economic analysis suggests opportunities for development related to employment, labor force employability and local business development. The revitalizing downtown and growing local industries, notably medical services, construction, and transportation, offer increased semi-skilled and skilled employment opportunities. In addition to employment, interviews revealed the possibility of related business development linkages for local suppliers and service providers.

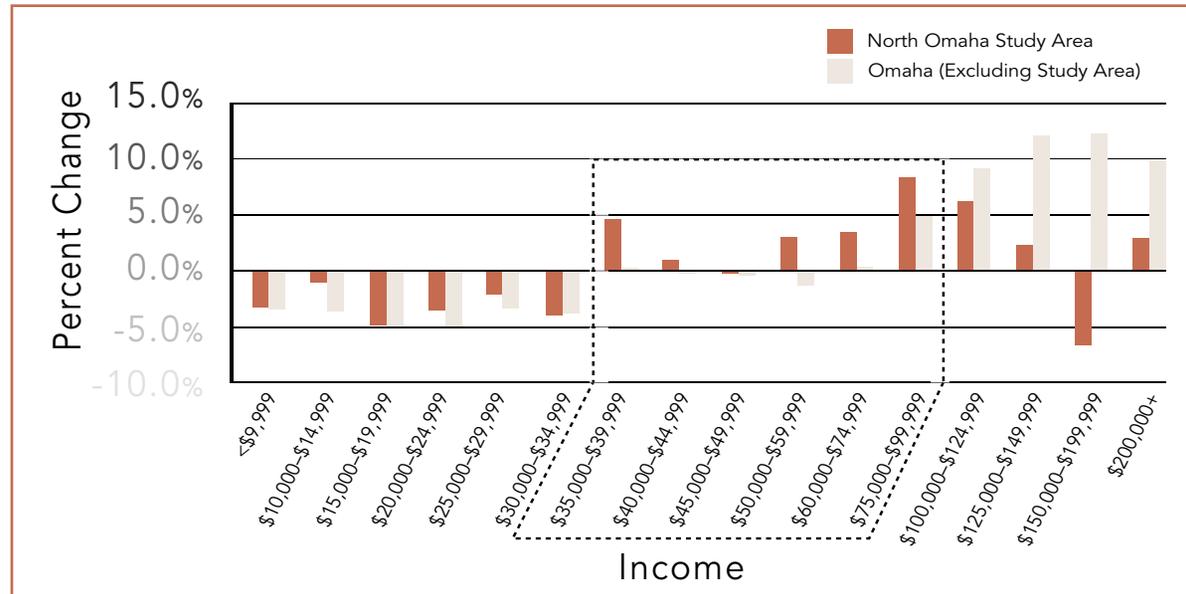
Policy Implications

Current trends within and around the North Omaha study area, primarily related to population and income change, affect opportunities for stimulating retail demand and housing development.

Changing household composition affects the types of housing products, commercial development, and services that residents require. Aging “baby boomer” households are generating a demand for smaller homes or townhomes, requiring less maintenance effort. In addition, these groups have retraining, continuing education, and job retention needs that differ from younger age groups. The aging of these population groups will also tend to increase local health service needs in coming years.

The relative loss of younger and older people suggests a need and opportunity for North Omaha to renew itself by provide quality environments for younger families and settings that meet the needs of older adults. Young households generate demands for both smaller, urban houses before they have children, and affordable homes that accommodate grow-

CHANGE IN HOUSEHOLD INCOME GROUPS, 2000-2006



ing families. A decline in older adults indicates that people are moving out of the neighborhood as their older houses no longer meet their needs.

Growth in the number of middle-income households indicates continued and growing economic potential in the North Omaha study area. The number of North Omaha households with incomes between \$50,000 and \$100,000 has grown substantially, and at a rate faster than the rest of the city. The number of households with incomes between \$100,000 and \$150,000 has also grown, while lower-income households have actually decreased. As households age, they also acquire wealth, even in a neighborhood often labeled as “low-income.”

About 58% of the study area population is African-American, strongly linking the economic health

of Omaha’s African-American community with the economic health of North Omaha. Within the City of Omaha, the median household income of African-Americans has grown, but more slowly than that of the city’s white population. This has widened the income gap between white and black households. Other recent data indicate that the poverty rate of Omaha’s African American population has grown from 30% to 44% between 2000 and 2005, and its unemployment rate has grown from 10.2% in 2000 to 17.5% in 2005. From a policy perspective, these data underscore the importance of creating employment and economic opportunities that are readily accessible and financially rewarding to the city’s African-American population.

Job opportunities are expanding in a variety of areas, from highly specialized professionals to semi-skilled and skilled professions that require some

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME CHANGE BY ETHNICITY, CITY OF OMAHA, 2000-2006

Race/Ethnic Group	2000 Household Median	2006 Household Median	% Change, 2000-2006	2000 Gap between from White Median	2006 Gap from White Median
White	42,890	46,844	+9.22		
African-American	23,883	24,722	+3.51	19,007	22,122
Hispanic/Latino	35,028	34,721	-0.88	7,862	12,123

Source: US Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey

or no post-secondary requirements. These provide significant opportunities for employment growth in North Omaha and for North Omahans. Trucking, distribution, health care and nursing, and skilled positions in construction and construction-related trades will experience vacancies into the next decade. These increasing job vacancies provide opportunities for strategic skills development. In addition, recruitment of expanding industries can provide jobs to a wide range of skill sets, providing the economic strength necessary to support a variety of housing, retailing, and services to North Omaha residents.

A strategic focus in North Omaha on creating housing and economic opportunity that crosses income groups can increase population and economic health and stimulate a self-sustaining private market. Elements of this approach include business financing and development, workforce development, and new employment and economic centers.

The Retail Market

The relative lack of neighborhood retailing has been a major issue for many North Omahans. The establishments typically identified with shopping – mass retailers, supermarkets, clothing stores, home improvements, and others – are typically found outside the boundaries of the study area. Retailing is important in urban communities because it:

- Adds convenience and quality to a neighborhood.
- Provides economic opportunity for both potential neighborhood entrepreneurs and prospective employees.
- Provides centers of activity and community life.
- Indicates a level of confidence and stability in the neighborhood.

The retail analysis considered issues such as retail supply, rents, and sales performance in the city and the study area; and the impact of national trends and spending patterns on local demand and possibilities.

Findings

Vacancy and underutilization of space are relatively high in North Omaha's principal retail centers. Retail centers within the study area include four primary clusters :

- Bakers Place at 51st and Ames.
- Kellom Heights Shopping Center at 24th and Cuming
- Long School Market Place at 24th and Hamilton, and the 24th Street corridor north to Lake Street.
- The 30th and Ames cluster.

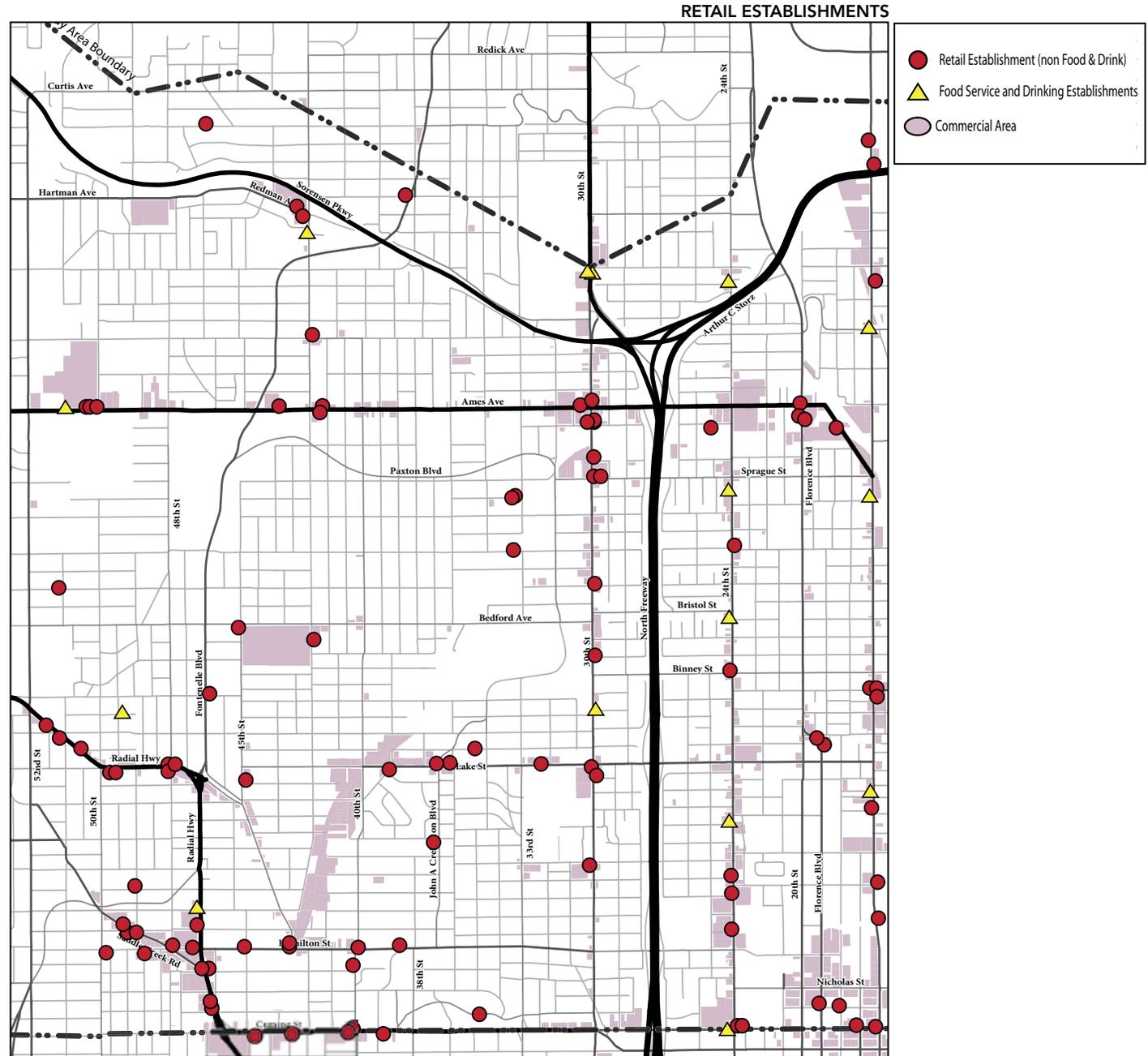
Roughly 21 to 25 percent of the total leasable space within these retail developments is currently unutilized with around 19 percent unleased.

The study area also contains several other retail or commercial clusters, both at former transit stops and at free-standing locations. These sites exhibit high vacancy and, in many cases, obsolete development patterns. Typically, one or two retail or consumer service establishments operate by themselves, and are scattered throughout these once more concentrated retail settings. Many retail clusters developed at streetcar stops or crossings of transit lines, and include 16th and Locust, 40th and Ames, 40th and Hamilton, 45th and Military, 42nd and Grand, and 33rd and Parker. These transit-oriented districts have lost much of their retail character, although some significant retailers and services remain. Walgreen's has also developed two free-standing store locations, at

30th and Lake and Fontenelle Boulevard and Ames. These areas account for an additional 600,000 square feet of small scale retail space. Based on interviews with area commercial brokers, visual surveys, and interviews with local merchants, about 30 to 45 percent of this inventory is vacant.

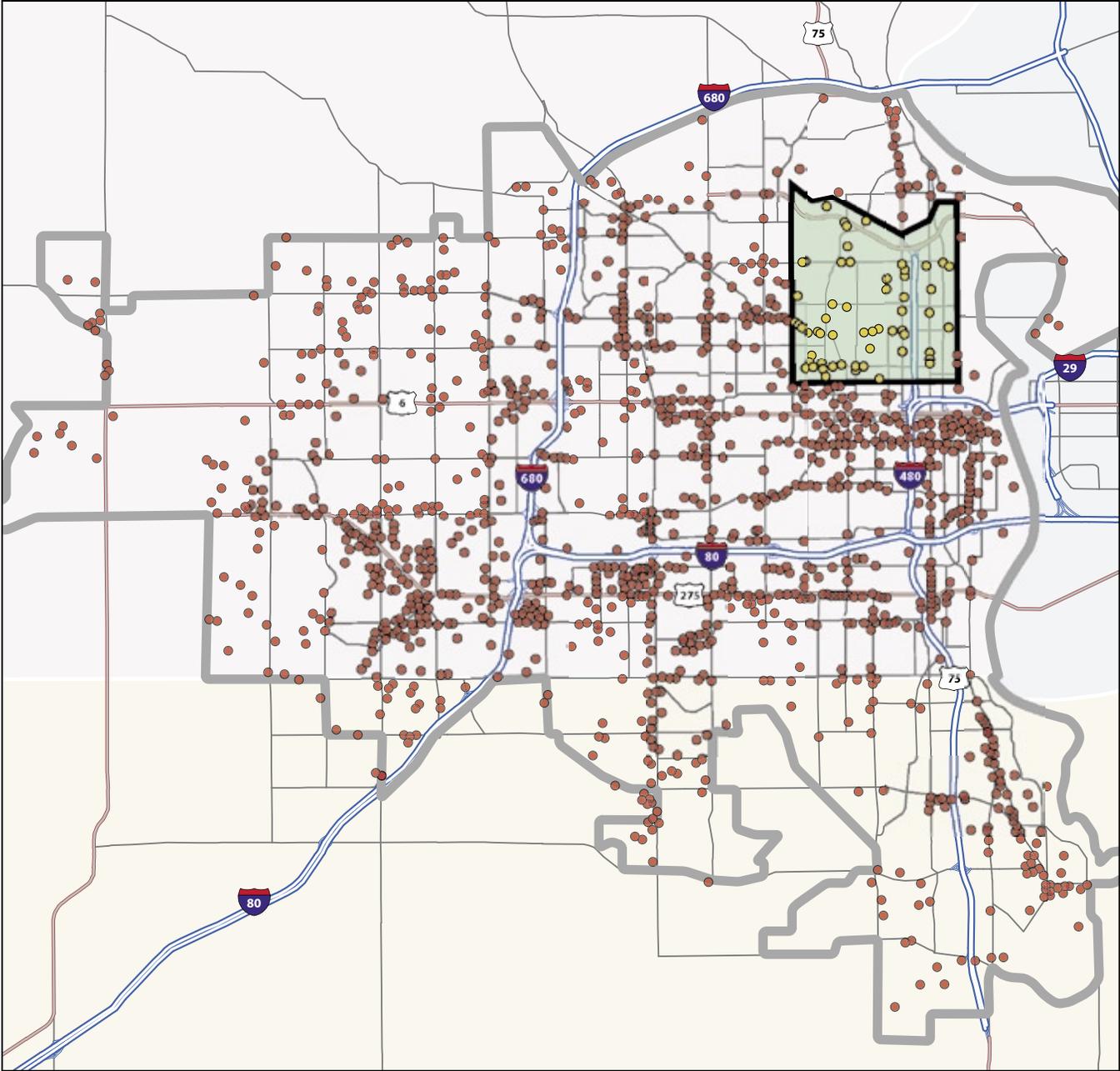
Much of North Omaha's retail space is outdated and inadequate for the current needs of retail tenants. Despite some newer development, the average age of commercial structures is 72 years. Locations often reflect former streetcar lines rather than contemporary traffic patterns.

Large retail and commercial concentrations within two miles of the study area attract some North Omaha consumers and may affect the commercial development potential of the study area. The most recent of these projects are two large power center developments on North 72nd Street between Ames Avenue and Sorensen Parkway. These centers attract regional tenants more effectively than the study area's scattered retail sites. Continuing efforts to add commercial space throughout the Omaha area may also affect retail interest in the study area.

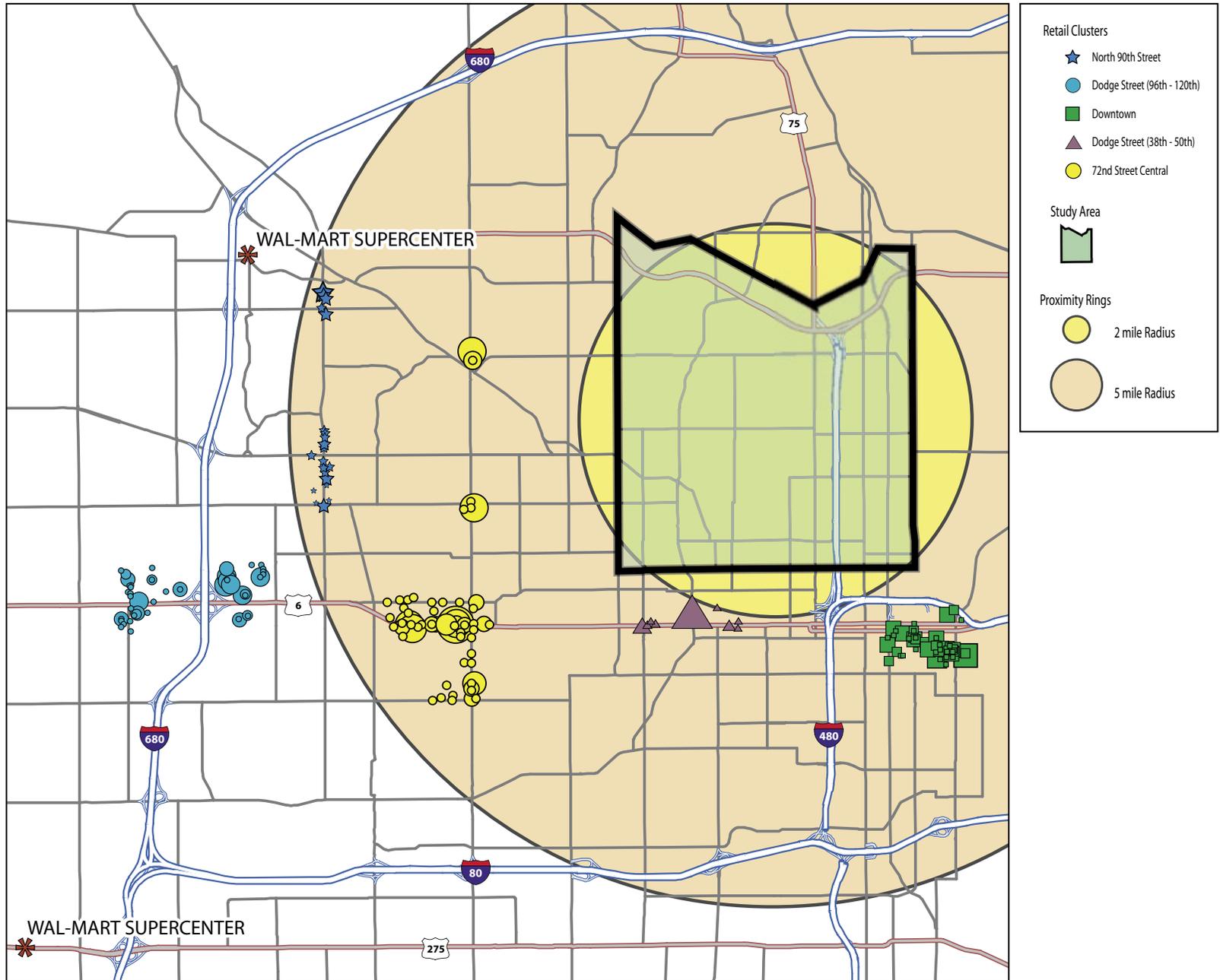


OMAHA AREA RETAIL CONCENTRATIONS

- Retail Businesses
- Study Area Retail Businesses



RETAIL CLUSTERS IN NORTH OMAHA TRADE AREA



Notable Retail Inventory Concentrations

Retail Development Concentrations	Gross Leasable Area (SF)	% of Total GLA	Avg. Rental Rate	Space Available (SF)	% Vacancy	% of Total Vacancy
Study Area						
Primary Clusters	242,382	5.6%	\$10.50	44,891	18.5%	6.21%
Overall (Estimated) <i>From City Parcel Records</i>	866,000	-	\$3 - \$11	-	35 – 45%*	-
North 90th Street Retail Corridor	482,079	11.8%	\$12.39	49,309	10.23%	7.08%
Dodge Street (between 96th & 120th) Retail Cluster	1,635,404	39.9%	\$15.29	158,716	9.71%	22.78%
Downtown Retail Cluster	442,299	10.8%	\$12.20	216,798	49.02%	31.11%
Dodge Street (between 38th & 50th) Retail Cluster	218,971	5.3%	\$12.94	14,264	6.51%	2.05%
72 Street Central Retail Corridor	1,088,257	26.6%	\$17.42	214,421	19.70%	30.77%
Total	4,733,010			698,399		

Source: Omaha Builders Owners and Managers Association

*Estimate of total study area vacancy was gathered through interviews of real estate brokers, community business persons, and developers. An undetermined percentage of overall retail space within the area is unavailable or inappropriate for retail use.



Chubb Foods at 16th & Locust

Competitive Retail Inventory Concentrations

North Omaha has a negative balance of retail trade, with a significant amount of retail spending leaving the neighborhood. Consumer spending by study area residents is estimated to range from between \$156 million to \$170 million. An estimated \$111 million is spent at businesses within the study area. Thus, North Omaha displays a gap of \$44 million to \$57 million between total spending and retail receipts within the study area. Some North Omaha retail revenues come from outside the study area, so actual consumer leakage for consumer items may actually be larger. This is a common pattern in older city neighborhoods, where households increasingly seek regional commercial centers such as malls and mass retailers, or catalog and internet options.

The study area displays a demand for additional grocery capacity and other niche businesses. Successful grocery stores in the area have remained under 20,000 square feet, are independently owned, and market directly to the specific community needs. Super Saver, a large grocer who occupied a former Baker's Supermarket store at 51st and Ames, closed in 2006. The proximity of competitive grocers also affects the potential market for a new store. Four Baker's and two No Frills stores operate within four miles of the center of the study area and Aldi's is proposing a store at 30th and Ames.



Former Bakers Supermarket

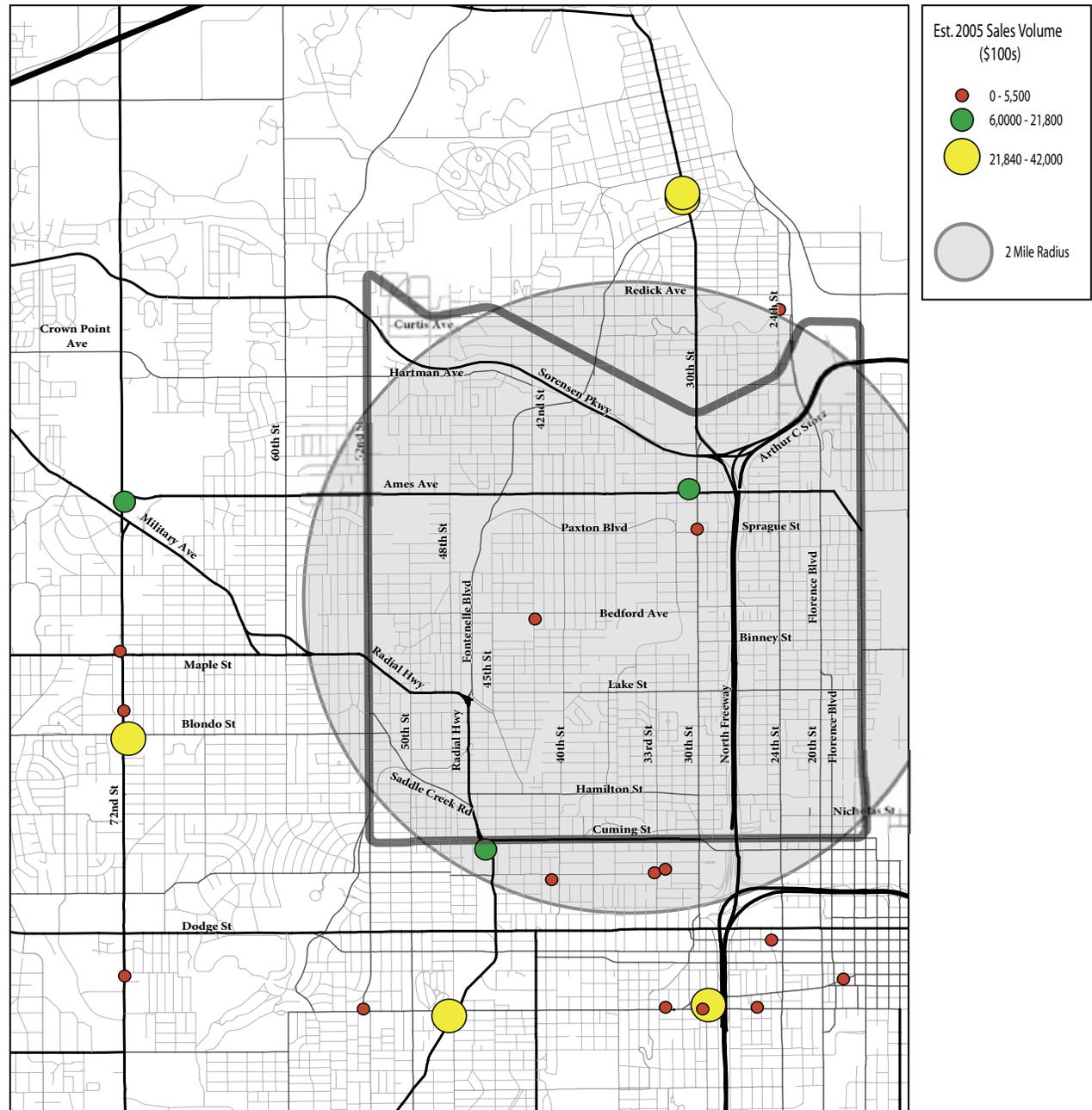
Other niches for both new businesses and opportunities for expansion include:

- Furniture and home furnishings
- Electronics and appliances
- Health and personal care
- Apparel
- Food and beverage,
- General merchandise

Commercial brokers are generally unfamiliar with potential markets in North Omaha. Interview information indicates a lack of awareness or focus on this market, making them unlikely to place tenants in existing North Omaha commercial spaces.

North Omaha fast food restaurant chains have performed at higher than expected sales. Expenditure analysis indicates that a strong demand for food and beverage retail continues in the study area.

GROCERY STORES IN NORTH OMAHA TRADE AREA



Policy Implications

The North Omaha study area lacks contemporary commercial centers or clusters that are located and designed to take advantage of current and emerging opportunities. Much of North Omaha's commercial building inventory includes old buildings in locations that often respond to development patterns of the neighborhood's formative years. As a result, they are often not attractive to contemporary retailers. Even newer projects like Bakers Place, built in the 1970s and expanded/remodeled in the 1980s, and Long School Marketplace have experienced difficulties in leasing. Baker's Place, at 51st and Ames, lacks a north-south cross arterial and a strong neighborhood context. Long School Marketplace, a contemporary small strip center, includes a productive anchor store, but is geographically separate from the potential Creighton market and awaits development of a surrounding neighborhood. Its rents to date are also above those of other available space in the neighborhood. The 30th and Ames intersection, at the crossing of two major arterials, adjacent to a freeway interchange, and near a major transit center, is the study area's largest commercial cluster. However, it lacks a major site that can accommodate large contemporary retailers.

North Omaha has thriving small businesses that are scattered through the area, tend to operate singly, and lack the exposure that can attract broader markets. Yet, these distinctive businesses present opportunities for greater market penetration. A few examples of these businesses are LeFlore's New Look Fashions (apparel), Jim's Rib Haven (restaurant), and Chubb's Finer Foods (grocery), and they demon-

strate that effective and innovative retailers can succeed in the neighborhood. However, the market lacks the quantity and diversity of strong local retailers necessary to both retain local consumer spending and attract new customers from outside. A clustering of these businesses in a location with high community exposure and access to multiple markets (North Omaha, Downtown, Creighton, and through traffic) could provide them with a major opportunity for growth.

North Omaha to date has been "off the radar" of major commercial brokers, limiting efforts to market commercial space in the neighborhood. For many years, Omaha's commercial marketing energy has looked west, leaving in-city sites largely to their own devices. That dynamic is changing with major commercial development in new mixed use projects such as Midtown Crossing and Aksarben Village. Yet, the North Omaha study area continues to fall out of the view of the mainstream market, despite its relatively large population. Greater involvement of brokers with their substantial networks, as well as potential anchors or project catalysts, would benefit commercial leasing activity.

Commercial rents in North Omaha are typically very low. Many small locally-based businesses cannot pay rents required by new centers. Real estate brokers and nonprofit developers experienced in North Omaha commercial leasing suggest that many local business owners pay rents below \$5 per square foot. Commercial investors and nonprofit developers indicate that the minimum break-even rent in projects financed by debt is approximately \$11 per square foot. Successful commercial development requires financing packages that provide rents that small business can afford.



North Omaha Barber Shop

Conclusions: Retail Development Opportunities

In America, retailers usually meet their customer needs best when located in a cluster with other stores. Shoppers prefer to accomplish multiple objectives during a single shopping trip, and businesses located together reinforce each other. Retailers in projects with a "critical mass" of tenants are more likely to attract customers than isolated stores. New retail space that cannot meet the critical mass criterion has limited potential for success.

The study area's primary deficits (modest population decline, below average incomes, and concerns about security) create challenges in a competition for large national retailers like Target, Wal-Mart, and Best Buy. However, these challenges are not insurmountable. In addition, smaller retailers can succeed in the neighborhood especially if they offer superior service or specialized products.

Critical mass can be achieved by creating conditions that encourage clustering and multiple services at strategic locations. Logical initial locations include:

- Sites near downtown where specialization already occurs to at least a limited degree. The 24th and Cumming intersection and the extended 24th Street corridor north is near Downtown, adjacent to outside markets, and benefits from increasing traffic created by the Qwest Center and riverfront development. Here, an emphasis on culture and entertainment, ethnic foods, unique apparel, beauty and lifestyle services, and restaurants may prove to be an effective mix.
- A point of maximum accessibility for more regional services. The 30th and Ames area, served by major arterials, adjacent to a North Freeway interchange, and including MAT's North Omaha Transit Center, meets the access criteria of a good contemporary urban commercial location. The intersection also benefits from the presence of an Omaha Police Department precinct station.

Initial tenancing will be critical to a project's success, particularly since any financing strategy will rely in part on the creditworthiness of anchor tenants who will typically sign long-term leases. In addition, a range of incentives, including land assembly, infrastructure, financing, and environmental amenities, will be essential to capitalize on retail development opportunities.



Kellom Heights Shopping Center



Energy efficient "green" home built in Long School

Residential Markets

Residential development is fundamental to the reinvestment process in North Omaha. It leads to population growth and brings people with a greater range of incomes to the neighborhood. The City of Omaha, in partnership with effective community development corporations, has completed in major rehabilitation and new housing initiatives since the 1980s, demonstrating the potential for new housing markets. Starting with Horizon Townhomes in 1980-81, projects like Conestoga Place, Concord Square, Charles Place, Monmouth Park, Fontenelle View, Kountze Park, and Miami Heights have demonstrated the demand for owner-occupied housing in North Omaha. Rental developments like Kellom Heights, Grace Plaza, and Ernie Chambers Court have also created high quality, affordable housing. This discussion addresses the nature of the residential demands necessary to accelerate housing development in the study area.

Findings

An interest in and demand for market rate housing exists in North Omaha. The demand for market rate mixed income and mixed density housing is supported by past experience, the increasing number of households earning over \$50,000 a year, and growing urban housing demand from a service-oriented workforce in downtown and adjacent areas.

Study area housing production grew between 2000 and 2002, and has since settled down to more moderate rates. The City of Omaha also has experienced a steady annual increase in housing units since 1990 with

a peak of production taking place in 1996-97. Multi-family construction in the city as a whole decreased after reaching a high production level between 1996 and 1998.

The study area has a relatively high estimated vacancy rate, hovering in the 10% range and suggesting that a number of these vacant units are at best obsolete and in many cases uninhabitable. The policies of the City and the Omaha Housing Authority during the last two decades have resulted in vacation or demolition of large concentrations of high-density, multi-family housing; dispersal of public housing units around the city; replacement of large housing concentrations by much lower-density housing; and redevelopment of vacant land by single-family, owner-occupied homes or moderate-density rental settings.

Residential demand in the study area has been driven by replacement of obsolete housing and an aggressive city-sponsored incentive housing program. The City of Omaha's approach has provided land, infrastructure, and "soft second" mortgages, funded through CDBG and HOME funds, to help community development corporations build and market affordable single-family housing. Although one private, for-profit developer is active in North Omaha, nearly all new residential construction since 2000 has been executed by nonprofit developers assisted by the City. The use of CDBG funds requires targeting of mortgage benefits or financing incentives to low and moderate-income households.

A major focus for new residential construction has occurred in the southeast part of the study area, south of Lake Street between 16th Street and the

North Freeway. Single-family development here includes the Concord Square and Charles Place subdivisions and the Long School infill area, while rental development includes the multi-phase Kellom Heights redevelopment area, Grace Plaza, and Ernie Chambers Court. Other major housing efforts during the last ten years include subdivisions built on the large parcels previously used for civic or institutional purposes (Monmouth Park on the former site of Immanuel Hospital, Fontenelle View on the site of the Fontenelle Home), or on infill sites in the extended Kountze Place neighborhood. All of these concentrated developments have dramatically changed the character of their respective neighborhoods.

Assessed values have increased in redevelopment areas, at the fringes of the study area, and along parts of the 24th Street and Florence Boulevard corridors. Based on a review of city-assisted single-family construction, new houses are receiving appraisals appropriate to their actual market value, ranging at or above \$150,000.

Recent experience indicates support at some level for high value new construction. The first phase of Miami Heights, a long-term project between Lake Street and Adams Park, 30th to 36th Streets, built ten homes priced above \$250,000. Interviews with the project developer indicate a limited current market for additional development. The Concord Square project, built on the site of the former Logan-Fontenelle Homes public housing development, has successfully built homes priced between \$150,000 to \$225,000.



24th Street Businesses

Policy Implications

North Omaha's overall ability to attract a range of residents, including middle- and upper-income buyers, to urban neighborhoods will be the basis for future growth in the study area. Recent evidence belies opinions that homes cannot receive market appraisals in North Omaha, or that property values in redeveloped areas are stagnating or declining. However, this performance is clearest in parts of the neighborhood that have good access to urban amenities, including downtown, the university setting, and the emerging North Downtown District.

New urban housing products such as attached housing, townhomes, rowhouses, condominium ownership regimes, and mixed use developments, with residential units over retail or workshop space, may promote population growth and economic diversity in North Omaha. Smaller units targeted to singles or families without children could both serve the needs of employees and add density to support commercial activity.



Investment in the Adams Park Area

Major area employers have a stake in the health and diversity of the North Omaha housing supply. An economically viable and growing North Omaha reinforces the environment of major surrounding employers and institutions. Quality urban housing in renewed neighborhoods also increases options for convenient housing near to workplaces. This in turn makes public transportation, bicycling, and walking, more attractive to more people, reducing the need for parking lots or structures on high-demand sites.

Affordable housing development will continue to be an important part of North Omaha residential strategy. Along with the relative decrease of multi-family production, the supply of livable homes priced under \$100,000 will continue to decrease as structures age. In addition, older rental projects like Tommie Rose Gardens and buildings west of Fontenelle Park that have posed chronic code enforcement problems are likely to be demolished and redeveloped. A comprehensive development strategy must include replacing obsolete and dilapidated structures with homes, both owner or renter occupied, that offer residents both good housing and a chance to build neighborhood equity.

Community development corporations report that land assembly is one of the greatest barriers that they face in building new housing. Some of the most successful housing developments in North Omaha involve unified parcels acquired from a single owner. A mechanism that assembles land efficiently and on an area wide basis would address this barrier.

Diversifying incomes in North Omaha requires financing programs and incentives that are not limited to lower income groups. CDBG requires principal benefit to low and moderate-income households, and cannot be used to provide incentives to upper-income families – the groups that, under current conditions, are not attracted to North Omaha. Public/private partnerships without income limits expand the potential market and encourage greater participation by both nonprofit and for-profit builders.

Assuming land availability, surrounding amenities, and neighborhood security North Omaha's share of the metropolitan housing market could increase substantially. North Omaha's share of the city's housing market probably cannot be equal to its share of the population because most homebuilding activity in both Omaha and urban America gravitates toward peripheral areas. Yet, a calculation of this share is instructive. The study area's population of 41,000 is about 5% of the overall metropolitan population. Assuming average annual production of 3,000 units, the neighborhood's proportionate share would be about 150 units. In addition, replacement of dilapidated or uninhabitable units could account for another 30 to 50 units per year. This potential for up to 200 units annually corresponds to a 1% annual population growth

rate for the study area. Between 2000 and 2002, neighborhood housing production actually approached this level. Again, while this does not indicate a demand at this level, it does suggest that North Omaha should exceed current housing production. In some cities, such as Chicago, Denver, and St. Louis, inner-city sites have in fact become the "new suburbs," – featuring new housing development across many income ranges.

Office and Industrial Market Analysis

Office and industrial uses account for Omaha's largest employment concentrations. Yet, outside of older industrial areas that frame the center of the city and follow the now abandoned Missouri Pacific Belt Line Railroad, North Omaha lacks significant office and industrial concentrations. During the 1990s, the Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with the Omaha Housing Authority and the City of Omaha, developed the North Omaha Business Park on the west half of the Logan-Fontenelle site. This facility has filled in and demonstrates at least some market for new light industrial uses. It is clear that employment generators are critical to the North Omaha program, but also important to understand the challenges that this kind of development faces.

Findings

On a surface level, it is difficult to demonstrate a significant demand for speculative multi-tenant office or industrial use in the North Omaha study area. About 1.7 million square feet of office space is already planned in Omaha for the next three years. Rapid absorption of this space may require tenants to relocate from older to newer office space. Bargains in older buildings created by these movements would present difficult competition for new offices in redevelopment areas like North Omaha.

Present vacancy rates in in-city office markets discourage construction of new office space in redevelopment areas. The 72nd Street submarket experienc-



State Farm Office North of 24th and Cuming

es a 17.5% vacancy rate, while Downtown office vacancy stands at 14.4%. These rates, while not alarming, do not encourage new Class A or B office development, including back office space, in North Omaha.

The study area includes certain types of office uses. Classes of offices include:

- Back office space related to major downtown employers and corporations. For example, Union Pacific uses the former Airlite Plastics property for storage and some office spaces.
- Neighborhood services, such as insurance agencies, tax preparers, and attorneys. These uses have gravitated toward environments like the Business and Technology Center and surrounding buildings, parts of the 24th Street corridor, and commercial spaces along North 30th Street and the Radial Highway.
- Civic and community organizations and service agencies, such as the Urban League (30th and Lake and 24th and Spencer), Family Housing Advisory Services (24th and Lake), and the Nebraska Health and Human Services System (34th and Lake).



Business and Technology Center

- Medical offices such as the Charles Drew Health Center.
- Financial institutions, concentrating around the 30th and Ames area.
- Operating or governmental agencies, including Metro Area Transit and the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency.

Omaha's industrial market has experienced little change during the past five years. Nationally, manufacturing growth slowed in 2005 and 2006 and will continue to do so through 2007. The Omaha industrial market is likely to follow this nationwide pattern.

North Omaha has traditionally accommodated industrial uses along the abandoned Missouri Pacific Belt Line and in the industrial frame of Downtown between Cuming and Charles Streets. These uses cluster in the following categories:

- Small industries concentrating in such areas as printing, plating, building supplies and services, equipment distribution, uniform services,

janitorial supplies, and related services. These businesses, many of which serve downtown businesses have clustered in the downtown industrial frame.

- Large industries at long-time sites, including Lozier along the north Belt Line corridor between Sprague and Ames and Roberts Dairy adjacent to Cuming and Burt Streets east of 30th Street.
- Vehicle storage, including bus and trailer storage.
- Salvage yards along the 16th Street corridor and former railroad yards to the east.
- Tool companies and light manufacturers.

The recent development and buildout of the North Omaha Business Park suggests types of businesses that North Omaha can attract. These industries include business services (uniform services, armored car and security services), automotive services, and small offices.

Implications

Major employment generating uses such as office and industrial uses are important to North Omaha. However, the Omaha office and industrial market is highly competitive, with a number of locations competing for a finite demand. Office projects already in the pipeline are likely to be more than adequate to absorb short-term metropolitan area office demand. In addition, demand for major manufacturing and industrial development is at best unpredictable. This leaves relatively little room for penetration by a new market in North Omaha.

In such a competitive environment, North Omaha sites must offer a secure and high amenity environment that emphasizes major assets. The study area will not succeed as a “compensatory” environment – locations that some corporations take out of a sense of social obligation. Rather, to achieve self-sustaining growth, sites in the study area must make sound business sense. They must provide affordable space, high amenities, convenient access, and a secure environment at least equal to and probably better than competitive offerings. In addition, North Omaha must play to its greatest assets – access to potential markets such as medical centers and downtown businesses; excellent freeway and airport access; access to Metropolitan Community College, a major skill training and continuing education center; and adjacency to Creighton University.

The definition of employment generators in north Omaha should go beyond traditional industrial and office categories. Health care and construction appear to provide substantial employment growth opportunities for the neighborhood and its residents. Metropolitan Community College and its new culinary arts facility opens major new possibilities for spin-off businesses. Omaha’s traditional strengths in telecommunications and information technology also present new opportunities in North Omaha. New employment sites should develop with the flexibility to accommodate these and other uses.

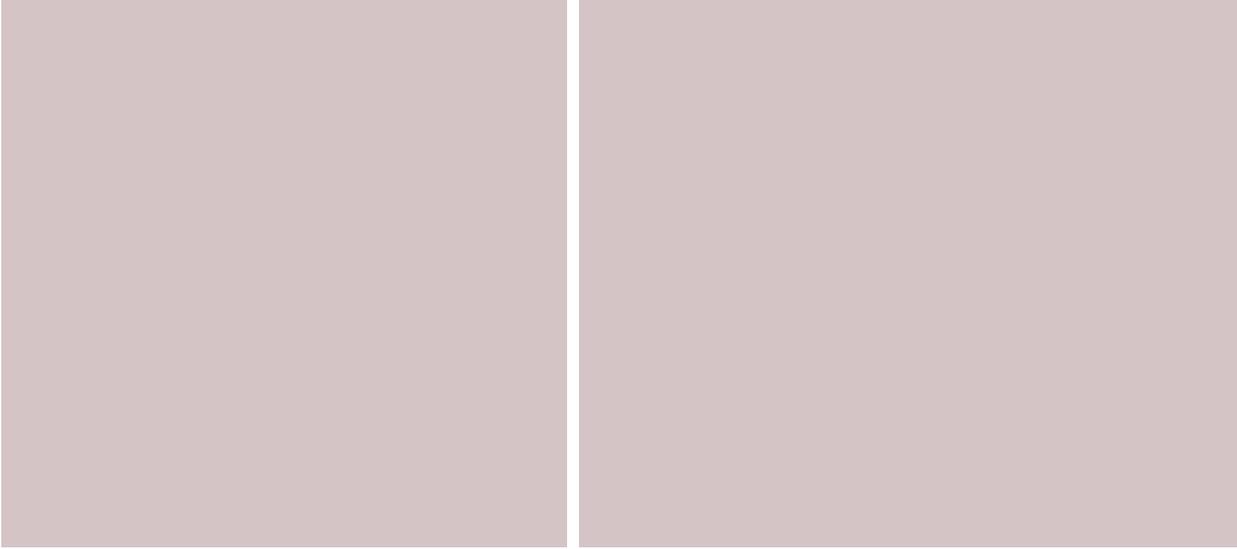
New business park sites should be announced and developed with at least one or two major occupants in place. This assures future business park tenants that they will not be pioneers in the area, and establishes momentum for completed development.



PART 3

VOICES OF THE
COMMUNITY:
The Citizen
Participation Process





North Omaha's residents and businesses are enormous community assets and their participation was essential to this planning process. This chapter of the plan presents the results of a community input program unprecedented in scope and its efforts to involve as many North Omahans as possible. This process included:

- **Six Local Planning Workshops.** The North Omaha Development Project study area covers a large and diverse area. In order to address specific local issues, we held planning workshops in each of six subareas. (see map). At these workshops, participants became part of the planning team, identifying issues and expressing ideas for their neighborhoods in words, sketches, and maps. These meetings took place during April and May, 2007.
- **Stakeholder Group Meetings.** Eleven stakeholder discussion groups, organized around specific interests or disciplines, were took place during April, 2007. Stakeholder groups included:
 - Marketing and media relations
 - Business community
 - Commercial developers
 - Educational institutions
 - Housing developers and advocates
 - Neighborhood organizations
 - Retail and small business owners
 - Financial community
 - Medical services
 - Service organizations
 - Churches or religious institutions



Neighborhood Workshop

Participants in these discussions spoke frankly and personally about North Omaha and its issues, potential, and future directions.

- **Resident and Business Surveys.** AHL, the study's survey consultant, conducted telephone surveys with both residents and business owners from April to July, 2007. The survey included a statistically significant sample of 300 residents and 52 business owners. To measure perceptions of North Omaha in the broader community, the survey also interviewed 101 residents and 50 business owners from outside the study area.
- **Community Survey.** Residents completed an on-line survey covering general perceptions and issues in the neighborhood.
- **Community Meetings.** Two general community meetings took place in April and July, 2007. Approximately 300 residents, business owners, and interested citizens attended each of these two meetings.

Neighborhood Planning Workshops

At each planning workshop, approximately 30 participants worked in small groups to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities presented by their own area and the larger North Omaha area. Appendix B, the Community Input Report, reviews the results of each group's work, but common themes include:

Study Area Strengths

- Long standing neighborhood associations.
- The rich history of the area.
- Residents' commitment to North Omaha.
- Availability of land for development.
- Large number of churches.
- Diversity and culture.
- Flat geography.
- Easy access to the interstate and downtown.
- Metropolitan Community College.
- Affordability of the area.

Study Area Problems

- Crime and safety.
- Lack of adequate public transportation.
- High unemployment.
- No major retailers or large grocery store.
- Racism and segregation.
- Absentee landlords.
- Relationship between community and police.
- Negative media coverage.
- Vacant lots and buildings.
- Limited availability of youth activities.

Study Area Opportunities/Strategies

- Mentoring: reaching out to youth to provide them hope.
- Positive marketing strategy.
- Support for small businesses.
- Development of a major grocery store.
- Better public transportation.
- Job skill training and development.
- Increased home ownership.
- Improved city services.
- Better communication resources.
- New development on vacant lots and buildings.

Specific neighborhood themes are summarized in Table 3.1.



Neighborhood Workshop

TABLE 3.1 NEIGHBORHOOD WORKSHOP SUMMARIES

Subarea	Strengths	Issues	Strategies
Area A (Sorensen Parkway to Ames , 30th to 52nd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Fontenelle Park • Civic institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime and safety • Public transportation • Vacant lots • Poverty and unemployment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job training • Improved public transportation • Programs for home ownership • Small business development • Utilize vacant areas
Area B (Ames to Lake, 30th to 52nd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After school and youth programs • Diversity • Churches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime and safety • Public transportation • Poverty and unemployment • Lack of economic diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded youth programs • Job training and opportunities • Expanded MAT service
Area C (Lake to Cumig, 30th to 52nd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighborhood associations • Neighborhood history • Parks and green space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of retail and commercial development • Absentee landlords • Street maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business growth and private market development • Better code enforcement • Additional retailing, including a grocery store
Area D (Storz Expressway to Ames , 16th to 30th)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity • Opportunity for improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of retail and commercial development • Crime and safety • Lack of small business support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More affordable housing • Property tax incentives • Funding for economic development
Area E (Ames to Lake, 16th to 30th)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Easy access to Downtown and airport • Neighborhood history and culture • Affordable housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacant lots, abandoned property • Unemployment • Low incomes • Lack of job training • Lack of retailing • No public transportation to job centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build high quality businesses with good wages • Public transportation to job areas • Time limits on abandoned buildings and reconstruction • More frequent transit with longer hours
Area F (Lake to Cumig, 16th to 30th)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable housing • Beautiful area, great views • Vacant lots as an opportunity • Positive growth and investment • Interstate access • Nearness to North Downtown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime and safety • Image of high crime • Lack of retailing • Few jobs in area • Lack of youth activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access to public transportation • Small business development and support • Expanded retailing • Improved and expanded parks and recreation

Stakeholder Group Meetings

The eleven stakeholder groups provided strategic perspectives based on their specific areas of experience. However, the following conclusions were common to many of the groups.

- North Omaha's image must be improved before real progress can be made.
- A marketing campaign should be established to improve North Omaha's image.
- The area needs more retailing, but it must also seem marketable.
- While North Omaha has a variety of youth programs, better coordination and a greater effort to reach youth at a younger age are needed.
- North Omaha must find ways to keep youth and upwardly mobile residents in the neighborhood.
- Many of North Omaha's young people see little room for them in the larger economy, and lose hope as a result.
- The neighborhood must create and sustain an economically diverse neighborhood in order to succeed.

The following highlights key points discussed by each stakeholder group.

Marketing and media relations

- Community image will be the biggest hurdle, requiring a large scale marketing effort for the area.
- Image-building efforts should be coordinated and involve a partnership with the media.

Business community

- Taxes are a significant city-wide issue.
- Media coverage is not the only problem.
- Crime is a problem that must be addressed for economic development to occur.
- The area must develop affordable, good quality housing.

Developers

- North Omaha is rich with urban in-fill opportunities.
- Mixed-use development should incorporate residential development with commercial uses.
- The area needs the momentum that a major center could bring.
- Development should occur in manageable steps.

Educational institutions

- Economic diversity is important for kids in the area.
- Family support and role models are often lacking.
- Schools and programs need to reach students at a younger age.
- Metropolitan Community College and Creighton University present great educational opportunities for North Omaha's youth.



Community Meeting

Housing developers and advocates

- Housing costs are increasing while wages are stagnating.
- Potential homebuyers in North Omaha must see a larger plan that provides financial security and stability for the area.
- Acquisition of land for housing developments is difficult.

Neighborhood organization representatives

- North Omaha must transition to a mixed-income area.
- Financing programs are needed for developing and improving homes.
- Street and pedestrian connections throughout the neighborhood and to the rest of the city are important.
- North Omaha should develop a business community that appeals to the culture of the neighborhood and attracts the attention of greater Omaha.

Retail and small business owners

- Businesses should focus on retaining consumers in the area.

- Incentives are needed to encourage development.
- A full-time position is needed to coordinate and pursue economic development and promote the neighborhood.

Financial community

- Individual banks have made banking in the area more attractive.
- Mortgage lending should be more aggressive.
- Financial entities should be increasingly involved in construction financing.

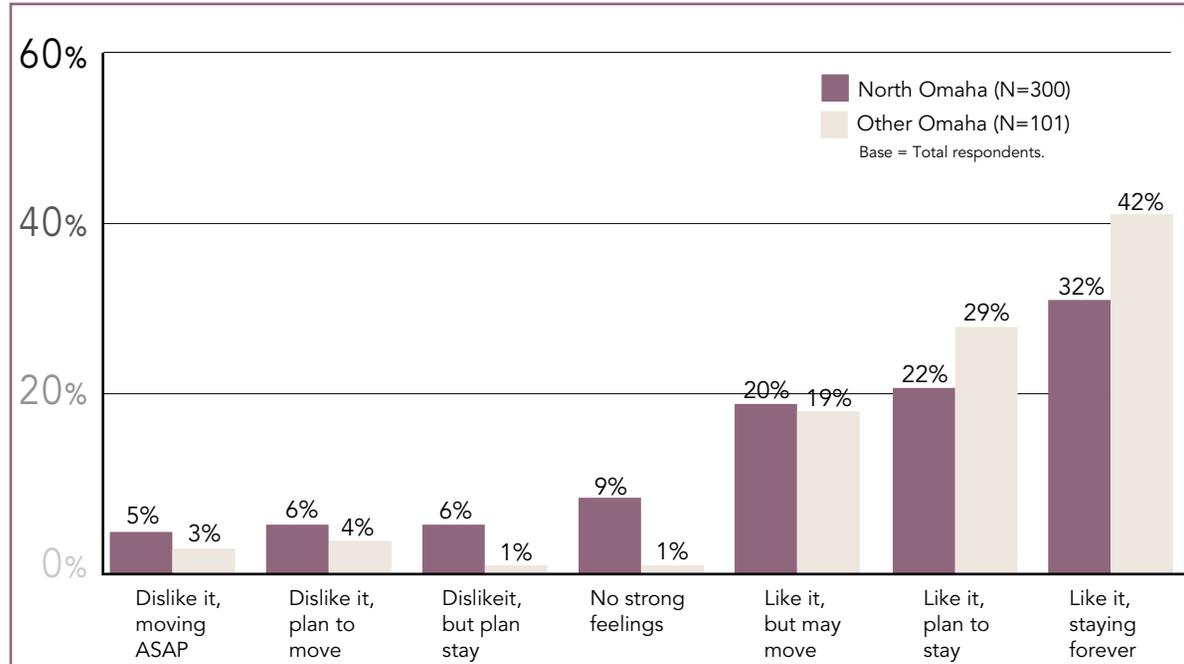
Medical services

- The neighborhood’s image and perception of the neighborhood is a hurdle for some clients, including potential residents in senior living facilities.
- The engagement of youth in local health industry and health care careers should be increased.
- Gaps include transportation and supporting medical services.
- Significant opportunities exist for specialized medical service businesses.

Service organizations

- North Omaha and its workforce need access to more job training.
- Access to transportation should be improved.
- North Omaha should be an economically diverse neighborhood.
- Youth should be engaged at an earlier age and directed toward opportunities.

INTENTION TO STAY OR MOVE



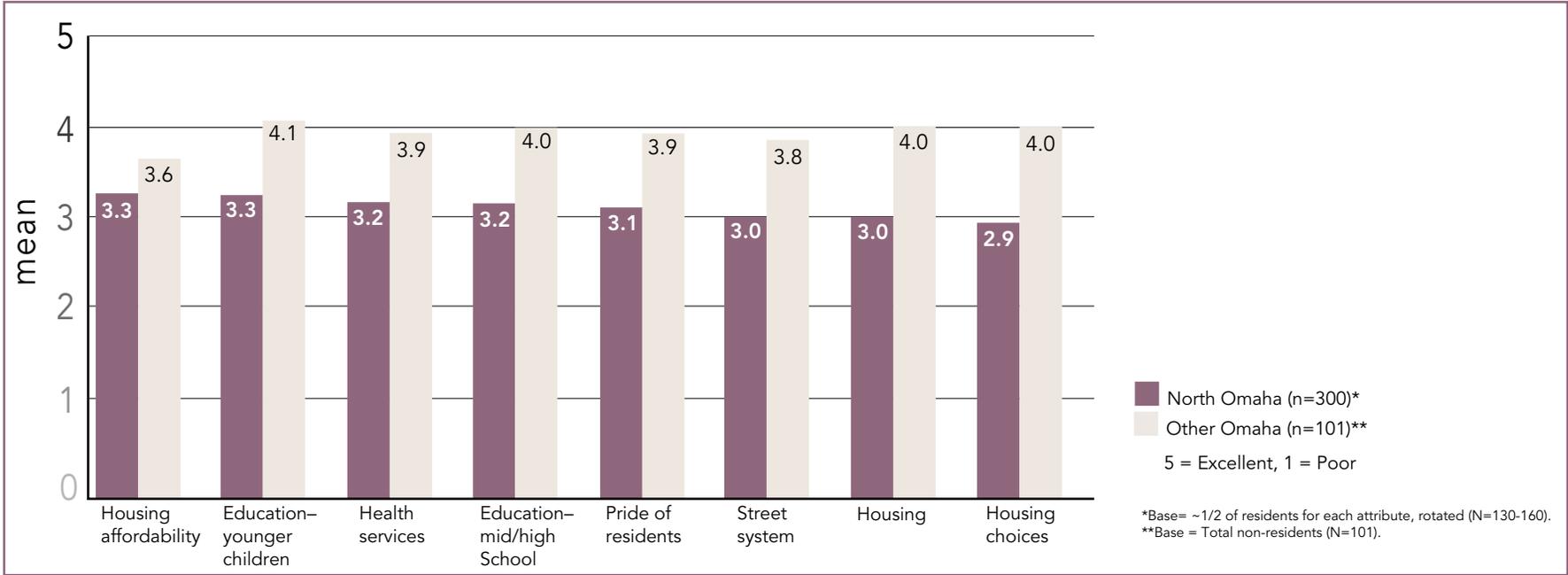
Church representatives

- Safety and security for residents is a major problem and must be assured.
- Youth should have more activities and greater community involvement.
- The faith community is vitally interested in community development, especially housing.

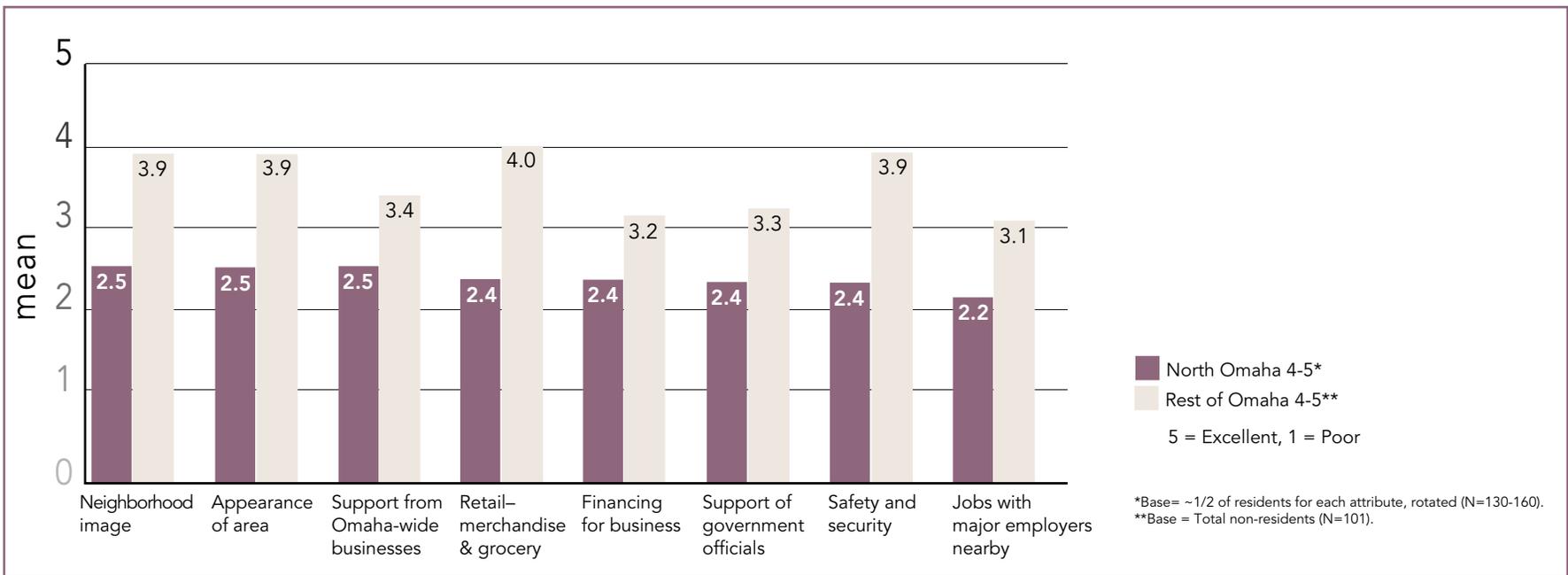
Resident and Business Surveys

The telephone survey broadened input into this plan by interviewing over 300 randomly selected North Omaha residents and 52 businesses. For comparison, the survey also interviewed 100 residents and 50 businesses living or conducting business outside the study area. The full results of the Residential and Business Surveys, conducted by AHL Consulting, Inc., are available in Appendix B. The following summarizes key results of the survey.

RATINGS OF NORTH OMAHA VS. OTHER OMAHA



RATINGS OF NORTH OMAHA VS. OTHER OMAHA



Resident Survey

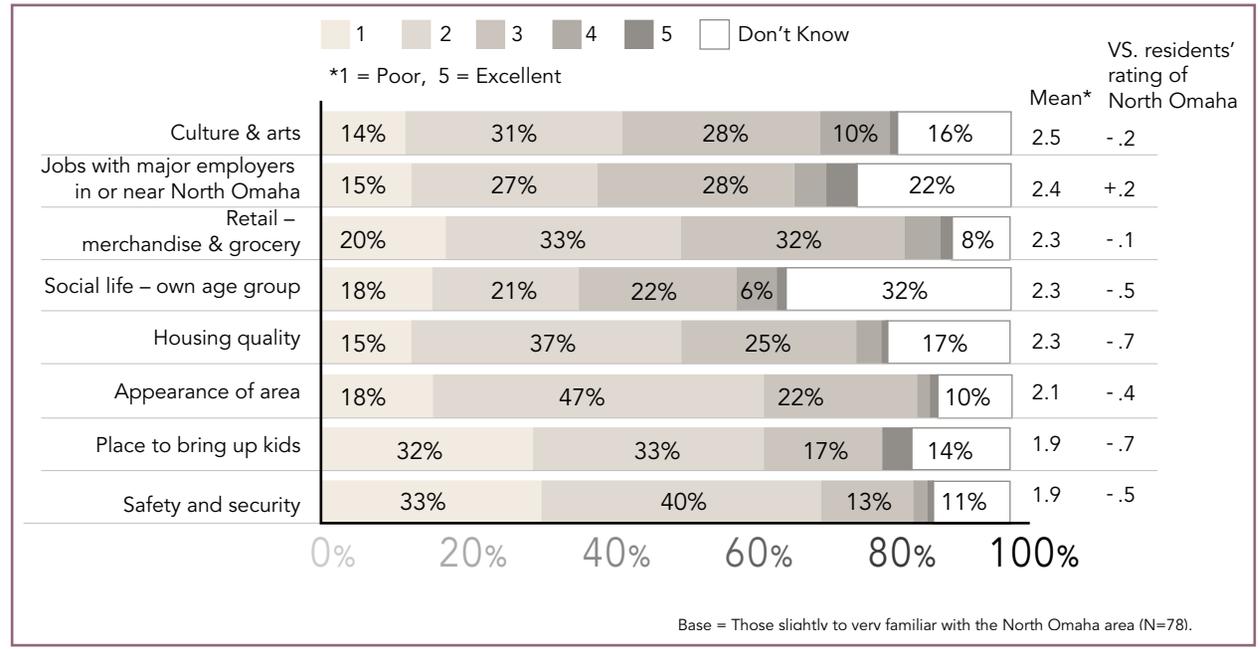
RESIDENTS' AFFINITY FOR NORTH OMAHA

- When asked of future plans, 53% of surveyed residents will likely stay in North Omaha, 11% intend to move.
- Reasons for *initially* choosing to reside in North Omaha are diverse, including:
 - a “nice, comfortable” neighborhood.
 - special needs (e.g., an apartment that allows pets).
 - monetary reasons.
 - family ties.
 - proximity to work/school/resources.
- Reasons for *continuing* to live in the area appear similar, with more emphasis on neighbors and less emphasis on financial requirements.
- For people wanting to move away from North Omaha, the primary motivator is concern about crime and safety. Even those intending to stay say that “greater safety and security” is the single most important issue for the future of North Omaha.

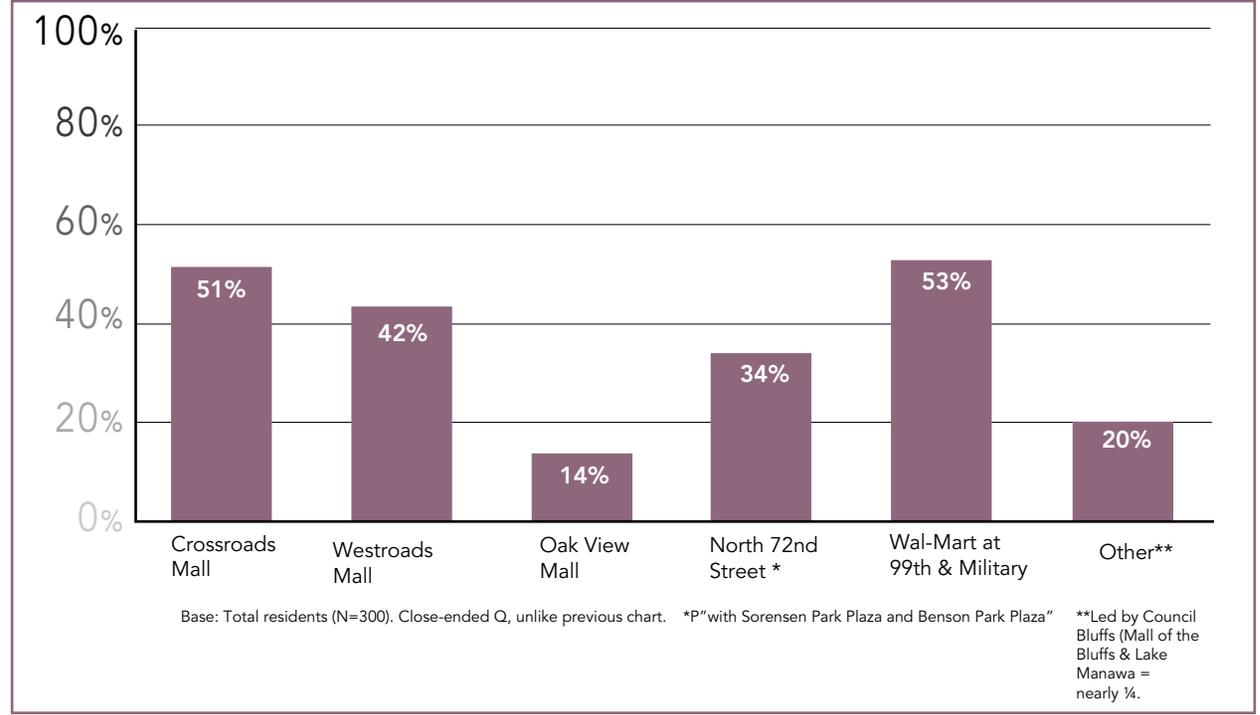
NORTH OMAHA'S PERFORMANCE AS A NEIGHBORHOOD

- Residents report that North Omaha “underdelivers” in 6 of 11 factors, in order of frequency:
 1. (tie) Safety and security.
 1. (tie) Job opportunities with major employers in or near North Omaha.
 3. Retailing, including general merchandise and grocery.

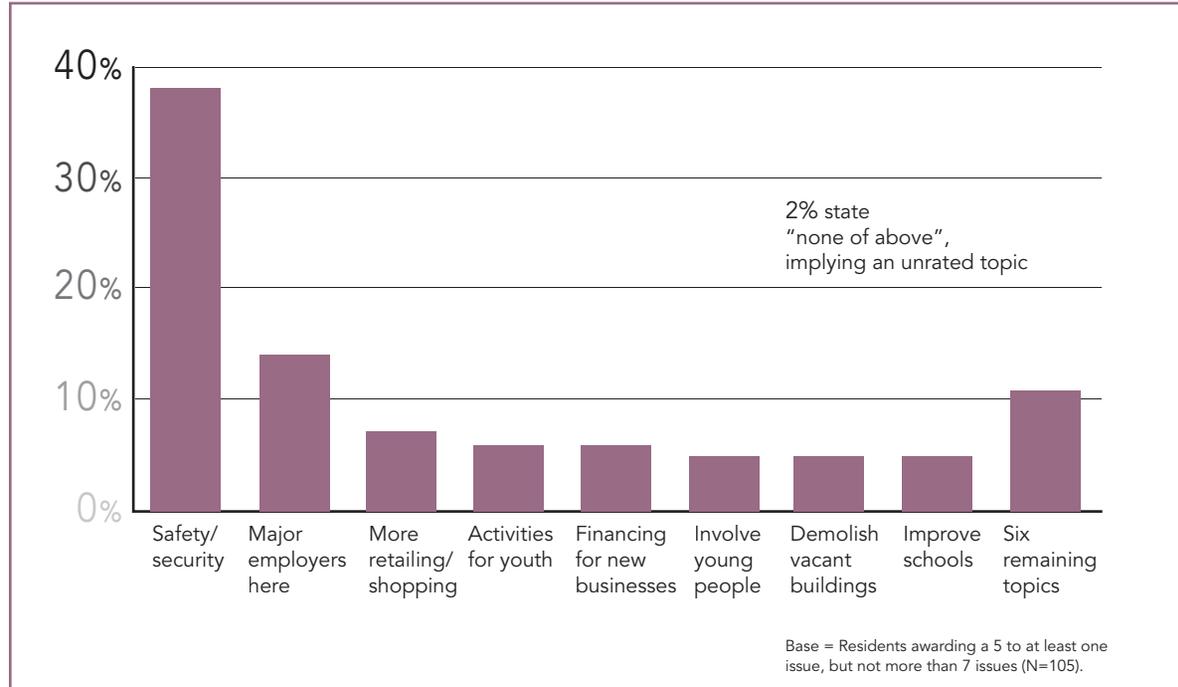
RATINGS OF NORTH OMAHA BY NON-RESIDENTS



SHOPPING CENTERS USED REGULARLY



MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE

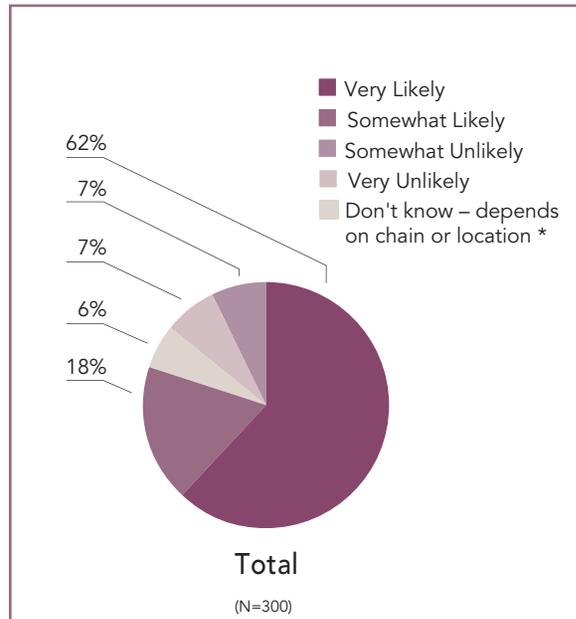


- New development on vacant/underused land and greater community involvement by young people were also seen as key issues.
- Perceptions of North Omaha’s progress over the past five years indicate that (1) safety and security pose continuing concerns; (2) education is viewed relatively positively, and (3) housing in the area has improved.

NON-RESIDENTS’ AND RESIDENTS’ ATTITUDES COMPARED

- Residents outside of North Omaha have a higher opinion than North Omahans of their own neighborhoods.
 - 71% like their area and will remain (compared with 53% for North Omaha), 7% dislike their neighborhood and plan to move (compared with 11% for North Omaha).
 - They consider their neighborhoods to be making progress on more fronts over the last five years than do North Omahans.
- Non-residents view North Omaha more negatively than North Omahans.
 - On a 1 (lowest) to 5 scale, the average rating for North Omaha was of 2.1, versus in-area residents’ 3.1 (based on a 1 to 5 scale, with “1” the lowest rating and “5” the best).
 - 85% consider criminal activity higher in North Omaha than the rest of the city. (insert chart from page 28)
- Generally, non-residents consider North Omaha’s transportation service comparable to their own.

LIKELIHOOD TO USE MAJOR GROCER

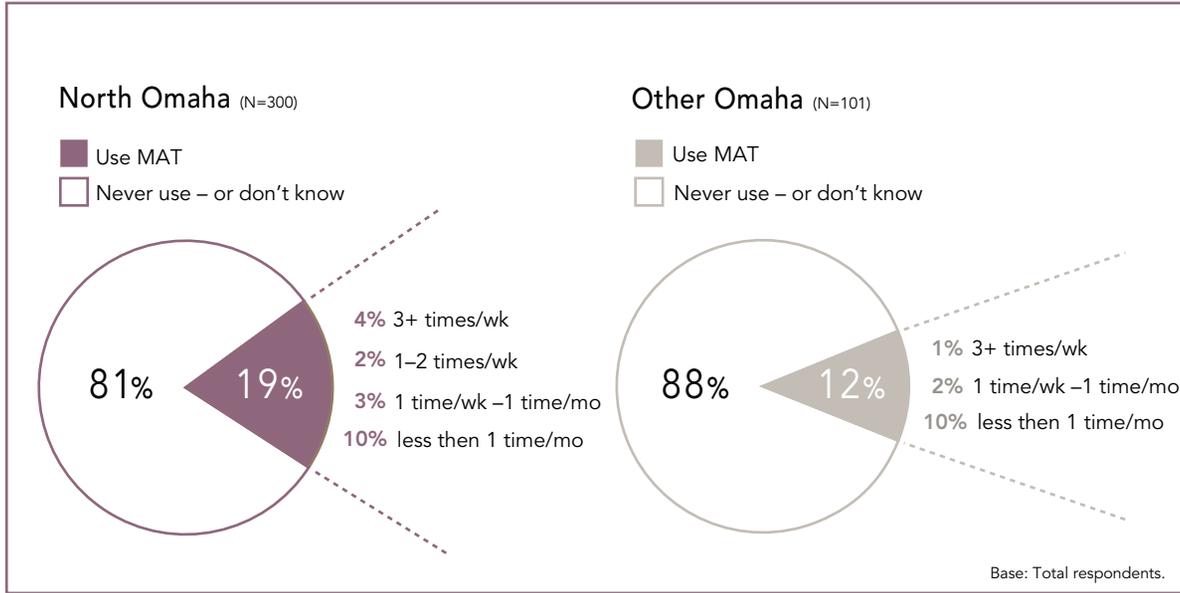


4. (tie) Activities for youth.
4. (tie) Financing to start or run a business.
6. Job training or education for adults.

North Omaha is also considered weak in public transportation to shopping/jobs outside of the area, and parks and recreation. However, residents consider these areas to be of somewhat less importance than those listed above.

- Considering both performance and importance, North Omaha fares best in:
 - Educating younger children and middle/high school students.
 - Housing affordability.
 - Health services.

USAGE OF METRO AREA TRANSIT BUSES

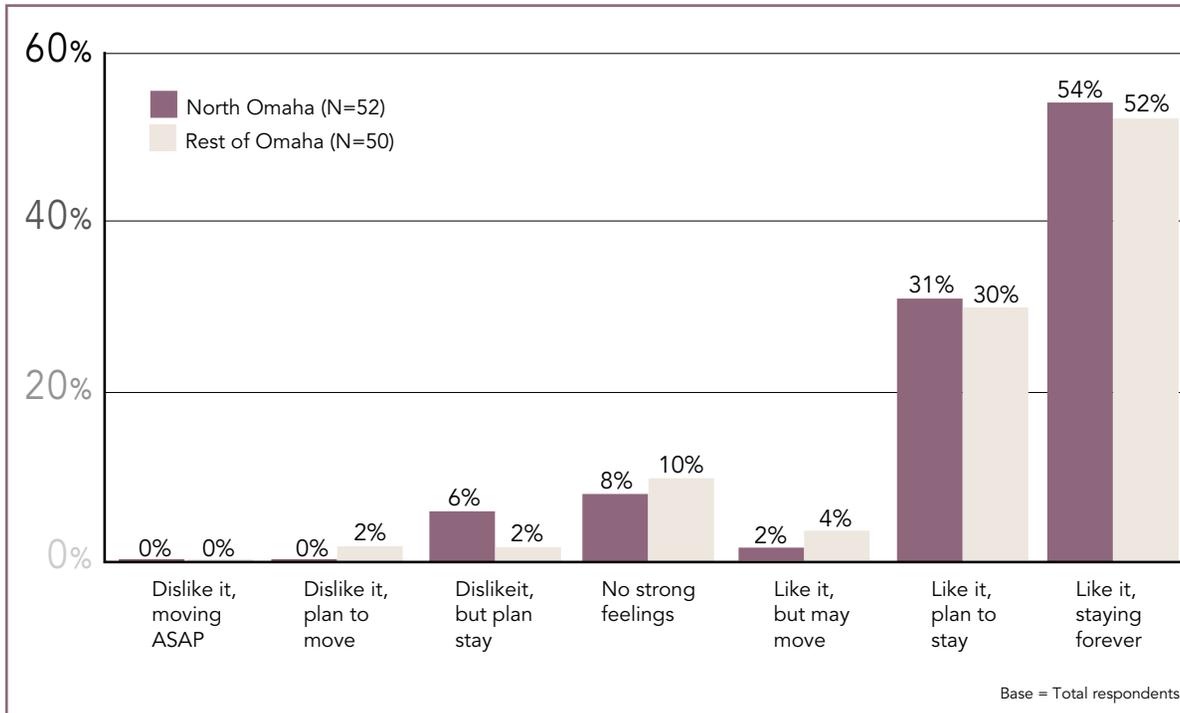


- Eight percent would consider moving to North Omaha, if they had to move. Crime is the most important deterrent to considering the area.

SHOPPING ANCHORS

- Almost all of North Omahans' destination stores for either merchandise or grocery are located west of 45th Street.
- Wal-Mart is the only shopping destination ranking in the top 4 for both merchandise (#1) and grocery (#4). The 99th and Military Wal-Mart location is the leading destination for North Omaha shoppers.
- Target, dominated by the Crossroads location, ranks second in general merchandise.

BUSINESSES INTENTION TO STAY OR MOVE



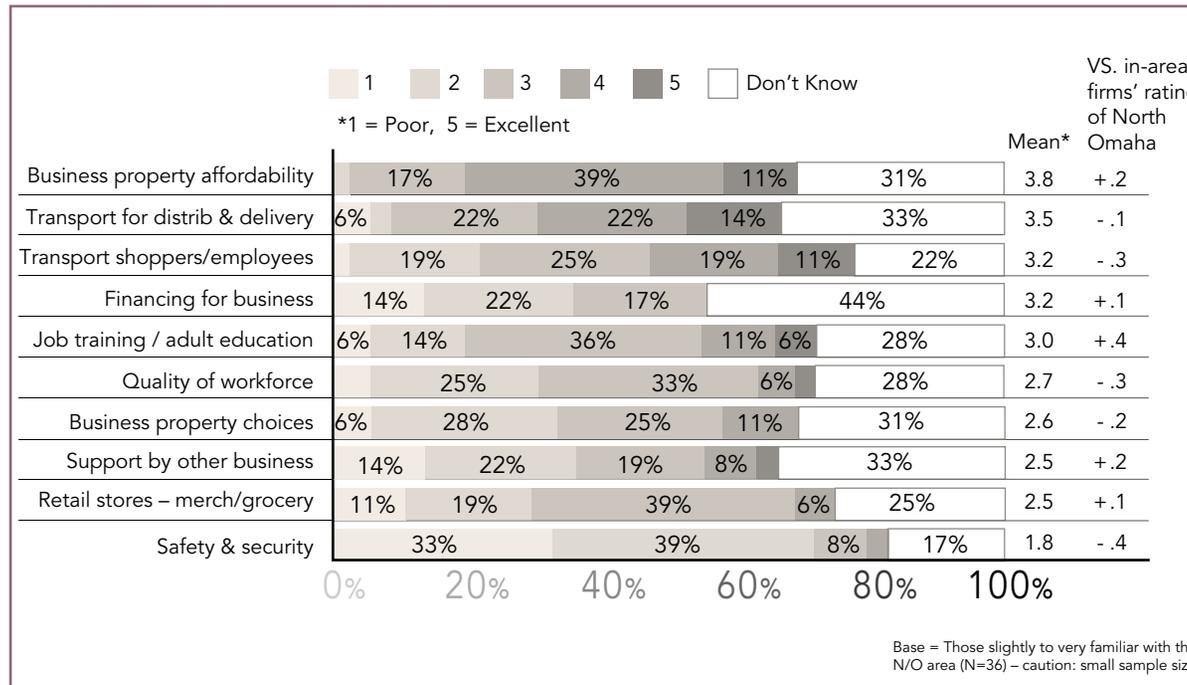
- Top groceries for North Omahans are, in order, No Frills (led by the Saddle Creek and Cuming store), Bakers, Hy-Vee, and Wal-Mart.
- Over half of respondents report shopping "regularly" at 99th and Military and Crossroads Mall.
- Survey participants suggest high acceptance for a major grocer within the study area. (Insert chart p. 41) Four out of five report that they would patronize a major Omaha grocery chain if it "opened a store in North Omaha with competitive prices;" another 7% claim it depends on the particular chain and/or location.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- Ten percent of participants sampled do not own a, operable motor vehicle. The household average owns 1.5 motor vehicles.

- The average commute for employed adults in North Omaha is between 8 to 14 miles – longer than typical commutes for residents in the rest of the city.
- Nearly one in five participants uses Metro Area Transit buses. The average North Omaha bus customer rides at least once per week. The amount and frequency of ridership is higher than that of the out-of-area sample.
- Major reasons for using MAT, with responses in the range of 36% to 44% of riders) include social trips, regularly repeating purposes like jobs and shopping; and occasional trips like health care.
- The MAT service improvement called for by most survey participants is “longer hours, including more weekend service” by buses.

RATING OF NORTH OMAHA BY OUTSIDERS



OTHER QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES

- Over one-quarter of the North Omaha respondents are renters, compared to 11% of the out-of-area sample. About 17% of North Omaha renters describes their dwelling as “poor, needing major rehabilitation,” compared to 2% of North Omaha homeowners.
- Residents most frequently cited law enforcement, youth activities, and neighborhood clean-up initiatives as the most desirable improvements for their neighborhoods.

DEMOGRAPHICS

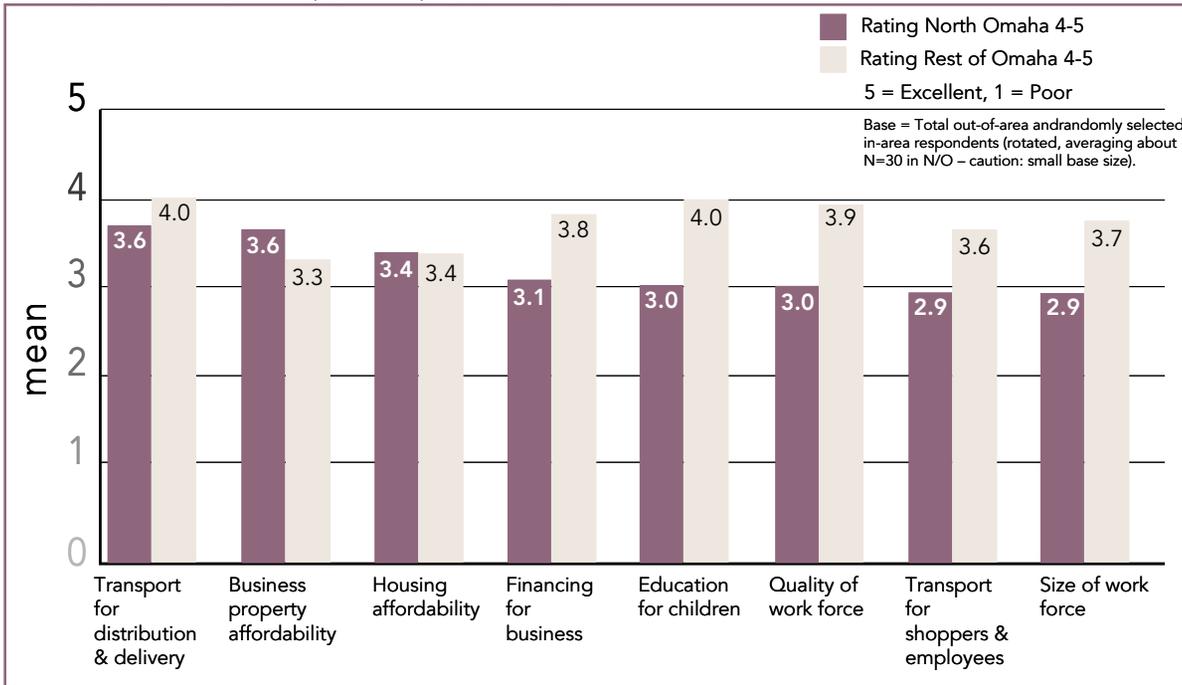
- Heads of household likely to remain in North Omaha, compared to those neutral or negative about their future in the area:
 - Are, on the average, about six years older.
 - Earn \$5,400 more per year, despite fewer full-time jobs or dual-incomes.
 - Live in smaller households with fewer children.
- Residents with positive perceptions are more likely to be males who have not attended college.
- Participants from out of the study area who view North Omaha favorably tend to be smaller households, males, and/or single.

Business Survey

LOCATION IN NORTH OMAHA

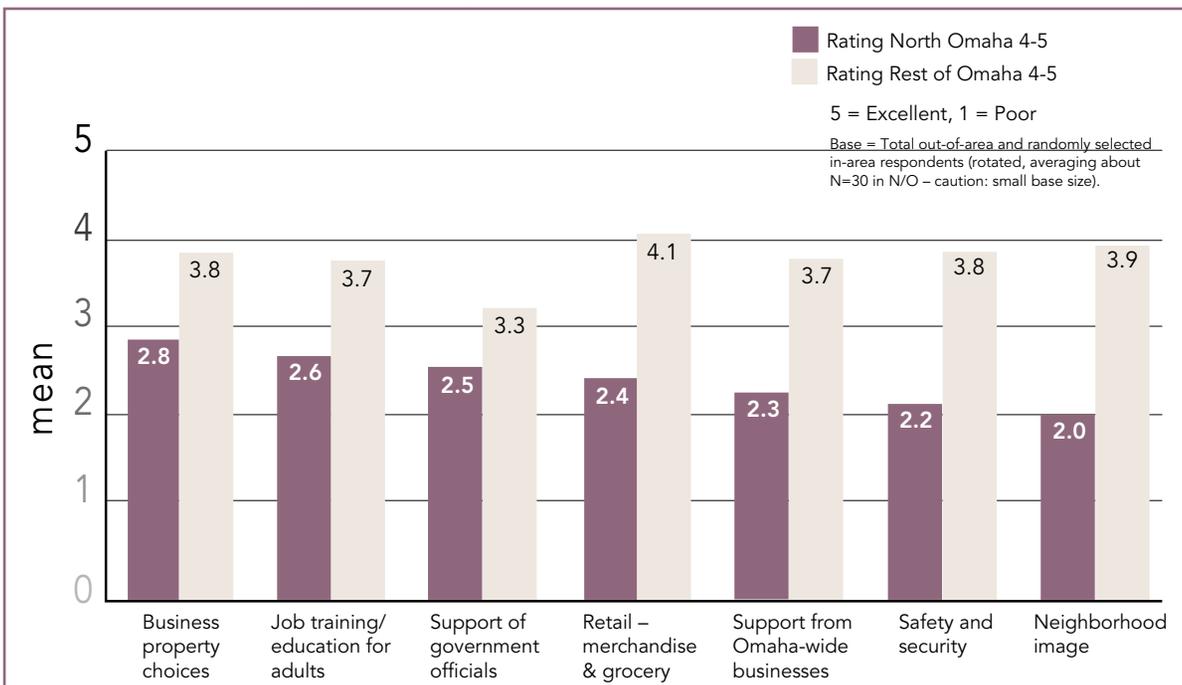
- Most North Omaha business owners/managers (85%) like the area and intend to stay there. Only 6% dislike North Omaha, and even they expect to stay.
- The two leading reasons for initially choosing to locate in North Omaha are (1) promising consumer demand and (2) continuation and/or purchase of an existing, established business.
- The business community rates North Omaha at a moderate 3.2 (on a scale of 5) as a business environment, compared to 4.0 for the rest of the city.

RATINGS OF NORTH OMAHA (TOP HALF) VS. OTHER OMAHA



- Of fifteen business attributes, the three most favorable in North Omaha are transportation for distribution/delivery, affordability of business properties, and low housing cost. The three most significant liabilities are support from surrounding businesses, safety and security, and neighborhood image.
- Of North Omaha’s strengths, the affordability of business properties is considered relatively unimportant by business respondents. On the other hand, respondents view safety and security, one of the major weaknesses, as extremely important.
- Other areas where North Omaha that display a gap between performance and importance are job training and presence of retail merchandisers/grocers.
- Relating quality and importance, schools and business financing are two of North Omaha’s most significant assets according to business respondents.
- Business respondents believe that North Omaha has made positive progress in housing and schools, but perceive declines in economic opportunity, safety and security.

RATINGS OF NORTH OMAHA (BOTTOM HALF) VS. OTHER OMAHA



THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

- Nearly half of the North Omaha businesses intend to make building improvements in the next year. This substantially exceeds the number who believe their building is in fair or poor condition (19%), suggesting that many are making qualitative improvements.
- Businesses strongly agreed (85%) that “several of the large retail chains have not been able to keep a presence in North Omaha.” Leading perceived reasons

for these failures are crime/shoplifting and an insufficient customer base.

- MAT buses serve virtually all the businesses surveyed. Responses on suggested service improvements were scattered, with new service to stops outside of North Omaha mentioned most often.
- Three of the top five desires by local businesses relate to more retail stores.
- Many outsiders vote for a lower crime rate, before they would consider a move to North Omaha.

BUSINESSES OPERATING OUTSIDE OF NORTH OMAHA

- Businesses outside North Omaha view their location as better than North Omaha in most respects. Specifically, they rate their current location:
 - Better than North Omaha “in general, as a place to run a business” and in 13 of 15 attributes.
 - Making better progress than North Omaha over the past five years, particularly in Economic Development and Safety and Security.
- Businesses are similar to their North Omaha counterparts in their reported intention to stay in their current area; and in physical condition of their building.
- Businesses outside of the study area seem somewhat less likely to have plans to improve their current buildings, and to benefit from MAT service.
- Perceptions of North Omaha are similar for business respondents located both in and out of the study area:
 - Among ten North Omaha attributes, five are rat-

ed higher by in-area businesses, led by safety and security; and five are rated higher by out-of-area businesses, led by job training.

- Businesses outside of the area rate North Omaha substantially lower as an overall business environment than those in the study area (2.1 on a scale of 5, versus 3.2 by in-area owners/managers).

COMPARISON OF RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS ATTITUDES

In general, business respondents view North Omaha more positively than residents.

- The 85% of owners/managers who like and intend to stay in North Omaha compares to 54% of North Omaha residents.
 - Out-of-area businesses exhibit less resistance to moving to a North Omaha location than out-of-area residents (76% to 91%, respectively).
 - Out-of-area business concerns about crime are less intense than those of out-of-area residents.
 - The North Omaha owners/managers feel that “financing for business” is better than residents realize, but are more concerned than residents about “neighborhood image.”
 - 28% of residents consider their homes to be in only fair or poor condition, compared to 19% of businesses with the same opinion of their buildings.

“DEMOGRAPHICS” OF THE BUSINESSES

- Relative to the rest of Omaha, the North Omaha companies tend to have:
 - Longer tenure in their current location.



Community Meeting Participants

- Less favorable trends in recent sales and/or projected sales.
- Fewer multiple-location business entities (65% single-outlet).
- Greater ownership of their building.
- Older, more racially diverse, and male owners/managers.

Community Survey

A web-based survey provided an additional opportunity for residents throughout the community to provide input. While not statistically valid, responses reinforce the opinions articulated in other parts of the process. These included:

Neighborhood Strengths

- Availability of affordable housing
- Local schools
- Availability of health services



Community Meeting Participants



Community Meeting Participants

Neighborhood Issues

- Crime and safety in the study area
- Lack of retail development
- Lack of support for business development
- Overall image of the neighborhood
- Job opportunities and employment

Community Meetings

The first community meeting occurred on April 2007 and was attended by nearly 300 people. Attendees were asked to complete comment cards following a presentation on existing conditions on North Omaha. Participants returned about 100 cards, with comments ranging from the planning process to recommendations for the study area. Common themes included:

- Housing as an important ingredient in the success of the neighborhood, mixed with concern that existing residents would be priced out of the area.
- The need to support existing businesses and encourage additional commercial and retail development.
- Strengthened code enforcement and removal of dilapidated properties.
- A strategic marketing and media campaign to highlight positive features in the neighborhood.
- A need to ensure that all residents share in the neighborhood successes.
- Increased job opportunities in the neighborhood and job training.
- Improved and more user-friendly public transportation.
- Crime and safety issues.

The second community meeting occurred in July 2007. At this meeting, about 300 people heard a presentation of preliminary plan concepts and spoke individually with consultant team and Steering Committee members, completed comment cards, and voted on priority proposals. Concepts presented at the July meeting that received the strongest positive responses from participants included:

- Improving the character of the 24th Street corridor.
- Developing an African American cultural and entertainment district.
- Developing a retail center at 24th and Cuming Street.
- Implementing the Malcolm X Birthsite plan.
- Redeveloping Adams Park and the underutilized land along the abandoned railroad corridor.
- Developing a community retail center at 30th Street and Ames Avenue.
- Developing new business parks with major employers adjacent to 30th Street and Ames Avenue.
- Redeveloping Baker Square at 51st and Ames as a mixed use center.
- Developing new housing along 48th Street west of Fontenelle Park.

Conclusions

The community participation process described above was unprecedented in its scope and asked hundreds of people and businesses, each with individual perspectives and insights, to think about the future of North Omaha. Despite the large number of people who participated, there was remarkable agreement about the most desirable outcomes of the North Omaha Development Project.

North Omaha must present a safer and more secure environment to residents and businesses. A safe neighborhood is of preeminent importance to North Omaha's future.

North Omaha should become more diverse economically and appeal to a greater variety of people. However, the North Omaha development process should avoid dislocating current residents.

The Project should increase economic opportunity to North Omahans by attracting new businesses, expanding and focusing job training activities, increasing support for local businesses, providing more possibilities for new business starts, and improving transportation to jobs available throughout the metropolitan area.

New retail development is important to the North Omaha community, with grocery and general merchandising seen as especially important. Local retailers and services should also be featured and enjoy greater support by the local market.

Young people in North Omaha must have higher expectations for their own futures – their ability to prosper and do good work in the community and to have the skills and knowledge to meet the challenges of the future economy.

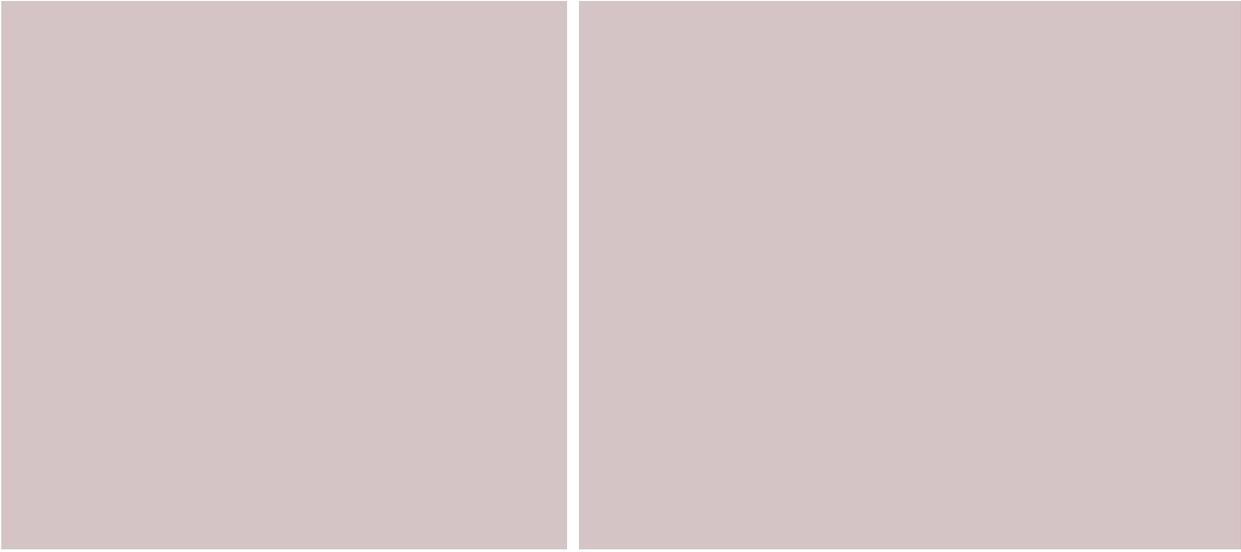
North Omaha's image must improve through a combination of reinvestment, improvement, and effective marketing.

Housing development is an essential component of neighborhood revitalization. In addition, action must be taken against problems that affect neighborhoods, such as poor property maintenance and deteriorated housing.



Community Meeting Participants



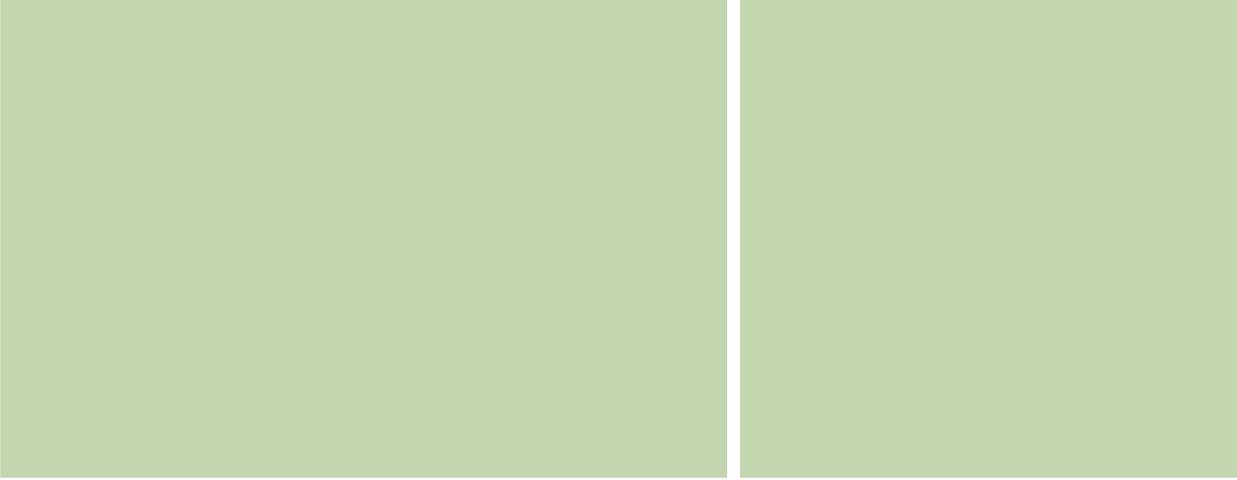




PART 4

THE
DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK





The previous parts of the North Omaha Development Project plan discussed the study area's current condition in maps, tables, markets, and the opinions of both its people and the larger Omaha community. This chapter presents a Development Framework for North Omaha – defining the building blocks and development focuses that can help the neighborhood bloom economically, physically, and socially. Our ambitions for North Omaha should be high, because we are talking about nothing less than the redemption of a neighborhood.

The Omaha community must recognize both the complexity and difficulty of this challenge and the opportunities that successful solutions open for North Omaha, its residents and businesses, and the entire city. North Omaha revitalization has many interrelated components – education, public safety, economic growth, community development, social issues, and others – that require different perspectives and approaches. While this plan focuses on economic and physical development and investment, it recognizes connections to other systems and business needs. The problem of cause and effect is also complicated. For example, we might justifiably contend that without a safe and secure environment in North Omaha, development is unlikely. We might argue with equal logic that the criminal activity that plagues part of the community is caused by a lack of economic opportunity and the absence of hope and expectations for a better life. We can debate where and how to begin, and which problems are causes and which are results, but we must work now to break the cycle. During the community participation process discussed in Chapter Three, North Omahans spoke eloquently about despair, particularly among

young people, and the need to restore a sense of common mission and upward movement. We agree, and steadfastly believe that a growing and hopeful community will eventually offer a safer and more secure and nurturing place for its members.

We also know that there are substantial, but limited, resources that can be brought to bear to create this kind of community in North Omaha. It is impossible to do everything at once, and Part Two's market analysis tells us that the market demands realism. We must focus our attention on those efforts that, if implemented, have the highest likelihood of creating conditions that lead to other projects and investments. In defining these efforts, this discussion must address several basic questions:

- Of all the questions to be answered and problems to be solved, what is the specific task of the North Omaha Development Program?
- What assets can North Omaha build on to create the "opportunity economy" that will lead to a self-sustaining development process and the restoration of hope that such a process can bring?
- What is the overall strategic approach and building blocks for self-sustaining economic development in North Omaha?
- How are these building blocks deployed in the neighborhood to take best advantage of assets and have the best chance of both short-term success and long-term spin-offs?

The Basic Question

We can distill a great deal of information about North Omaha's relationship to development and growth in the Omaha area into two brief statements:

1. **Omaha is a dynamic growth and development market in many sectors, including housing, retailing, office development, medical care, and information technology.**
2. **North Omaha lags by not sharing substantially in this growth.**

North Omaha and Regional Growth

By contrast, the North Omaha study area has not participated in this growth and its consequent prosperity:

- The North Omaha study area has about 5% of the metropolitan area's population. If it also built 5% of the area's housing, it would develop about 200 new housing starts annually. During the last ten years, about 600 new units have been built in the study area. During this same period, 150 housing units have been demolished. The net addition of 450 units, or an annual average of 45 units, is noteworthy, and new housing development has been an important success story for Omaha's community development program. It is also unrealistic to expect an older neighborhood to build according to its share of the overall population. However, the comparison still indicates that North Omaha lags behind the rest of the city in housing production.

- During the last ten years, the study area has only seen about 50,000 square feet of new commercial development, primarily at Long School Marketplace and two Walgreen's stores. Conservatively calculated, annual retail sales within North Omaha are an estimated \$60 million less than the retail demand generated within the area. Substantial construction has occurred near but outside of North Omaha, particularly along the 72nd Street corridor north of Ames. But Omaha's retail growth has unfortunately missed North Omaha.
- North Omaha has seen limited employment growth and little new office and industrial construction. Most new development has occurred within North Omaha Business Park, on part of the former Logan-Fontenelle public housing site. This project created about 107,000 square feet of new space and approximately 400 jobs. Here again, though, North Omaha has lagged well behind the rest of the metropolitan area. Some of Omaha's explosive growth in medical care and research has occurred near, but not within, North Omaha, and many recent medical jobs and new facilities have followed population growth in West Omaha. Many of Omaha's new information technology jobs have located in business parks distant from and largely inaccessible to much of North Omaha's workforce.
- Previously, this plan highlighted some of the economic differences between North Omaha and the larger community, and between African-Americans and other racial and ethnic groups. Data from the 2005 American Community Survey of the US Bureau of the Census indicate substantial disparities between Omaha's white and black communities and indicated alarming levels of poverty among African-Americans in Omaha.

While 2006 data indicate a better overall economic picture, substantial inequalities continue. While the North Omaha study area and the city's African-American population are not coterminous, an economically healthy North Omaha both requires and produces an economically healthy African-American community.

Desired Plan Outcomes

The fundamental goal of the NODP is to open opportunity by closing the economic gap between North Omaha and the rest of the city. Thus, the dual desired outcomes of this plan are to move toward:

Creating the conditions by which North Omaha achieves a more proportionate share of the metropolitan growth market. Housing development, employment and economic growth, and retail development – all of which are now dominated by other parts of the city – should also occur in North Omaha. Eventually, North Omaha should no longer be seen as a "redevelopment area" – a neighborhood that requires massive infusions of compensatory funds. Rather, the private market should view it as a growth area, where private investment is economically rewarding and the market sustains itself. Many of the nation's most successful revitalization efforts have brought the natural growth that typifies many suburban areas back into the center of the city.

Assuring that North Omaha's residents and businesses are the principal beneficiaries of this growth, so that the neighborhood shares in the city's overall prosperity. If North Omaha grows economically and developmentally, it must and will attract new people to the neighborhood. However, this growth should pro-

vide the greatest benefits to existing residents and businesses. The concept of “closing the economic gap” applies to the people of the community, not its geography or buildings. North Omahans need access to expanded employment choices, new businesses, more retail services, and a stronger economy. Physical development is an important means to that end, but we measure success in human terms, not in the number of square feet of buildings built, or acres of land developed.



The Omaha Star



Educare Center

Changing Conditions and Prospects for Economic Growth

Omaha has been in the business of community and economic development for over four decades, and much planning and investment has focused on North Omaha. As far back as 1966, a series of plans prepared under the Community Renewal Program proposed large-scale redevelopment of many North Omaha neighborhoods and was the basis of unsuccessful campaigns to create an urban renewal authority. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the city took its first small steps toward code enforcement and housing rehabilitation programs. With the beginning of the Community Development Block Grant program in 1975, Omaha, still in a learning mode, attempted to expand housing rehabilitation and prepared the redevelopment plans that started the Kellom Heights, Conestoga Place, and 24th and Lake projects. After 1980, CDBG funds used initially to complete the Gene Leahy Mall in Downtown were shifted to neighborhood projects and the city’s community development program matured. Since then, new or rebuilt neighborhoods gradually emerged in developments like Grace Plaza, Charles Square, Concord Square, Monmouth Park, Fontenelle View, Miami Heights, and Kellom Heights. Projects like Ernie Chambers Court renewed historic buildings to provide affordable housing for families, and economic development efforts like the Kellom Heights Shopping Center, Business and Technology Center, North Omaha Business Park, and Long School Marketplace were launched. Yet, all this work still has not created

a self-sustaining private market in North Omaha and economic gaps remain between many of the neighborhood’s households and their counterparts in other parts of the city.

Principal Assets

However, changing conditions and perspectives have created new and unprecedented opportunities for growth in North Omaha. These principal assets, aligned now to create a vastly expanded potential for economic development, include:

NORTH OMAHA’S PEOPLE

The North Omaha study area is blessed by people who care deeply about their neighborhood, are committed to its future, have strong historical and cultural traditions, and have the skills and drive to make things better. There is nothing new about this, and North Omaha has been sustained for years by people who have served in neighborhood organizations, supported churches and institutions, and been the towers of the community. The survey results summarized in Chapter Two show that the residents’ affinity for the neighborhood, despite challenges, remains strong. What is new is the level of organization and unity emerging in 2007 around economic development and growth in North Omaha.

PRIVATE SECTOR COMMITMENT

In 2007, Omaha’s private and business sector understands that the city cannot be completely healthy unless all of its parts are also healthy and recognizes the untapped potential present in North Omaha. Once a back-



Fontenelle View

ground issue for many, the growth of North Omaha has now moved to the front of the community agenda. This growing private commitment is the reason for and foundation for the North Omaha Development Project. Other parallel initiatives include Building Bright Futures, a private sector focus on education; and large-scale capacity building efforts in employee skill training and contractor development, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce.

The African-American community has also organized in unprecedented ways. The African-American Empowerment Network (Empower Omaha!) is a new initiative that to date has involved over 400 African-American leaders representing over 200 organizations, churches, groups, and businesses. The purpose of the Network is to “develop and implement a covenant and strategic plan that empowers African-Americans, North Omaha, and the city of Omaha to dramatically and tangibly enhance our quality of life and create a greater future for our children.” Omaha 20/20 focuses more specifically on economic growth, and is an alliance of people with special development and business expertise. This effort, coordinated with the Empowerment Network, is developing strategies around two themes: increasing

the long-term viability and sustainability of African-American businesses and professions and expanding the African-American middle and upper economic class.

This alliance of both the African-American and “mainstream” private sectors in a coordinated effort to build a vigorous North Omaha economy is new in Omaha’s history of community and economic development, and holds great promise for the future.

ADJACENT DEVELOPMENT

The climate of surrounding districts has changed dramatically during the past ten years. Areas that were once marginal have become hot spots for new development, and centers of traditional strength have become even stronger. These assets create an enormous base for accelerated, private sector investment in North Omaha and include:

- A resurgent Downtown, spurred by riverfront development and new destinations like the Qwest Center and Holland Center, that has also become a major center for new residential growth. Large investments by First National Bank, the Omaha World-Herald, the Gallup Corporation, the National Parks Service, ConAgra, and a host of smaller employers have further reinforced Downtown’s role as a major metropolitan employment center.
- The adjacent North Downtown (or NoDo district), which has transformed from a declining industrial district around downtown to an emerging urban village and is beginning to change the face of Cuming Street.
- Creighton University, where a program of aggressive, high-quality urban campus growth has extended the university domain south of Cuming and east to 17th Street.
- Midtown, where two of Omaha’s largest and most ambitious mixed use urban projects – Midtown Crossing and Aksarben Village – are currently under construction and many other smaller scale projects are underway because of renewed private interest.
- Medical center and health care development, including the rapid growth of the University of Nebraska Medical Center and the continuing strength of the Creighton University Medical Center and Alegent’s Immanuel Hospital.
- Metropolitan Community College, which will enhance its status as a major career training center with construction of a new Culinary Institute at the Fort Omaha campus.
- The continuing growth of nearby Eppley Airfield.
- Two-way circulation and improved freeway access to Cuming Street as part of transportation changes related to riverfront development. This has made Cuming Street, the southern edge of the study area, a major route to the airport and Qwest Center, and has increased the corridor’s business potential.

The Strategy

We can combine these major resources – North Omaha’s people, a community understanding of the importance of its revitalization, and surrounding investment anchors –with an appraisal of potential markets and priorities to frame the North Omaha development strategy. The guiding principle of this strategy is to define those areas of focused action that have the best chance of creating a self-sustaining economy in the neighborhood. The overall strategy must address two questions: where are the physical areas of concentration and what should be developed in each of these areas.

The Question of Where

From a physical development perspective, North Omaha has strong surrounding assets and a much less secure neighborhood core. This situation suggests a three-step strategic sequence.

Step One: Build inward from surrounding strengths.

It makes sense to start development in areas that have the greatest chance of short-term success, building on the strength of surrounding features and extending that strength into the neighborhood. On the south edge, Downtown, NoDo, and Creighton create a stable environment for investment. The successful completion of new, owner-occupied neighborhoods such as Concord Square and Charles Place and successful redevelopment in the Kellom Heights and Grace Plaza areas have already demonstrated this area’s housing market. To the north, Metropolitan Community College, high visibility and transportation access, and existing commercial development and financial institutions also support new growth.



The New Downtown Skyline



Missouri River at Gallup University



Tip Top Apartments



North Downtown (NoDo)



Harper Center Under Construction – Creighton University



Metropolitan Community College

Step Two: Complete a feature at the core of the neighborhood that transforms the community's image. The community input process discussed in Chapter Three indicates that North Omaha has a negative image in the broader community. The second step in the revitalization process is creating an element that dramatically changes these perceptions and has the power to generate new investment around it. In major development efforts, this element is often functional but very distinctive public amenity that both increases the community's quality of life and catalyzes new growth. In Downtown Omaha, the Leahy Mall, ConAgra/Heartland Park project, and Riverfront development all had this transformational quality.

Step Three: Expand this development momentum throughout the neighborhood. With centers of strength growing in from the edges and out from the core, self-sustaining growth expands outward to the rest of the neighborhood. The strategy identifies these secondary growth opportunities and centers that build on the initial phases of development to create a self-sustaining economy.



Educare

The Question of What: Economic Development Building Blocks

The three steps above, applied to the entire study area, tell us where the North Omaha Development Project should focus its attention. Analysis of market potentials, the insights of community residents and stakeholders, and an understanding of economic needs can help tell what types of development should occur. The building blocks of economic development in North Omaha are:

- **Employment Creating Development**, creating more jobs and opportunities for entrepreneurs.
- **Medical and Health Care**, building on the fastest growing sector of Omaha's economy and a critical future demand.



Concord Square

- **Retail**, providing at least some of the goods and services that people now leave the neighborhood to obtain.
- **Mixed Income Residential**, increasing both the population and economic diversity of North Omaha, building markets, and restoring vacant land to productive use.
- **Culture, Entertainment, and Image**, building on North Omaha's rich heritage to improve the neighborhood's quality of life, and fundamentally change community perceptions.

Each of these building blocks has specific characteristics and requirements to give them the best chance for success.

EMPLOYMENT CREATING DEVELOPMENT

The Chamber of Commerce and the Omaha Development Foundation have executed two major industrial development projects during the last 20 years affecting job growth in or around North Omaha. These are the Airport Industrial Park, north and west of Eppley Airfield, completed during the 1980s; and the North Omaha Business Park, on the west half of the Logan-Fontenelle Homes site along 24th Street between Paul and Clark, developed during the 1990s. Both projects have succeeded, demonstrating that quality industrial sites in the area are marketable. Criteria that can make business park development successful in North Omaha include:

- *A high-quality, high amenity setting.* North Omaha must compete with other metropolitan sites for business, office, and industrial clients. It also struggles with issues of image and perception. Amenity rich sites – comparable to other quality business park settings – can be competitive.
- *Initial anchors.* Business sites should open with pre-arranged anchors with an affinity for North Omaha and its human resources. This reduces the perceived risk assumed by subsequent clients, making full occupancy more likely.
- *Flexible types of development.* Business park sites should have the flexibility to accommodate a variety of occupants and building types, including office, light industry with limited environmental effects, and flex buildings that combine aspects of office and industrial uses. Circulation patterns and sites should minimize conflicts with surrounding residential neighborhoods.

- *Excellent transportation access.* A quality business park location requires excellent transportation and truck access. In North Omaha, this means sites with convenient access to both the North Freeway and Eppley Airfield. In addition, sites should be easy for people to reach. Business sites in North Omaha, an area with high transit utilization, should have convenient bus service, as well as good pedestrian and bicycle access.
- *A close connection to Metropolitan Community College.* Metro's Fort Omaha campus is a major economic development asset. Its relative physical adjacency to business park sites provides excellent coordination with job training programs and staffing resources.

HEALTH CARE-RELATED DEVELOPMENT

Health care represents an enormous economic opportunity for North Omaha and its residents. Health care has become one of Omaha's fastest growing employment sectors, offering opportunities for people at the widest spectrum of educational levels. With the aging of the baby boom generation and the continued maturing of Omaha into a nationally noted medical center, staffing needs will increase substantially well into the future. Finally, institutions that are driving much of this growth, including the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Creighton University Medical Center, and Alegen Health, are located very near the North Omaha study area. The North Omaha population itself also creates a significant demand for health services. Charles Drew Health Center provides community-based health services and works closely with the city's larger health providers, and Midwest Geriatrics provides assisted living, skilled nursing, and Alzheimer's care at its North Omaha facilities.



North Omaha Business Park



30th Street & Ames Avenue Businesses



Charles Drew Health Center

A mixed-use Medical Village capitalizes on this key economic development component. This new concept combines outpatient care, professional and medical offices, wellness and health maintenance services, ambulatory surgical services, and health-related retailing into a mixed use project. Project design should express healthy living concepts by promoting pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access and wellness themes. Other site criteria include connection to a larger retail development, high design quality, and human scale. The project would be sponsored by one or more of Omaha's major health care providers with a direct stake in North Omaha.

The Medical Village is a compelling development concept that adds employment opportunity, retail services, and direct health services to North Omahans. However, it is not the only focus of the health care component of the North Omaha economy. Two other important directions include:

- *Training and educational capacity.* Area educational institutions, including Omaha Public Schools, Metropolitan Community College, UNMC, Creighton, and Alegend should work cooperatively to help North Omahans staff the community's health needs for the future. Early intervention in the schools would help orient youth toward the possibility of rewarding medical careers at a wide variety of levels and skills. Programs and facilities should provide the education necessary to create a new health-care workforce. Possible directions may include classes in existing schools offered cooperatively by educational institutions; more aggressive skill training programs at Metro; and even the creation of a medical services magnet school. For example, Omaha's shortage of



LeFlore's New Look Fashion

skilled medical professionals (especially nurses in the short term) creates a significant opportunity for North Omaha's youth. However, evidence suggests that the connection between high skill employment opportunities and North Omahans, particularly African-Americans, is not being made.

- *Senior care.* A growing senior population in North Omaha and the larger community will create a demand for more care givers and additional residential facilities. This may expand the market for affordable assisted living in addition to those offered at current facilities like Royal Oaks.

RETAIL

Retail development is the third key to rebuilding North Omaha's economy. The lack of major retailing in the neighborhood leads residents to purchase a large share of goods and services outside of its boundaries.



Long School Market Place

Retail growth is important for several reasons:

- Consumer dollars spent outside of the neighborhood represents a lost economic opportunity. New commercial development that addresses gaps in service can retain local dollars and attract some new spending from outside the neighborhood. This in turn translates to more local employment and support for starting new retail businesses.
- Convenient and varied retail services encourage people to live in the neighborhood. In in-city areas, the presence of major retailers is a vote of confidence in the area's future.
- Retail centers have become important activity centers, adding to the quality and social organization of the neighborhood.
- Successful retail development tends to produce more investment in surrounding areas.



Chubb's Foods

However, we must recognize that although North Omaha is under-retailed, the support for new retailing is somewhat limited. North Omahans still shop despite the scarcity of local retailing; they simply go elsewhere. Some additional retailing in North Omaha will shift spending rather than creating real growth. Yet, there are several important opportunities:

- *Community commercial center.* Community commercial centers offer basic goods and services, including general merchandise and groceries. A typical center offers a large-scale general retailer, supermarket, and supporting shops and restaurants. An ideal site has pre-existing retail strength, is located at the crossroads of major arterials, is convenient to most parts of the neighborhood, can attract some business from outside North Omaha, and has good adjacent public transportation service.



Countryside Village: A Cluster of local businesses

- *Retail village.* Despite North Omaha's rather small retail supply, the neighborhood does have a variety of locally-owned, unique businesses that offer specialized products and services. These distinctive businesses are scattered throughout the neighborhood, making them relatively hard to find and keeping them from developing the synergy that occurs when retailers cluster shopping centers. These businesses would benefit from a thematic retail village, a high-quality, pedestrian-oriented project in which they can group together on a site with high exposure to broader markets. An example of such a project in a different setting is Omaha's highly successful Countryside Village, developed during the 1950s. The retail village should be located along the Cumming Street corridor, with access to the Creighton University market and growing traffic along the two-way Cumming Street bound for the Qwest Center area, airport, and NoDo, as well as North Omaha customers.



McDonald's at 24th & Cumming streets

ON BUSINESS AT 24TH AND CUMING...

“The area has just taken off. It has really turned around. We are running increases that are just unbelievable. The area is booming and we are excited. And that is coming from someone who has been on the corner of 24th and Cumming for 22 years!”

- Fay Hobley, Franchise Owner,
McDonald's at 24th and Cumming

Project financing must be designed to provide low initial rents to retailers, helping them focus resources on inventory and marketing. The Old Market offers an excellent example in Omaha of a “patient” rent structure that encourages start-up and expansion of innovative and unique retailers.

- *Long School Marketplace.* North Omaha’s two previous retail projects are Kellom Heights Shopping Center at 24th and Cuming and Long School Marketplace at 24th and Hamilton, both developed by Omaha Economic Development Corporation. Kellom Heights is largely occupied by Creighton campus services such as the University Health Center and restaurants. Long School Marketplace has experienced slow lease-up beyond its primary retail tenant, Family Dollar. The Marketplace’s slow leasing may result from rents too high for local retailers to afford; a location far enough off Cuming Street to discourage potential customers from Creighton or the Cuming corridor; a lack of surrounding residential development; and a first phase building that is separated from 24th Street. Full occupancy of this building and completion of the project would add new retail and stimulate additional growth in the surrounding Long School area. These goals can be achieved by financial restructuring that reduces rents to affordable levels; financing for buildings along the 24th and Hamilton Street frontages; redeveloping vacant or underused sites around the shopping center; and completing the 24th Street streetscape concept from Cuming Street to the Marketplace.

MIXED INCOME HOUSING

New housing development in North Omaha has been a focus for city development policy since the completion in 1981 of the pioneering Horizon Townhomes at Florence Boulevard and Spencer. Since then, new residential construction has been a significant success, building over 400 new single-family houses and 450 new rental units, and creating new neighborhoods like Conestoga Place, Concord Square, Charles Place, Monmouth Park, Fontenelle View, and, more recently, Miami Heights. These developments have clearly demonstrated that people are interested in quality, contemporary housing in North Omaha. Mixed-income housing development remains a critical component of economic development in the neighborhood because it:

- Increases North Omaha’s population, adding demographic and economic strength to the neighborhood, creating new markets for more commercial development, and providing support and leadership for neighborhood institutions.
- Diversifies household incomes, increasing wealth and economic resources in North Omaha, reducing social issues like crime and violence often correlated to large concentrations of low-income people, and raising overall expectations for neighborhood quality and services.
- Increases equity and ownership in the neighborhood.

To date, almost all of North Omaha’s new housing has

been built by Omaha’s nonprofit community development corporations in partnership with the City of Omaha. The largest of these CDCs are Omaha Economic Development Corporation, Holy Name Housing Corporation, and New Community Development Corporation. Each has developed its own projects in specific areas, and tends to specialize in different project types. While these groups have been very effective, Omaha’s private sector homebuilding industry has been largely absent from the area. An accelerated residential development program in North Omaha will:

- *Mix residential densities and incomes.* Housing and neighborhood development should provide a variety of products that serve the needs of diverse groups. In addition, City financing incentives to date have largely focused largely on mortgage assistance, using Community Development Block Grant funds to make homes affordable to low and moderate-income buyers. Appealing to households with a wider range of incomes will require incentives from other sources that are not restricted to specific income groups.
- *Cluster development to create a critical mass, supported by neighborhood features.* People buying houses in markets that they perceive as untested or risky need to feel that their investment is secure. This security is achieved by reducing uncertainty – focusing work in one specific area, building enough homes in one location to define the character and value of the neighborhood, and controlling undeveloped land. Suburban subdivision development follows this model, and it is especially valid in in-city redevelopment areas. Few homeowners want to live in the only house on a street.

- *Engage the private housing industry in North Omaha development.* Nonprofit developers have been indispensable to North Omaha, but the ultimate concept of a self-sustaining private market will require involvement of Omaha's private homebuilders. We envision North Omaha as a significant residential development center for the entire metropolitan area, as Chicago's South Loop and Denver's Stapleton have become for their respective metropolitan areas.
- *Providing urban housing alternatives.* Most of North Omaha's recent housing production has been single-family detached homes. However, Omaha is becoming a more diverse market, and higher-density products like townhomes and rowhouses have become increasingly popular. North Omaha should offer settings for urban living and mixed uses in addition to more conventional housing types.



Miami Heights



*Examples of Urban Housing:
Above: The Towns at Little Italy
Left: Stapleton*

THE VINE: DEVELOPING KANSAS CITY'S JAZZ DISTRICT

Kansas City's American Jazz Museum and Negro Leagues Baseball Museum are celebrating their tenth anniversaries in 2007. These museums, housed in a unique "duplex" structure at 18th and Vine in Kansas City, are world-class museums and visitor attractions. But they were also conceived as the core of a redevelopment effort intended to radiate from this historic intersection. The Jazz District Redevelopment Corporation (JDRC) was formed to develop the district into a "premier destination place where restaurants, retail services and cultural entertainment merge for a memorable experience for all who live, work and visit the District." The Corporation is a subsidiary of Jazz District Renaissance, a 501(c)3 corporation and formed a limited liability corporation, Jazz District Commercial LLC to hold and manage real estate.

Despite the two museums and other anchors like the famous Peach Tree Restaurant and Historic Gem Theater, lease-up and spin-off development activity was considerably slower than expected. In 2005, Kansas City's Kauffman Foundation retained the California-based design firm IDEO to re-imagine 18th and Vine. The IDEO approach focused extensively on branding – defining the spirit of a place that is then articulated by others, including developers. One aspect of the approach has been to think of potential activities and experiences in the neighborhood, and then to consider the features necessary to support those "moments."

The Jazz District continues to evolve. In August, 2006, the JDRC announced selection of a master developer to complete the district's planned mixed use development. April, 2007 saw the opening of The Monarch, an \$11.3 million project with 72 housing units and 32,000 square feet of commercial space that was developed by McCormack Baron Salazar of Saint Louis. The 18th and Vine experience indicates that the "if you build it, they will come" philosophy and two signature museums by themselves were not sufficient to attract major development to the district. Instead, a much more integrated concept based on all aspects of the district experience may prove to be more successful.



18th & Vine in Kansas City



18th & Vine in Kansas City

CULTURE, ENTERTAINMENT, AND IMAGE

Amenity development has been a staple of economic development strategies in American cities. In Omaha, amenities like the Leahy Mall, Heartland Park, Qwest Center, Holland Center, and the Missouri Riverfront have, over time, re-energized Downtown's investment environment. Minneapolis (Loring Park), Oklahoma City (the Bricktown Canal), Des Moines (Principal Riverwalk and Gray's Lake), Chicago (Millennium Park), Denver (South Platte Valley), and many other cities have similarly demonstrated that urban amenities can transform the image of communities and dramatically spur economic development. Yet, redevelopment projects in in-city neighborhoods often stick to basics – housing, mass retailers, industrial development – and forget how important it is to change perceptions. Unique features bring people to neighborhoods that are outside their normal routine. This, in turn, may lead them to live, work, or invest in the area. Amenities that build on North Omaha's heritage, culture, and open spaces are the fifth building block of economic development, and can create conditions that leverage private reinvestment. Opportunities include:

- *Open spaces and parks.* The North Omaha study area includes two large city parks – Fontenelle and Adams – and several smaller open spaces scattered around the neighborhood. Fontenelle Park, in the northwest part of the neighborhood, has good street exposure and includes a golf course, ballfields, and a rehabilitated lagoon. Adams Park, in the core of the neighborhood, has poor street exposure, difficult topography, and unsafe feeling, and little utilization. The park is also surrounded by vacant or underused land that

could be opened for development. The park, which receives little use by North Omahans, is an unrealized opportunity.

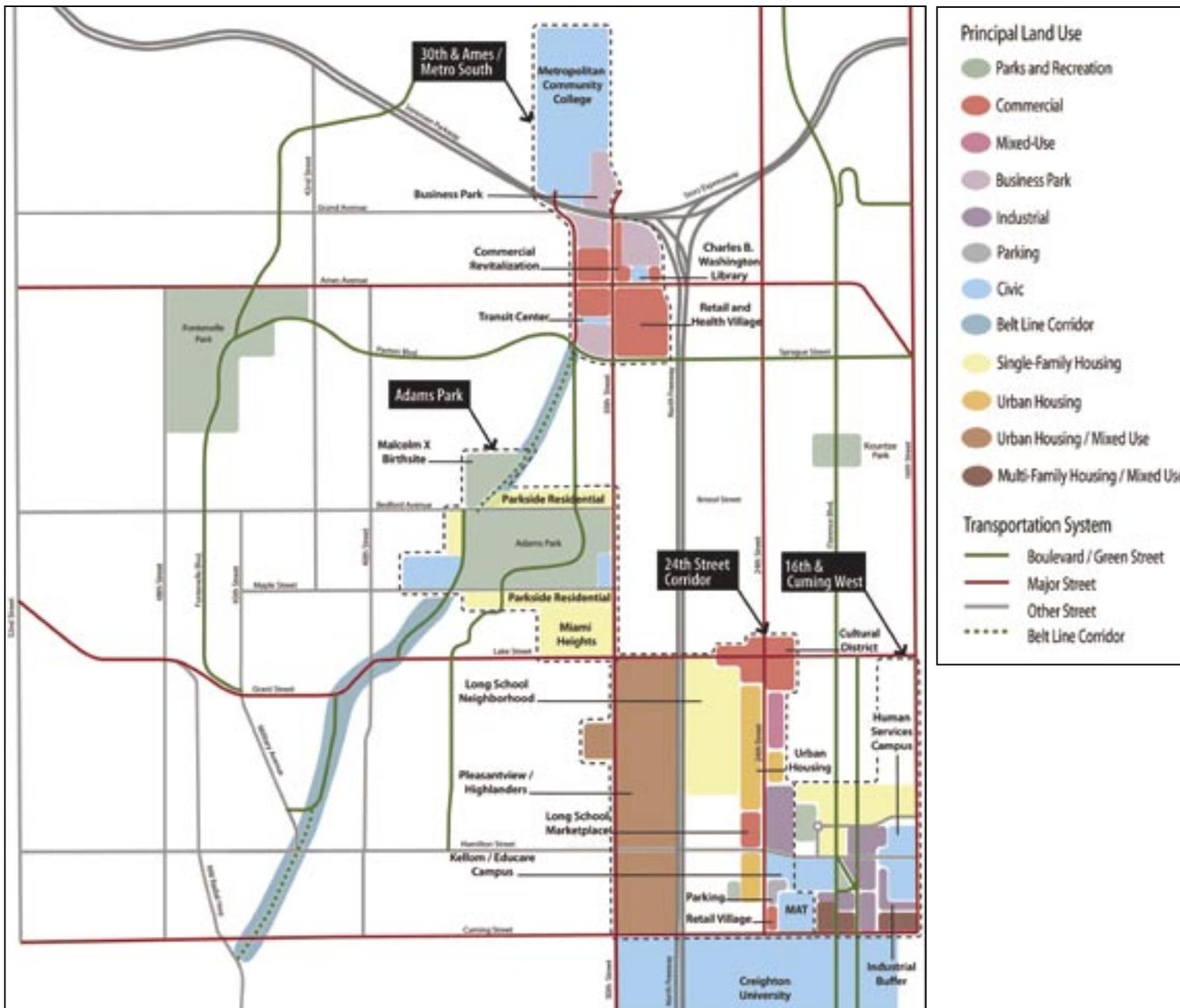
- *Museums and cultural development.* North Omaha's rich history presents another image transforming opportunity. Streetscape improvements around 24th and Lake are themed around the city's jazz traditions and Love's Jazz and Art Center is a new museum that celebrates the life and career of the great Preston Love and other Omaha musicians. But other opportunities are also present. The Great Plains Black Museum, once the only museum of African-American history between Chicago and Denver has been closed for several years but, if revived, could be a major center for community culture and education. The John Beasley Theater Center and Workshop, founded by well-known actor and producer John Beasley, is seeking a permanent home. In Kansas City, the Museums at 18th and Vine, incorporating the American Jazz Museum and Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, have established a new image for this famous intersection that has created a significant, although not always smooth, avenue for new investment. North Omaha can learn from the experience of others and create a multi-faceted experience at 24th and Lake, continuing the initial momentum created by Love's, the streetscape program, and new and traditional area businesses.
- *Historic sites and development.* Historic sites are a third category of amenity and image development. Omaha was the birthplace of Malcolm X and the Malcolm X Foundation owns his birthsite and ten acres of surrounding land, adjacent to Adams Park.

The Foundation is in the process of raising funds for site development, including gardens, interpretive features, and open space. Development of this site again has nationwide potential for education and visitor attraction. Other North Omaha sites, such as the Dreamland Ballroom, Prospect Hill Cemetery, Fort Omaha, and others, tell the story of both the neighborhood and the broader community.



Great Plains Black Museum Building

NORTH OMAHA DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



The Framework

The previous discussion presented a simple, three-step spatial strategy for North Omaha:

Step One: Build in from strengths on the neighborhood's edges.

Step Two: Transform the image at the core.

Step Three: Spread the momentum in directed ways throughout the neighborhood.

It continued by presenting five building blocks for economic development in North Omaha:

- Employment and business generators
- Medical and health care
- Retail
- Mixed income housing
- Culture, entertainment, and image transformation

These geographic and development strategies and their individual requirements lead to four initial focuses for the North Omaha Development Project. We call these focused areas "Development Opportunity Areas." They include:

- The 24th Street Corridor.
- 30th and Ames/Metro South.
- Adams Park.
- 16th and Cuming West.

The 24th Street Corridor



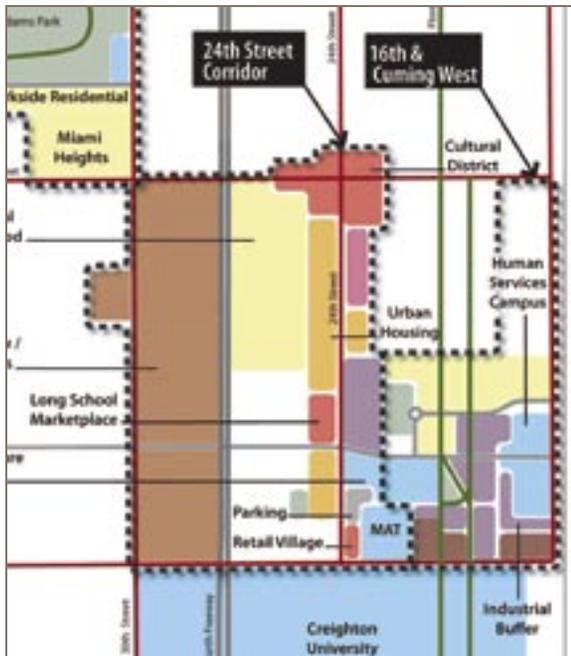
Bryant Center

This Development Opportunity Area extends from 24th Street to 30th Street from Cuming Street to north of Lake Street. Its main focus is the 24th Street corridor, but it includes both sides of the North Freeway.

Why this Area? Twenty-Fourth Street is the traditional image center of North Omaha, and has been a center for city and nonprofit reinvestment since 1978. Major efforts here include the Kellom Heights residential and commercial developments, Long School Marketplace, the Long School residential infill project, 24th and Lake Redevelopment Area, North Omaha Business Park, Kellom School, and Metro Area Transit's administrative and maintenance facility. Major characteristics include:

- Frontage along Cuming Street and adjacency to Creighton University, providing access to outside markets.

- Substantial past redevelopment activity.
- An emerging cultural node at 24th and Lake, including the streetscape, Dreamland Plaza, and Love's Jazz and Art Center.
- Previous economic and business development projects, including North Omaha Business Park, Business and Technology Center, Jewell Building, and Blue Lion Center (Omaha Workforce Development).
- Significant retail development efforts on 24th Street, in Kellom Heights Shopping Center and Long School Marketplace.
- Major educational and youth development resources, including Blackburn High School, Boys and Girls Club, Kellom Elementary School, Educare of Omaha, and Project HOPE.
- Other long-standing community institutions, such as Bryant Center and the *Omaha Star*.
- Continuous vacant or underused blocks along 24th Street and dispersed lots in the Long School neighborhood, providing substantial development opportunities.
- Finely-scaled, urban street that lends itself to mixed use urban-density development.



Metro Area Transit

A VISION FOR THE 24TH STREET DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY AREA

The 24th Street corridor will concentrate on residential, retail, and cultural components of the NODP. It will become:

- **A front door** that invites the entire community to visit, conduct business, and make homes in North Omaha.
- **A vital urban corridor**, where North Omaha connects with Downtown and Creighton.
- A place that helps North Omaha's **unique retailers grow, showcasing their businesses to multiple markets.**
- **An emerging urban residential neighborhood** that appeals to a variety of markets, from young people, family households, and empty nesters.
- **A center of arts, culture, and heritage** that attracts visitors from around the city and the entire region.
- A continuing **center for community-based economic growth**, providing opportunities for new business enterprise.

THE FRAMEWORK CONCEPT

The framework concept for the 24th Street Corridor establishes two key mixed use nodes bookending urban development along the street. The south node at Cumming Street is anchored by the Retail Village, a pedestrian-oriented center that provides superior exposure and an excellent thematic environment for distinctive North Omaha businesses. The north node at Lake Street is the Cultural and Entertainment District, building on Love's

Jazz Center, Dreamland Plaza, existing businesses, and the themed streetscape to create a special destination that draws visitors from a wider area. Urban-density, owner-occupied housing connects the two nodes, making 24th a distinctive urban street, punctuated by other long-established and recent mixed uses. To the west, the Long School neighborhood becomes a revitalized single-family neighborhood, building on vacant lots and, where necessary, replacing obsolete structures with new homes. Components of the initial concept include:

- The Retail Village, re-using a portion of the Metro Area Transit parking lot between Cumming and Nicholas Street. Convenient, employee parking is located on other sites adjacent to the MAT building.
- Urban housing with a live/work component with shops or workspace at street level and residences above, on the remaining Kellom Heights redevelopment site south of Hamilton Street. The university community could be receptive to this innovative development type.
- Completion of Long School Marketplace on 24th Street between Hamilton and Seward Streets.
- Urban housing development (such as townhomes, detached townhomes, or rowhouses) on vacant property along both sides of 24th Street. Limited new commercial uses, existing institutions, and landmark businesses would be incorporated into this new urban environment.
- A Cultural and Entertainment District anchoring 24th and Lake, featuring development of a new African-American museum and theater center, along with retail and housing development.

- New single-family construction concentrated in the Long School neighborhood, west of the 24th Street corridor to the North Freeway.
- Enhancement of the Lake Street corridor between the North Freeway interchange and 24th Street, with street landscaping, thematic lighting, graphics, and wide sidewalks.

The momentum created by completing this initial cluster of projects will extend to other parts of the development area. This expanded response will address the following sites:

- Vacant sites north of Lake Street between 24th and the Freeway.
- The Public Works maintenance yard between Lake and Miami Streets east of the North Freeway.
- Pleasantview Homes and adjacent vacant lands south of Lake Street, redeveloped as a mixed use housing development. Other uses of the site could accelerate its redevelopment. Possibilities include a specialized magnet school designed around major employment opportunities, senior housing, or other uses that need a large site.

30th and Ames/Metro South



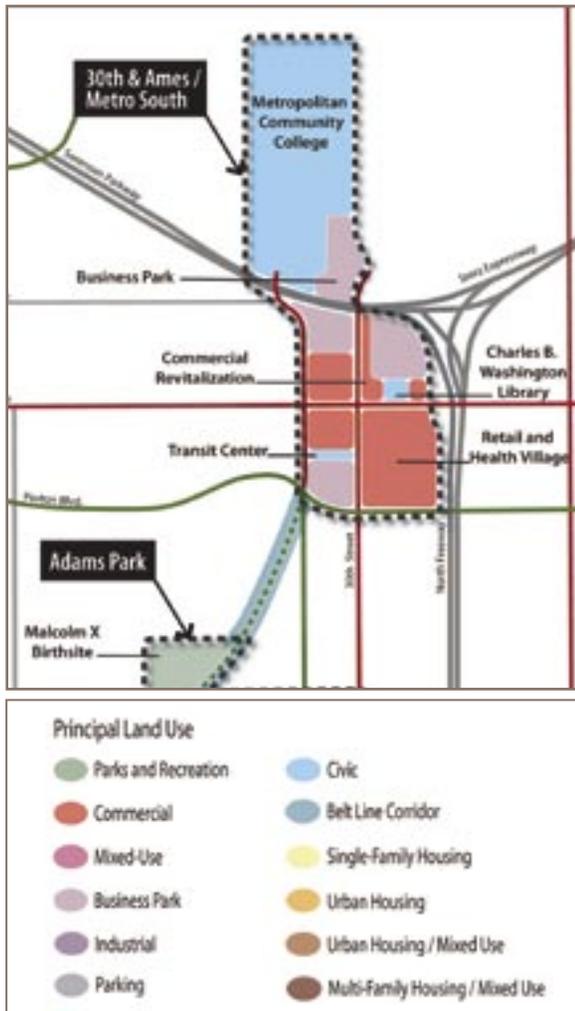
Charles B. Washington Library

This Development Opportunity Area extends from Sprague Street to Sorensen Parkway/Storz Expressway, including the south edge of the Metropolitan Community College campus from the North Freeway to 31st Avenue. Its main focus is the 30th and Ames intersection, North Omaha's leading commercial cluster.

Why this Area? The 30th and Ames intersection is North Omaha's major commercial intersection, and includes two banks, fast-food restaurants, free-standing commercial buildings, a grocery store and other shops, and the remainder of the traditional Kenwood business district. The Fort Omaha Campus of Metropolitan Community College forms the north edge of the area. Metro is reorienting its main campus entrance and circulation route to Sorensen Parkway with the construc-

tion of its new Culinary Arts Building. This development district also includes the recently remodeled Charles B. Washington Library, appropriately commemorating one of Omaha's great civil rights leaders, and Metro Area Transit's North Omaha Transit Center. The area's largest single building is the former US Mills Building, owned by Omaha Public Schools, now used as a temporary relocation facility for schools undergoing major rehabilitation. Major attributes include:

- The intersection of two of North Omaha's principal arterials, 30th Street and Ames Avenue.
- Excellent transportation access with an interchange at Ames Avenue to the North Freeway and the intersection of 30th Street, Sorensen Parkway, and Storz Expressway. This provides very direct access to the Interstate system and Eppley Airfield.
- The North Omaha Transit Center, a transfer point among MAT's North Omaha bus lines with connections to many parts of the city.
- Significant retail and service strength.
- Obsolete, landlocked residential neighborhoods, surrounded by industries or the Freeway/Sorensen Parkway corridors.
- Underused obsolete industrial properties along the abandoned former Missouri Pacific Belt Line railroad.
- The adjacent Metropolitan Community College, a major educational institution that is reorienting its campus development to its Sorensen Parkway frontage.



U.S. Mills Building

A VISION FOR THE 30TH AND AMES/METRO SOUTH DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY AREA

The 30th and Ames/Metro South opportunity area will be a principal center for retail development and job generating businesses, taking advantage of its central location, excellent transportation assets, and ability to attract outside markets. This role is strongly reinforced by the neighboring Metro campus. It will become:

- A home for **dynamic retail and job-creating enterprises**, both home-grown and attracted from other places.
- A center for **employment expansion into growth markets** such as health services, culinary arts, and technical services.
- **An enterprise center that capitalizes on excellent access to Metropolitan Community College** for technical and training support.
- **A major community commercial and activity center** for the North Omaha market.
- **A center for health-related services and retailing**, innovatively coordinating health services, wellness, and specialty retailing.
- **A walkable, amenity-rich environment** that provides a place of pride and experience for the North Omaha community.

THE FRAMEWORK CONCEPT

The framework concept for the 30th and Ames/Metro South area creates a strong commercial intersection at 30th and Ames, surrounded by high-quality business park development to the north and south. Deteriorating and isolated residential areas are redeveloped with business parks, generating employment and entrepreneurial opportunities with excellent transportation access and adjacency to Metropolitan Community College. A community commercial center and Health Village occupy the southeast quadrant of the district, designed as attractive, urban projects that provide excellent pedestrian, automobile, and transit access. Remaining commercial buildings and streetscapes are upgraded to reinforce the district's design character. Major transportation improvements enhance east-west connections, link Metro into the heart of the development area, and improve the public transportation environment. Components of the concept include:

- A community commercial center, capable of accommodating two large retail uses and associated shops, in the southeast quadrant of 30th and Ames.
- A Health Village, combining health services, wellness facilities, and health-related retailing in the same development quadrant, integrated into the commercial center design.
- Four business center redevelopment sites, including the south and east edges of the Metro campus to

Sorensen Parkway and 30th Street; two areas north of Fowler on either side of 30th Street; and a site between Sprague Street and the North Omaha Transit Center west of 30th Street.

- A campus redesign for Metropolitan Community College, providing a new site for the Culinary Arts Building and a south campus gateway on Sorensen Parkway. This gateway is linked to the neighborhood along 31st Avenue.
- An improved North Omaha Transit Center.

Adams Park



Adams Park Lagoon

This Opportunity Area highlights Adams Park, one of North Omaha’s largest open spaces and most underutilized community resources. The Adams Park concept is based on the strong relationship between great parks and neighborhood reinvestment. The park is located between 30th Street and the abandoned Belt Line, from north of Maple Street to Bedford Avenue. It is adjacent to the ten acre Malcolm X Birthsite property, owned by the Malcolm X Foundation.

Why this Area? Adams Park is in the absolute center of the study area and should be a common for the entire community. Instead, despite the presence of a recreation center, the park receives little use. It is invisible from nearby streets, and its hillside topography sharply limits casual recreational use. Yet the park’s central location and the vast amount of surrounding vacant land create tremendous opportunities for remaking this part of the neighborhood and reclaiming surrounding land for new and productive uses. Connecting the park to the adjacent Malcolm X Birthsite will increase public exposure for that important historical site. Major features and issues include:

- The 61-acre Adams Park, currently underused because of design, lack of street exposure, and very hilly topography. Its back, or west, side has some flatter space developed with a pond and ballfields.
- Very poor auto access to the park, reducing public use and creating unsafe, hidden spaces. Extremely poor street connectivity through the neighborhood adjacent to Adam's Park.
- The abandoned Belt Line railroad, an overgrown corridor that could link the 30th and Ames development area with Midtown and the University of Nebraska Medical Center. This corridor follows one of the drainageways that feeds the Saddle Creek watershed.
- An adjacent 10-acre site that includes the Malcolm X Birthsite.
- North Omaha’s largest concentration of vacant land in the area surrounding the park and Malcolm X Birthsite.

- The Miami Heights redevelopment area adjacent to the south, between Lake and Maple Streets. The first stage of the Miami Heights subdivision is composed of very large houses on a promontory overlooking the Missouri River Valley.

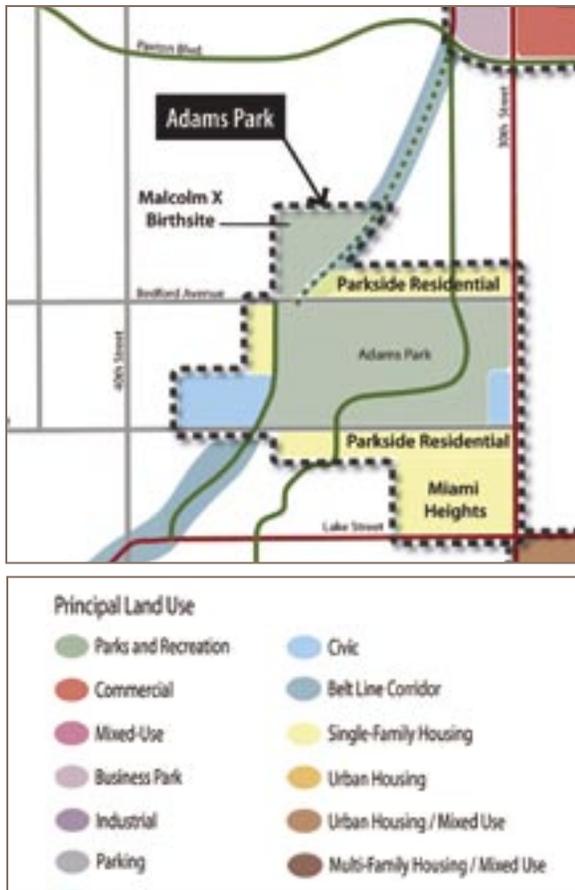
A VISION FOR ADAMS PARK

A reborn Adams Park and the completed Malcolm X Birthsite can remake the center of the neighborhood and transform the image of the core of North Omaha. This open space will become:

- The **“Central Park”** of the North Omaha community.
- **A reborn and vibrant urban space** that acts as the catalyst for new residential development around the park.
- An open space attraction that **brings people to the area from around the city, region, and nation.**
- **An area transformed** from an insecure, unsafe looking place to a place alive with people and activity.
- **A source of development momentum** that extends along other neighborhood corridors.

THE FRAMEWORK CONCEPT

The framework concept for Adams Park envisions extending the park to 30th Street by purchasing and developing property between Howard Kennedy School and Bedford Avenue. The parks topography would be remade by cutting down the large hill and developing a lake by extending the park pond out toward 30th Street. Water could pass under Creighton Boulevard and cascade down to the park extension along 30th Street. Trails would sur-



round the lake, with people floating by in paddleboats and canoes. The shore is dotted with fishing piers and even beaches. The community center's promontory would be maintained, with panoramic views of the lake and park scene. New park streets eliminate dead ends and give users access to a great open space. The Malcolm X Birthsite project would be completed and linked by pathways to Adams Park, creating a combined open space and historical site of national importance. The overall idea includes:



Miami Heights

- A redesigned Adams Park, enlarged and extended to 30th Street. Park components include a major lake created by reshaping landforms, trails, a green lawn for unstructured use, a water playground, ballfields, and other places for active recreation. Other potential features could include a waterfront activity center with piers, concessions, and boat rentals; and a recreation center or indoor aquatics park. Howard Kennedy School would be an important part of the expanded park.
- Completion of the Malcolm X Birthsite concept, linked by pathways and green space to Adams Park.
- Improved street access and circulation, including a parkway along 36th Street and the Belt Line right-of-way between Bedford and Maple, connects local street to this new road, and an internal park loop with lakefront access.
- Residential development on vacant lots that would be opened to adjacent streets and the redeveloped park.

The completed Adams Park and the Malcolm X Birthsite projects will create energy that extends to adjacent



View from Miami Heights

areas. The most logical private market response will be expanded mixed-income residential growth. This response includes the following possibilities:

- Extending Adams Park eastward by redeveloping Spencer Homes with new mixed-income housing oriented around a parkway, creating a more pedestrian-friendly Bristol Street crossing over the North Freeway and continuing the parkway east to 24th Street.
- Extending Belt Line development as a "green street" and trail corridor, connecting 30th and Ames and Midtown, and providing a front yard for new housing development
- Redeveloping underused, former industrial property between the Belt Line greenway and Creighton Boulevard for residential or civic uses.



Loring Park, Minneapolis, in 1891



Loring Park, Minneapolis, in 1994



Hudson River Park, New York, 2007

THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF PARKS

The notion that parks and open space add value to surrounding properties is an intuitive belief that goes back hundreds of years. King Henri IV of France created the Place des Voges (1605-12) in order to spark development in the surrounding territory; Louis the XIV created the Place Vendome (1677-99) and Louis the XV created the Place de la Concorde (1755-1775) for the same purpose. For centuries the families that owned the great estates of London have collected increasingly valuable rents from the more than 400 squares the created as incentives to lease property to developers.

American cities have been doing the same for more than two centuries. In 1883 The Evening Journal of Minneapolis, argued that “The relatively inexpensive acquisition of parkland now will add millions to the real estate value of the city in the future and will give us at a moderate comparative cost the finest, most comprehensive system for parks possessed by any city on this continent.” As a result of that investment, in 2007 it was the best located, best designed, best maintained, and best managed system in the country. This investment paid off handsomely in soaring real estate tax revenues from surrounding properties.

Despite these experiences and those of many other public spaces, including Governor Tom McCall Waterfront Park in Portland and Millennium Park in Chicago, hard evidence on the direct economic impact of parks is sparse. Perhaps the only clearly quantitative evidence of the impact of investment in parks and open space is a 2007 study entitled The Impact of Hudson River Park on Property Values prepared jointly by the Real Estate Board of New York and The Regional Plan Association. It measured sales prices for condominium apartments during the years 2003-2005 along the length of the new park between Chambers Street in Lower Manhattan and 59th Street – nearly 5 miles. During that period only one stretch of the park had actually been finished. That 15-block-long section of the park experienced an 80% increase in the sales price of 285 condo apartments. During that same period there was only a 45% increase in the sales price of 657 condo apartments along the uncompleted portion of the Hudson River Park.

16th and Cuming West



Fitzgerald Hotel and Bloom Monument Buildings

The 16th and Cuming West Development Opportunity Area includes areas along the Cuming Street corridor and north of Creighton University, and extends between Cuming and Clark Streets from 16th to 22nd Streets.

Why this Area? The 16th and Cuming area – part of the industrial frame of Downtown Omaha and characterized by commercial and industrial uses as well as single room occupancy housing – is undergoing rapid change. This change is caused by the expanding Creighton Campus; emerging development in the NoDo district, including the residential reuse of the Tip Top Building and construction of hotels along the north side of Cuming Street; and the emergence of Cuming as a principal route to the airport, Riverfront, and Qwest Center. The possibility of a new baseball stadium north of the Qwest Center may accelerate these trends. However, the large homeless population gravitating toward Siena-Francis House, Campus for Hope, and relatively high impact industrial uses affect the long-term use of this area. Major attributes include:



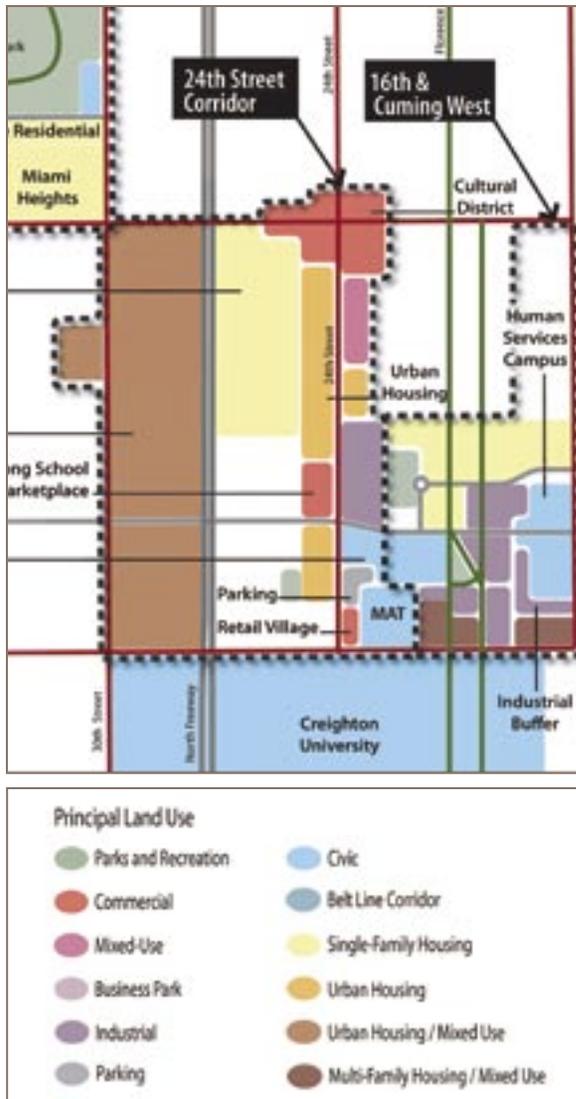
Modern Equipment – Property Now Owned by Creighton University

- Frontage along Cuming Street and adjacency to Creighton University, with access to these markets.
- Major redevelopment activity east along Cuming Street and in the NoDo and Riverfront development areas.
- Unsightly salvage yards and blighted sites along the 16th Street corridor south of Grace Street.
- Major social service facilities along 17th Street between Nicholas Street and the Kellom Greenway (Charles Street), including Siena-Francis House and the Campus for Hope.
- A variety of industrial uses, ranging from low to relatively high impact, in various parts of the area.
- A substantial amount of vacant or blighted land.
- The leading edge of new residential development along 20th Street in the Charles Place development. Here, obsolete industrial uses and emerging single-family neighborhoods meet.

A VISION FOR THE 16TH AND CUMING WEST DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY AREA

The 16th and Cuming area will be a completely unique district, representing a harmonious meeting of land uses and activities that conventional wisdom would judge to be completely incompatible. It will become:

- A place that **reflects the unique values of Omaha— an ability to create a district that accommodates everyone**, from the most disadvantaged people to young families investing in new homes.
- A **center for human services that respects the humanity and dignity of clients**, while also **controlling the undeniable impact** that a large homeless population has on its surroundings.
- A **continuing center for enterprise and employment**, complementing existing solid industries with new enterprises.
- A **productive corridor that takes advantage of the university market** to develop unique housing and retail environments.
- An **improved physical and transportation environment** that improves both the function and appeal of a mixed use urban district.

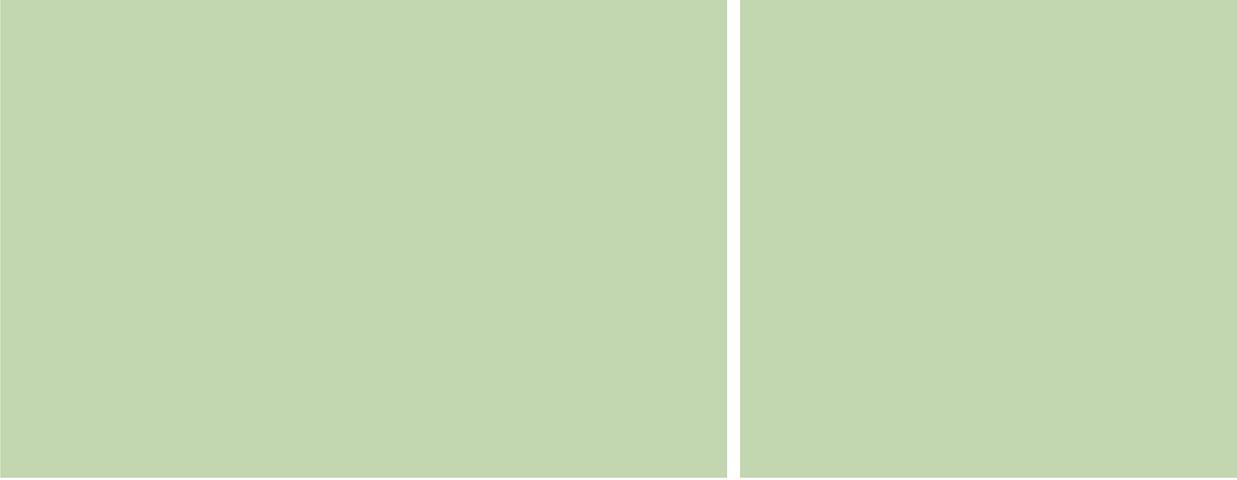


Siena-Francis House

THE FRAMEWORK CONCEPT

The framework concept for the 16th and Cuming West Development Opportunity Area resolves potential conflicts among very different types of uses. The concept expands the existing Siena-Francis House and Campus for Hope developments along 17th Street into a self-contained Human Services Campus, providing clients with a full range of services, including common open space, within its boundaries. This expansion also removes the blighting influence of salvage yards along 16th Street. The concept retains stable business and industrial uses, and gives new, small business and industrial buildings room to expand. These uses also provide a buffer around the human services campus. Mixed-use urban commercial and residential development occurs along Cuming Street, combining new buildings and amenities with existing structures of historic character. Finally, the meeting of new residential and older commercial and industrial uses is resolved by creating a neighborhood amenity. Components of the concept include:

- A Human Services Campus, between Nicholas and Charles Street west of 16th Street, providing space for needed new facilities and campus open space, designed to respect human dignity while limiting potential negative effects.
 - An urban development corridor along the Cuming corridor, with mixed-use commercial/residential projects, reuse of unique commercial buildings, and a streetscape appropriate to a university/city edge.
 - Preserving architecturally and historically significant buildings and key community institutions like Holy Family Church.
 - Maintaining important employment generating industrial uses while providing opportunities for new businesses on blighted or underused sites.
 - The potential new youth development program coordinated with and adjacent to Educare and the Kellom Elementary School campus.
 - New single-family housing expanding the Charles Square development.
 - Converting 20th Street and Florence Boulevard to two-way streets, reflecting their current residential character. The traffic system would establish one-way circulation as these streets enter downtown.
 - Improving the visual character of the 16th Street corridor.
- Chapter Five presents development details and implementation concepts for each of the four Development Opportunity Areas. It also suggests ways in which the energy created by completing these areas grows into other parts of North Omaha.





PART 5

THE PLAN
DEVELOPED





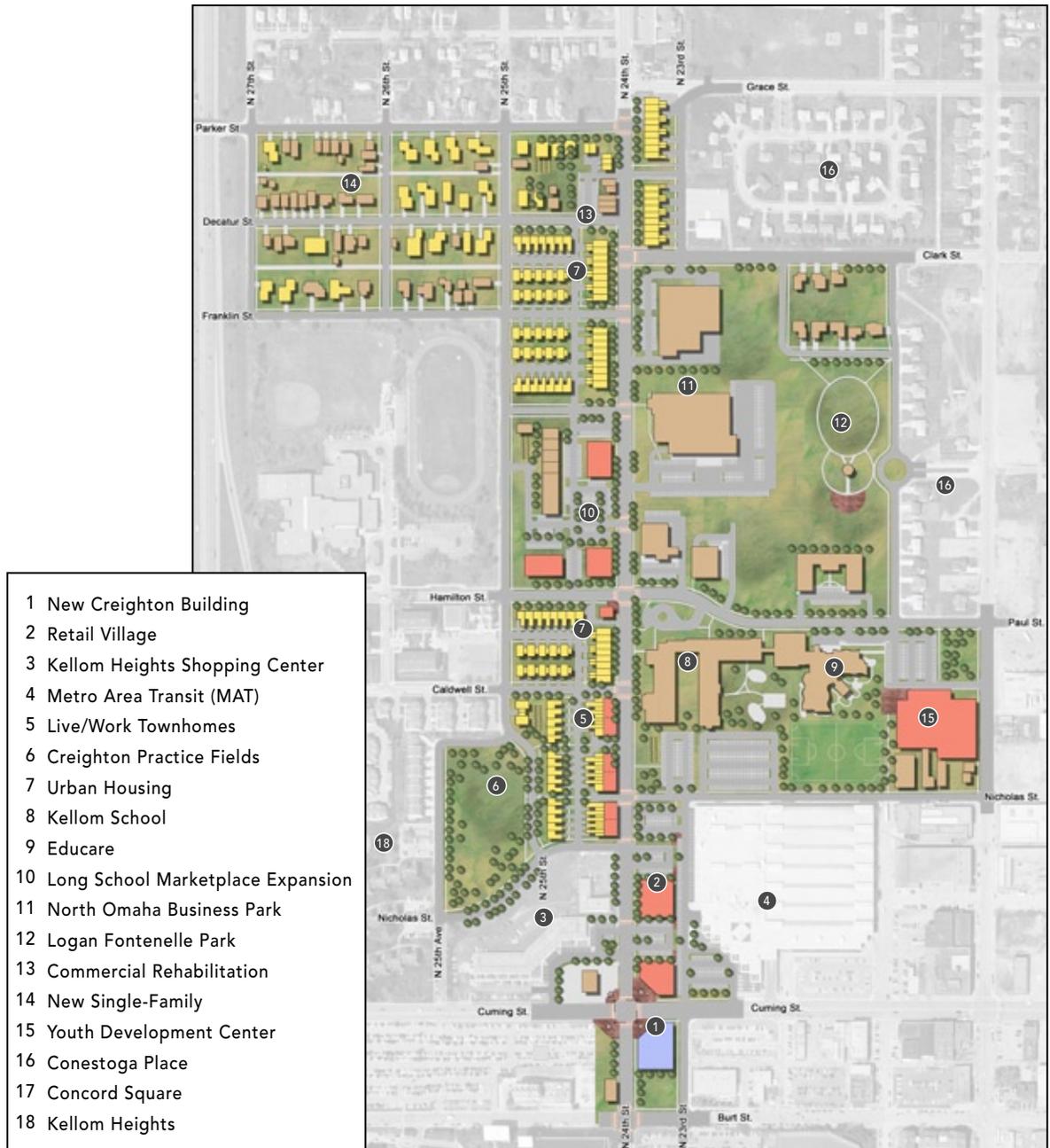
24th and Cuming Looking North

Chapter Four presented the framework for the North Omaha Development Project. It addressed two fundamental questions: **WHAT** components should the project focus on and **WHERE** should it direct that focus. This chapter will provide further detail on the development concepts, but adds a third critical consideration: **HOW** should this important work be accomplished to meet the twin goals of 1) helping North Omaha achieve its proportionate share of metropolitan area growth and prosperity and 2) assuring that the citizens and businesses of North Omaha are the principal beneficiaries of that growth. In this chapter, we will:

- Illustrate how each development opportunity area may develop and recommend techniques for implementing the concept.
- Discuss improvements in the transportation system that to support area-wide economic and residential development.
- Consider how the momentum created by realizing the Development Opportunity Areas concepts spreads to other parts of the community.

24th Street Corridor

Of the four development opportunity areas identified by the Framework Plan, the 24th Street Corridor has received the most city attention and experienced the most change during the last twenty years. The vision of the corridor as a diverse mixed use urban district, anchored by new, locally-based retailing on the south and a cultural and entertainment district on the north, also requires a variety of coordinated implementation techniques. The 24th Street Corridor program includes four elements: Housing Development, Retail, the Public Realm, and the Heritage District.





24th Street Corridor Today



Potential 24th Street in the Future

Housing Development

THE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The housing component of the 24th Street Corridor envisions a mixed-density new urban neighborhood, strongly oriented toward owner occupancy. Townhouses and rowhouses will make 24th Street as an attractive city street, with the flavor of historic districts in other American cities, while the surrounding Long School area will be a more traditional single-family neighborhood. The development concept includes:

- **An urban family neighborhood with live/work units** on the remaining site in the Kellom Heights redevelopment area between 24th and 25th street south of Hamilton Street. The live/work units would develop along the 24th Street frontage, with retail or workshop space along the street and living units climbing the hillside above them. These units are especially attractive to artists, craftspeople, and other people who create and sell products and provide services in the same place. This new neighborhood also offers a mix of townhouse, and single-family attached and semi-detached homes at moderate urban densities. Most garage access is provided by mid-block alleys, permitting narrower lots and producing more pedestrian-oriented streets. A new street that connects 24th Street and 25th Avenue north of the Kellom Heights Shopping Center and a slight realignment of 25th Street will improve local traffic flow. The existing Creighton soccer field would provide a community green space for the Kellom Heights area.

- **Urban townhomes along 24th Street and, where possible, intersecting east-west streets, from Seward to Burdette.** Townhouses would be set back from 24th Street to provide each home with a small garden along the street. Garage access would be provided by rear driveways to strengthen the pedestrian nature of 24th Street. These units will all be owner-occupied, and are similar to new development occurring in Downtown and Midtown neighborhoods.
- **An independent senior living development along 25th Street between Parker and Burdette Streets.** In contrast to typical senior apartments, this project envisions cottages that provide residents with access to their own gardens. The project will be particularly attractive to seniors as part of a convenient, mixed-use urban neighborhood with good transit service and access to community facilities.
- **Single-family detached, owner-occupied housing in the Long School neighborhood north of Franklin Street between 24th Street and the North Freeway.** Development will begin on vacant lots throughout the neighborhood. Existing homes will be rehabilitated if feasible. If rehabilitation is not feasible (usually because of structural deterioration, obsolescence, or lead paint), houses would be acquired, providing owners with the resources to purchase new homes in the developing Long School neighborhood. Improved street landscaping, thematic street lighting, neighborhood green space, gateways, and historic markers (such as a marker on the site of the original Long School) would provide new homeowners with a beautiful residential environment comparable to any neighborhood in the city.

This development concept produces approximately 295 new homes – 196 urban homes along the 24th Street corridor and about 99 new detached homes in the Long School neighborhood. At completion, 1,000 new residents would live in the area, with a probable value of home construction of about \$51 million.

THE IMPLEMENTATION CONCEPT

For a large-scale developer in Omaha, a 300-home subdivision is business as usual. In a redevelopment area, however, production at this scale can be daunting. Yet, an effective implementation program can create a distinctive city neighborhood in this vital part of North Omaha. In designing this program, we can learn valuable lessons from large-scale production developers and production builders.

The implementation program is guided by the following principles:

- **The program should provide complete site control and phased development in this neighborhood.** Control over the land is required for successful development in this area. No conventional developer in a suburban setting would attempt to sell lots or houses without controlling all the land in a subdivision – the uncertainty over what might happen with the rest of the land would “kill the deal.” In an area that buyers already perceive as risky, unified control over the land is essential.
- **Phasing should provide development clusters with the critical mass to offer security to buyers.** Phases should include enough units to establish the character of the neighborhood and provide security to buy-

ers. New townhomes in Downtown or Midtown settings are built in groups or blocks, not one unit at a time. However, they are typically built on a pre-sale process, to avoid excessive risk either to builders or buyers. The builder builds a model block or group of units, and sales are made on the basis of those units.

- **The development area should include multiple builders and should be a focus for both profit and nonprofit developers.** Each of North Omaha housing developments has been developed by one community development corporation (CDC). For example, Concord Square was built by the New Community Development Corporation, Monmouth Park by the Holy Name Housing Corporation, and Kellom Heights by the Omaha Economic Development Corporation. More typically in Omaha, though, one company develops the subdivision, and homebuilders buy lots and build homes. We suggest the same model in the 24th Street Corridor, providing both variety and a greater opportunity for private sector involvement. CDCs should continue to work as they have in the past, but a multiple builder approach can create a self-sustaining housing market, capable of building more houses and expanding into new areas as demand for living in North Omaha grows.
- **Incentives should be provided that can attract middle-income homebuyers.** Most North Omaha housing developments offer affordability incentives funded by CDBG or HOME funds, such as “soft-second” mortgages, that are limited to low and moderate income households. Mixed-income development means attracting people whose incomes are too high to qualify for these incentives. In North Omaha, mar-

HOME EQUITY PROTECTION IN SYRACUSE

Creating predictable sales and value performance in an emerging development market presents several challenges to homebuilders and homebuyers alike. Lacking a historical inventory of a significant number of new housing sales and a long term perspective of increasing housing values, homebuilders are reluctant to enter new and untested marketplaces. Homebuyers may doubt that their investment in a new home will generate significant equity and increase their wealth. Homeowners take it for granted that their home will increase in value or at least hold its own. However, in soft or emerging markets, owners may be unwilling to take the risk that they will recover their investment when it comes time to sell.

To protect homeowners against decreases in home values and the accompanying destructive financial loss, the City of Syracuse, New York, developed a simple and affordable value insurance program in 1992, the Home Equity Protection (HEP) program. This program provides a homebuyer with guaranteed financial protection should market values decline in their neighborhood between the time they purchase the protection and the time they sell their home, in exchange for a one time fee of 1.5 percent of the “Protected Value” of the home. Homeowners of existing or newly constructed homes may purchase Home Equity Protection at the current market value of their home, some portion thereof, or for its anticipated value after making improvements (that becomes the “Protected Value” of their home, on which the protection is based). As homeowners resell their homes after three or more years, HEP pays down their mortgage (or pays them directly) if home prices have dropped in their neighborhood.

HEP is being administered by Equity Headquarters, Inc., a non profit subsidiary of Home Headquarters, Inc., a NeighborWorks organization located in Syracuse, New York. More information on HEP may be found at Equity Headquarters’ web site at www.equityhq.org



*Urban Family Neighborhood and Live/Work
Townhouse Units Along 24TH Street*

Market appraisals for single-family houses are about the same as construction value. This very desirable situation results from many years of work and involvement by area lenders, and makes large grants or price write-downs unnecessary. However, middle-income homebuyers have specific concerns that discourage them from considering North Omaha against other housing locations. Incentives should address these concerns.

We recommend four program components to address these requirements: front-end land acquisition and site control, construction financing, incentives for market-rate homebuyers, and second mortgage support for affordable buyers.

- **Front End Land Acquisition and Land Reservation.**

Site control of this overall project area is essential for successful development. The City of Omaha owns about 43 lots in the area, many of which are between 24th and 25th Street. These, of course, will be available to the project. The area includes another 128 privately-owned vacant lots and 75 existing houses (excluding recently constructed, single-family infill houses). In

order to complete the development, these vacant lots must be assembled and owner-occupied homes either rehabilitated or acquired and replaced. This requires adequate funding for a complete property acquisition program, a major focus for the North Omaha Development Project.

This program and the organization that actually holds land, must be transparent and accepted by the community, and will begin by acquiring vacant lots and other properties. City redevelopment powers should be employed if necessary to acquire vacant sites, with land conveyed to a development group. Relocation benefits will give many owners of homes that cannot be feasibly rehabilitated the resources they need to buy a new home, often in the new Long School neighborhood. The overall process must be administered openly and with concern for residents in the area.

• **Construction Financing for Phased Development.**

Construction financing that minimizes personal risk will increase the involvement of private builders, vital at the beginning of the redevelopment effort. We propose a housing construction loan pool, funded by a consortium of local lenders and NIFA, adequate to maintain an inventory of 25 townhomes along the 24th Street (equivalent to about two blockfaces of units) and 20 single-family houses in the Long School development area. This does not mean having an inventory of 45 vacant speculative houses, but rather having the capacity to provide interim financing for that number of units at any one time. This commitment will provide the critical mass necessary to reassure homebuyers that they will not be alone.

• **Incentive Possibilities for Market Rate Buyers.** The appraisal history of North Omaha development indicates that expensive and unrecoverable write-downs are not necessary to support area housing development. However, middle-income buyers may be discouraged by concerns about the risk and costs of urban housing and common maintenance. We recommend three initiatives to address these concerns:

- *Value Support through Home Equity Protection (HEP).* Home equity insurance insures buyers against loss of equity for a specific period of time in areas that are perceived to carry higher than normal risk. Oak Park, Illinois, was an early user of this technique as part of a successful effort to prevent “white flight” and maintain its character as a mixed-income, integrated suburban city. In 1992, HEP was implemented successfully in Syracuse, New York. (See Sidebar: Home Equity Protection in Syracuse) This program addresses an important concern that discourages people from buying homes in redevelopment areas and applies directly to the 24th Street Corridor development program.
- *Targeted Employer Assistance.* These programs provide incentives to employees considering home purchases in areas of special interest to their employers. Programs take a variety of forms; one design involved matching contributions to a downpayment fund, similar to matching 401(k) contributions. Saint Louis University, in a very successful effort to rebuild the blighted Central Grand neighborhood around its campus, instituted a housing incentive program for faculty and staff. Creighton University, as well as other area corporations, may have a similar self-interest

HOUSING INCENTIVES AT SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

Saint Louis University provides a housing benefit to its employees through an Employer Assisted Housing Program (EAHP). The EAHP provides three benefits for University employees: (1) housing information and education on home ownership, (2) when available, preferred rates and reduced closing costs on mortgage and refinancing costs through partnering institutions, and (3) when available, forgivable loans for eligible employees, applicable towards the purchase of a home located in the designated neighborhoods near campus.

This policy applies to all current, full-time faculty and staff members of Saint Louis University. Properties eligible for the forgivable loan program must be located within specific revitalization areas. The percentage of the loan that is forgiven increases with the number of years of employment after origination of the loan, up to 100% of the loan after five years of employment.



Central Grand Neighborhood, St. Louis

in the health and security of this adjacent neighborhood. (See Sidebar: Home Equity Protection Insurance)

– *Homeowners Association Support.* Attached, urban density, owner-occupied housing is increasingly well accepted in the Omaha marketplace. However, requirements for common area and uniform façade maintenance almost always require creation of a Homeowners Association (HOA). HOAs are funded by compulsory, monthly assessments that are then placed in a fund to finance maintenance and repairs, which add significantly to the fixed cost of the unit. A program that helps capitalize HOAs, reducing monthly assessments at the beginning of the mortgage period, may also encourage desirable urban housing development along 24th Street.

- **Second Mortgage Support for Affordable Housing Buyers.** Deferred (or soft-second) mortgages have helped put new housing in North Omaha within the reach of many buyers by reducing monthly housing costs. This strategy uses CDBG and HOME funds, and is targeted to low and moderate-income households. The second mortgage program should continue and expand if possible. We estimate that about one-third of homebuyers in the project area will be assisted through deferred second mortgage loans.

Commercial Development

THE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The commercial component of the 24th Street Corridor envisions pedestrian-oriented, village-scaled retailing, taking advantage of Creighton University, new transportation patterns that have increased traffic along Cuming Street, and the local North Omaha market. New development combined with the existing projects will produce an attractive, market-driven supply of commercial space. The 24th Street concept also strengthens the connection of Long School Marketplace and the 24th and Lake street area to Creighton and Downtown. Features of the commercial component include:

- **The Retail Village,** using an existing commercial site and a substantial portion of the Metro Area Transit parking lot at 24th and Cuming. The project provides about 25,000 square feet of new retail space. Buildings are located along 24th Street, with sidewalks that connect directly to the street. Parking is located between buildings, and landscaping and pedestrian connections are designed to make walking from one building to another pleasant and comfortable. The Retail Village's design should be consistent with the urban residential character of 24th Street. Plazas, clear crosswalks, and streetscape features at the four corners of 24th and Cuming should mark the project as a gateway to North Omaha and visually connect the Village to the Creighton University campus. Well-defined crosswalks and a possible pedestrian signal will also encourage pedestrians to cross 24th Street between the Retail Village and the Kellom Heights Shopping Center.



24th and Cuming Looking North

A proposed Creighton University project on the southeast corner of 24th and Cuming may house campus security offices and include a node for intra-campus transit. This project strongly supports the Retail Village concept and its design should reflect the status of 24th and Cuming as the intersection of campus and community.

The Retail Village design must replace lost Metro Area Transit parking to meet MAT's requirements. Parking for MAT's mechanical and maintenance staff would be replaced north of Nicholas Street. Parking for bus operators is planned adjacent to the MAT building, southeast of 24th and Nicholas, and (in cooperation with Creighton University) south or east of the MAT building. In addition, MAT circulation must be separated from the shopping center, and MAT's loading dock must remain accessible. The site development concept satisfies these requirements. Existing commercial occupants at 24th and Cuming would be integrated into the new project.

- **Long School Marketplace.** A second phase of this recent commercial center would be developed, with buildings located along and facing Hamilton Street and 24th Street. This later development stage, made more feasible by surrounding residential growth, will connect the existing strip building to 24th Street.
- **Commercial rehabilitation.** Several distinctive older commercial buildings along 24th Street should be rehabilitated in historically appropriate ways. These buildings reinforce the urban character of the street and in several cases house traditional businesses that are part of the story and life of North Omaha . . . the Omaha Star, Skeet's, the Fair Deal, and others.
- **Other new commercial development.** New commercial buildings may be integrated into townhouse blocks along 24th Street, as demand presents itself. The northeast corner of 24th and Lake, now part of the Business and Technology Center's parking lot, provides another possible small commercial site.

The completed plan anticipates about \$5.6 million in commercial building investment, excluding acquisition, streetscape, or other site related costs.

THE IMPLEMENTATION CONCEPT

The experience of neighboring businesses, traffic on Cuming Street, market research, and interviews with retailers all give us confidence that these retail concepts can work on 24th Street. The problem is ultimately the cost of space – the rents required to finance new construction are higher than potential tenants can afford to pay. Commercial projects must be financed so that young or growing enterprises can invest their resources



Retail Village

in ways that build their business – marketing, inventory, and operations – and not on rent. The implementation concept addresses this need in the following ways:

- **Retail Village Financing Program.** The Retail Village project must provide front end financing so that tenants are only responsible for occupancy costs during their growth period. We recommend a “patient” financing program assembled by the North Omaha Development Project. Rents may eventually rise to retire debt as businesses become established and their ability to afford space increases. A revenue-sharing program may be implemented that increases rents as business increases. This approach to incubating a young business district has a very successful precedent in Omaha's Old Market. Mercer Management's

long-standing Old Market lease program establishes a monthly base rent to cover reasonable operating costs. This base rent is then multiplied by a factor that establishes a basic gross sales level. The retail tenant pays a fixed percentage of any revenue over that basic sales level. A combination of retail revenue sharing, increased capacity to pay rent, and other financial incentives could repay at least a significant portion of initial project cost over time. Site preparation, including relocating MAT's parking and property acquisition, must also be covered by the project.

- **Long School Marketplace.** Lease-up of Long School Marketplace has been slowed by rents that exceed the ability or willingness of prospective tenants to pay. Financial arrangements to reduce rent structure

24th Street Streetscape Plan

will reduce this problem. Residential development on surrounding blocks and the development of the Retail Village north from 24th and Cuming will also help the project by reducing its isolation, linking it more effectively to Cuming Street, and increasing the size of the resident market. Additional resources can complete the Marketplace, improve the center's street frontage, and market to new clients, including retailers, offices, and medical services.

The Public Realm

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The public environment is the third part of the 24th Street Corridor plan. The City of Omaha retained EDAW, Inc. to develop a streetscape master plan for the 24th Street corridor, and the project's first segment, between Grant and Ohio Streets, is complete. The streetscape, which should continue to Cuming Street, provides features that make the 24th Street environment more appealing and secure, links adjacent development together, and celebrates 24th Street's musical history. Elements of the public realm concept include:

- **24th Street Streetscape.** The 24th Street streetscape program would be completed from Cuming to Ohio, as proposed by the city's master plan. The project should also include a four corners plaza concept at 24th and Cuming with vertical gateway and lighting elements to mark the intersection as the gateway to both Creighton University and North Omaha. Clear crosswalks, using a contrasting paving surface, should be established at key pedestrian crossings along 24th Street.
- **Lake Street Enhancement.** Improving the Lake Street environment between the North Freeway and 24th Street would provide a front door for people enter-



Lake Street today between the North Freeway & 24th Street today



The Future Lake Street in the same area

ing the 24th and Lake area from the North Freeway interchange. Enhancements to the street right-of-way should include a thematic gateway feature at the interchange, upgraded sidewalks, street landscaping, and lighting.

- **Residential Gardens.** As part of the design of urban homes along 24th Street, a small setback with porches will provide places for gardens. This will add vitality and a personal touch to the street, and provide a buffer between the street and the private home.

LIGHT RAIL AND DEVELOPMENT: DENVER'S FIVE POINTS NEIGHBORHOOD

Denver's Five Points neighborhood, which had visibly declined over the past several decades, is gradually becoming more prosperous and safer. The major reason for the transformation, according to developers and residents of this African-American and Hispanic community, is the extension of Denver's light-rail transit system which during the day shuttles thousands of commuters to downtown business locations and at night brings residents from throughout the city to experience its rich cultural arts and nightclub venues.

Five Points displays many of the attributes of North Omaha's 24th and Lake Neighborhood - it is the historic center of Denver's African-American community, it was once the great jazz mecca of the West, and like North Omaha, it was one of Denver's first residential neighborhoods. Prior to its current renaissance, Five Points experienced significant economic and social distress with many historic properties falling into disrepair and eventual abandonment.

In 1994 the Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD) extended its existing light-rail system to the 30th and Downing intersection, centrally located in the Five Points neighborhood. The effort focused investor attention on this end-of-the-line location in hopes of capturing the financial success realized by street-car subdivisions developed over a century ago. Due to the economic generator created by the light-rail system, the Five Points area is now witnessing a remarkable rebirth. New condominiums and apartments are sprinkled within a fabric of restored buildings housing theater, dance and musical performances. While there remain challenges for its long term success, the Five Points neighborhood offers affordable housing opportunities, convenient access and views of downtown Denver comparable to the popular LoDo area.





Martin Luther King Memorial

• **Transit and Streetcars.** The 24th Street concept creates a transit-oriented environment, and the design of the public realm should encourage use of public transportation. Omaha has discussed the possibility of developing a streetcar, with a starter system that would expand to the west and north. If such a system were built, we strongly recommend an early service along 24th Street to 24th and Lake. A streetcar should be seen as a development tool, rather than a response to a current transit demand. A streetcar would greatly benefit North Omaha development by:

- Making 24th Street an extension of Creighton and Downtown, greatly expanding the potential residential market for the corridor and accelerating its development.
- Creating a major fixed public asset on the corridor that builds investor confidence.
- Providing added security through regular observation – “eyes on the street” that increase the perception of safety.
- Adding a quality of life feature that enriches the street environment and improves access for residents.

The first phase of Denver’s light rail system included a segment from Downtown Denver to Five Points along Welton Street, a neighborhood and street very similar to North Omaha and 24th Street. The LRT extension has had a significant effect on development in the corridor, and demonstrated the role of light rail transit as a major development tool.

Heritage District

THE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The richness of 24th and Lake as a center for jazz and entertainment, and its status as the historic center of the African-American community makes it a natural north anchor for the 24th Street Corridor. Past city investment has already created a promising environment that can be further enhanced by several key projects. The 24th and Lake Heritage District includes:

- **The African-American History Museum and Theater Center.** This signature project would be located on the Grant to Willis block between 22nd and 24th Street. In common with the Museums at 18th and Vine in Kansas City, the project could include two distinct, but connected institutions – a renewed African-American Museum and a theater center that could be a new home for a company such as the renowned John Beasley Theater. The project would include a plaza at 24th and Grant, oriented to the intersection that also includes the Omaha Star building and Bryant Center. Parking would be developed to the east of the new Center, with a walkway to 22nd Street and the Hope Center for Kids. The site design also emphasizes a relationship to the historic Zion Baptist Church.
- **Programming for the Dreamland Plaza at 24th and Lizzie Robinson Avenue.** This square, just south of the new Family Housing Advisory Services building, could provide a home for both regular and special events, including a Saturday Market. More extensive programming and use of the space would add life to the entire 24th Street district.

- **New commercial development.** A new commercial building on the southwest corner of the Business and Technology Center would take advantage of a highly visible site and reduce the impact of the BTC's parking lot. The Webster Telephone Exchange Building, formerly housing the Great Plains Black Museum, would be reused, possibly for private or community offices. The building's listing on the National Register of Historic Places makes it eligible for tax credits that encourage private reinvestment.

THE IMPLEMENTATION CONCEPT

Funding for the Museum and Theater Center, like that of similar facilities, will depend heavily on private philanthropy. A fund-raising campaign should also establish an endowment to maintain the buildings and support operations. The project will also require an effective, business-oriented governance structure. Omaha's Heritage Services, which provides fund-raising and coordinated business administration for Joslyn Art Museum and the Western Heritage Museum, is a good model for cooperative management of this new North Omaha facility.

- | | |
|----|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Urban Housing |
| 2 | Long School Urban Infill |
| 3 | Museum & Theater Center |
| 4 | New Retail |
| 5 | Family Housing Advisory Service |
| 6 | Business & Technology Center |
| 7 | Jewell Building |
| 8 | Bryant Center |
| 9 | Dreamland Plaza |
| 10 | Love's Jazz & Arts Center |



Implementation Sequence

The following table presents an implementation and phasing program for the 24th Street Corridor Opportunity Center. Rather than specifying time periods, the schedule addresses sequences, identifying actions that should be accomplished in specific increments. The symbols indicate the increment during which each action, with related funding, occurs. The Greater Omaha Chamber and the North Omaha Development Project Committee will determine detailed implementation programs.



Saturday Market

TABLE 5.1: 24TH STREET CORRIDOR IMPLEMENTATION SEQUENCE

Project Component	Increment One: Short term	Increment Two: Medium Term	Increment Three: Long Term
Residential Redevelopment			
Site Acquisition and Preparation	◆		
Construction Financing Pool	◆	◆	◆
Home Equity Insurance		◆	◆
Homeowner Association Support		◆	◆
Second Mortgage Assistance	◆	◆	◆
Employer Assistance		◆	◆
Commercial Component			
Site Acquisition and Preparation	◆		
Parking Lot Relocation	◆		
Retail Village Capital Construction	◆	◆	
Long School Marketplace Stage 2		◆	
Public Realm			
24th Street Streetscape	◆	◆	◆
Lake Street Enhancement			◆
Streetcar			◆
Heritage District			
Site Acquisition and Prep	◆		
African-American Museum		◆	
Theater Center			◆
Endowment		◆	◆
Parking and Public Realm		◆	◆

24th Street Corridor: Action/Response Summary



24th Street Live/Work & Urban Housing



24th & Cuming Street Intersection

NODP Actions

Housing Development

- Land assembly
- Construction loan pool
- Market-rate incentives
- Mortgage financing

Commercial Development

- Site acquisition
- Patient project financing
- Marketing

Public Improvement Financing

Culture and Arts Development



Private Response

Housing Development

- 315 owner-occupied housing units

Commercial Development

- 25,000 square feet of new commercial
- \$5 million in annual retail sales

Job Creation

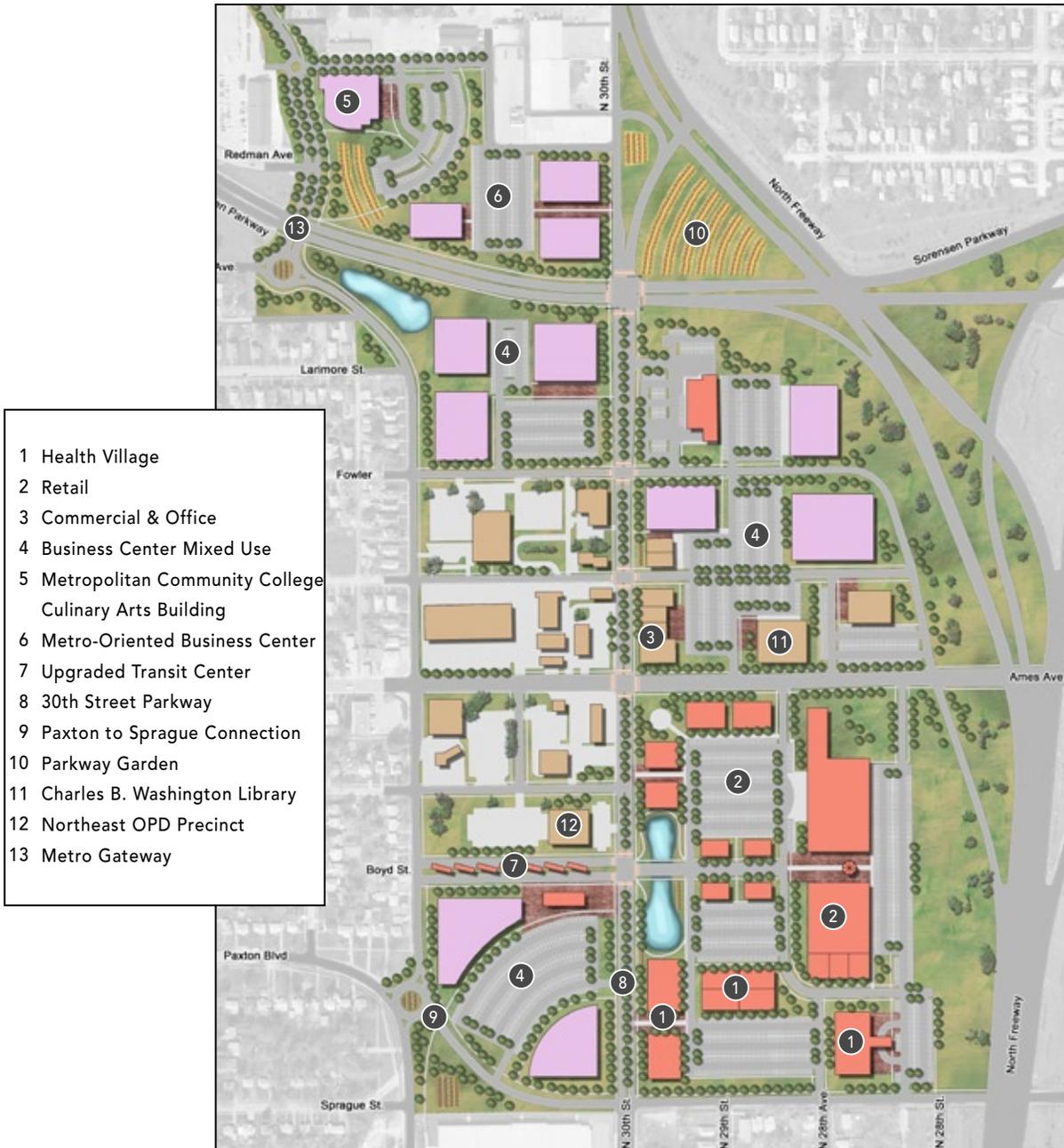
- 156 new jobs



Dreamland Plaza



24th Street Banners & Street Signs



- 1 Health Village
- 2 Retail
- 3 Commercial & Office
- 4 Business Center Mixed Use
- 5 Metropolitan Community College Culinary Arts Building
- 6 Metro-Oriented Business Center
- 7 Upgraded Transit Center
- 8 30th Street Parkway
- 9 Paxton to Sprague Connection
- 10 Parkway Garden
- 11 Charles B. Washington Library
- 12 Northeast OPD Precinct
- 13 Metro Gateway

30th and Ames/Metro South

The 30th and Ames/Metro South Development Opportunity Area, with its focus on business development, major retailing, and innovative health services, will be implemented by acquiring land, preparing sites, and building infrastructure. However, this process is more complicated than conventional “greenfield” development, because it involves redevelopment of land and redesign of existing infrastructure and streets. The 30th and Ames/Metro South concept has three major components: four high amenity business park sites near Metropolitan Community College, a community commercial center and health retail village, and supporting transportation improvements.

Business Parks

The four business parks can be developed separately and in sequence as demand requires. These sites include:

- **Site 1:** Existing commercial and light industrial sites on the northwest corner of 30th and Sorenson Parkway adjacent to the Metropolitan Community College. This strengthens Metro’s new Sorenson Parkway entrance and its planned Culinary Institute. This business park site would have access externally from 30th Street and internally from the Metro campus. A preliminary concept envisions up to three buildings, providing about 65,000 square feet on one level.
- **Site 2:** Existing residential area between Sorenson Parkway and Fowler Avenue, between 31st Avenue and 30th Street. Proposed building sites frame the

north and west sides of the site. Principal access is from Fowler and 30th Street. A water feature along Sorensen Parkway would enhance a new Metro link created by the revised 31st Avenue alignment. This site can accommodate up to three buildings, with a combined area of up to 100,000 square feet on one level.

- **Site 3:** Existing residential and vacant land north of Meredith Avenue and adjacent to the North Freeway. An internal road connection would serve this area by linking Meredith with the southbound on-ramp from Ames Avenue. This site concept accommodates three buildings with up to 100,000 square feet on one level.
- **Site 4:** Redevelopment of a vacant and industrial site between 30th and 31st Avenue from Sprague to Boyd Streets. This site is adjacent to the North Omaha Transit Center incorporates a potential trail that continues south along the abandoned Belt Line. Excellent transit access makes it a good site for office or other employee-intensive business development. The site accommodates two large footprint buildings, with a combined total of 73,000 square feet on one level.

The combination of the four sites yields buildings with a combined footprint of about 340,000 square feet. Development value of the sites, without equipment or finishes, is estimated at about \$23.7 million.

Implementation requires a process of land assembly, relocation, and infrastructure development. The four sites combined currently include about 78 housing units and about 11 acres of non-residential land.



Business Park Sites

Community Commercial

The major commercial project includes both a community commercial center with two anchor stores and the Medical Village, encompassing a variety of health-related services and retail uses. These two projects are designed to be fully connected, should reflect wellness themes, and include quality amenities. Features of the project include:

- **An entrance street**, lined with pad buildings, aligned with the North Omaha Transit Center. This gives transit users and buses good access to the center. The entrance drive crosses a pond to create a distinctive entrance and main street environment.
- **Internal parking lots**, wrapped by buildings. Large retail buildings are located within the site, backed up to the North Freeway, while smaller commercial buildings define the 30th and Ames edges. The retail buildings are sized to accommodate a medium-sized “big box” department store and supermarket.
- **The Health Village**, located on the south edge of the site, but with walkways and parking connected to the commercial center. An ambulatory surgical building is located to the east, with immediate freeway access.
- **Walkways that connect all buildings throughout the project**, designed to minimize conflict with automobile traffic.

The community commercial/health village concept yields between 170,000 and 220,000 square feet of retail space and 50,000 square feet in the Health Village. Total improvement construction value ranges from \$24.2 million to \$27.5 million. Implementation re-



Potential 30th & Ames/Metro South - Looking Northwest

quires site acquisition and preparation and infrastructure development. The site includes about 21 acres of primarily commercial, industrial, and vacant property. The concept also proposes upgrades to existing commercial buildings along 30th Street north of Ames and Ames between 30th and 31st Avenue.

Transportation and Public Realm Improvements

Significant changes in the street and transit environment support the 30th and Ames concept by improving both access to sites and the design quality. The overall project seeks to create a retail and business park environment competitive with any other available in the metropolitan area. Specific projects include:

- **30th Street Parkway.** Thirtieth Street between Sprague and Sorensen Parkway would become a divided, urban parkway, with landscaped median,



30th & Ames McDonalds

street trees, thematic street lighting and streetscape features. The parkway would strengthen the image of the entire development area.

- **Metro Gateway.** Metro's new south entrance would be continued through a new Sorensen Parkway intersection to a roundabout that connects to 31st Avenue and Grand Avenue. This gateway link continues south as an improved 31st Avenue, connecting Metro to the business parks, Creighton Boulevard, and Adams Park.
- **Paxton/Sprague Connection.** The current intersections of 31st Avenue, Sprague Street, Creighton Boulevard, and Paxton Boulevard would be redesigned as a roundabout connecting Paxton Boulevard and Sprague Street. This produces a continuous street connection between Fontenelle Boulevard and 16th Street, resulting in much better access from the west side of the study area to the 30th and Ames area. This, in turn, makes the new center very easy to reach from most of its market area.



30th & Ames Transit Center

- Transit Center Upgrades and Route Improvements.** Metro Area Transit should upgrade the North Omaha Transit Center to the contemporary standards of its new facilities such as Westroads and Benson Park. MAT should also consider new technologies, such as “next bus” electronic notification boards. An upgraded North Omaha Transit Center should also form the base for new services, including counterflow express- es to west Omaha job centers, and service routes, discussed later in this chapter.
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Access.** Connections should be made to existing and potential trails serving the 30th and Ames area to create a model for excellent non-motorized access. Good trail access also reinforces the themes of healthy living and wellness that are present in many of the North Omaha Development Project’s recommendations. The area is served by the existing Creighton/Paxton Boulevard Trail and a po-

TABLE 5.2: 30TH AND AMES/METRO SOUTH IMPLEMENTATION SEQUENCE

Project Component	Increment One: Short term	Increment Two: Medium Term	Increment Three: Long Term
Business Park			
Land Acquisition/Preparation	◆	◆	
Infrastructure		◆	◆
Commercial			
Land Acquisition/Preparation	◆		
Infrastructure	◆	◆	
Public Realm			
30-Ames Parkway		◆	
Metro Gateway		◆	
Paxton/Sprague Connection			◆
North Omaha Transit Center		◆	◆
Pedestrian/Bike Access		◆	◆

tential Belt Line Trail to Adams Park and the Medical Center area. 31st Avenue should be wide enough to accommodate bicycle lanes from these trails to Metro Community College. An improved Sprague Street should also provide standard sidewalks and bicycle lanes that connect to Boyd Field, Levi Carter Park, and the Riverfront Trail.

Implementation Sequence

The following table presents an implementation and phasing process for the 30th and Ames/Metro South Development Opportunity Area. As discussed earlier, the table presents the sequence in which each proposed action, with related funding, is accomplished.



Business Park Redevelopment in Denver’s Five Points Area

30th and Ames/Metro South: Action/Response Summary



Commercial at 30th & Ames



Commercial development in Denver's Stapleton area

NODP Actions

Business Park Development

- Land assembly
- Site development and infrastructure

Commercial Development

- Land assembly
- Site development and infrastructure

Transportation Improvements



Private Response

Business Park Development

- 340,000 square feet of building area
- 1,700 jobs

Commercial Development

- 220,000 square feet of new commercial
- \$30 million in annual retail sales
- 600 new jobs



30th & Sprague looking north

Adams Park

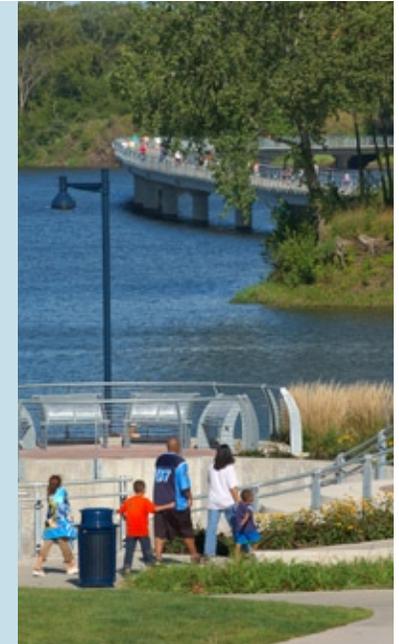
The Development Concept

The development of Adams Park will change the landscape to create a “Central Park” for North Omaha. The process of creating a great place for North Omaha and the rest of the city will:

- **Acquire property to open the park to surrounding streets: 30th Street on the east and Maple Street on the south.** The park must be visible from its perimeter streets, requiring acquisition of property along 30th Street and a row of houses along the north side of Maple Street. Homeowners could be relocated to new homes programmed for the Miami Heights subdivision, immediately south of the park. The park expansion should also include the abandoned Belt Line railbed.
- **Resculpt the land.** This removes most of the hill that now makes much of the parkland unusable for recreation. This hill rises in two steep slopes, divided by a ledge that was once the switchback roadbed of John Creighton Boulevard. With re-grading, Adams Park Community Center would command a promontory overlooking much of the rest of the open space, and most of the park will be at about the same level as neighboring Bedford Avenue. This also makes most of the park’s large open space visible from 30th Street, although slightly above the street grade.

GRAY’S LAKE: CREATING A “CENTRAL PARK” FOR DES MOINES

Gray’s Lake Park in Des Moines is an excellent example of how an underused open space was reclaimed to create a great place for the entire city. The original lake was a small oxbow, caused by a change in course of the Raccoon River. Sand and gravel mining operations increased the size of the lake to about 100 acres. Various plans for city ownership of the lake were developed over the years, but none were realized. Some of the site was developed for a motel, and in 1970, a federal grant and matching private funds raised money to purchase most of the rest of the site as a city park. However, the park received little public use. The historic floods of 1993 destroyed the motel, leaving only the partially demolished building. In 1998, the city received a major charitable gift to build a trail along the lake and the Weitz Corporation, who owned about one-third of the lake, donated this land to the city. These actions began a major community campaign to redevelop Gray’s Lake for public use. The completed park has become a magnet for people from all over the metropolitan area and has become Des Moines’ “Place to Meet.” The park’s signature feature is its colorfully lighted, ¼ mile pedestrian bridge. The lake offers a variety of recreational activities, including a two-mile trail connected to the rest of the city’s trail system, paddle boats, hydrobike rentals, canoe rentals, fishing, and a swimming beach.



ADAMS PARK AND MALCOM X BIRTHSITE CONCEPT

- 1 Malcolm X Birthsite
- 2 Single-Family Residential
- 3 Recreation Fields
- 4 Adams Recreation Lake
- 5 Community Center
- 6 Water Playground
- 7 Kennedy School
- 8 Observation Area



- **Extend neighborhood streets into the park.** Most of Adams Park today has no street access, and increased public use depends on people being able to get to its interior. Proposed extensions include a Belt Line Parkway from 36th and Bedford south along the Belt Line to Maple Street, continuing south to Lake Street, a park access loop that connects Wirt Street and 34th Street, and a Spencer Street link to the Belt Line Parkway. On the southeast corner of the park, 31st Street could also be extended to intersect Creighton Boulevard. This access plan completely eliminates dead-ends in the park and the surrounding neighborhood, creating a secure environment and providing sites for new housing.
- **Integrate Adams Park with the Malcolm X Birthsite.** Unifying Adams Park and Malcolm X Birthsite into a combined open space project creates a facility of nationwide importance and expands the exposure and use of the Malcolm X site. A pathway system should connect the two parks with a grade separated crossing, and the projects should be developed together.
- **Include signature features.** The reborn Adams Park should be a common space for the whole city, not just North Omaha. Like the 24th and Lake Cultural District, Adams Park should break down the separation that exists between North Omaha and the rest of the city. This can be done by including special features that attract users from around the city, producing a park for all Omahans.
- **Emphasize community wellness features.** Several organizations in Omaha, including Alegent Health, Our Healthy Community Partnership, and Healthy

Omaha are placing a high emphasis on community wellness and healthy lifestyles for youth. A remade Adams Park should incorporate features that promote wellness and fitness, including trails, places for informal recreation, and facilities for active recreation. This complements other health and wellness related projects in this plan.

- **Surround the park with housing.** Creating and developing housing sites around the park takes advantage of the demonstrated development potential of a high quality open space and increases the park's security by making it part of a neighborhood landscape and placing "eyes" on the park. The transformation of Adams Park will accelerate the development of the adjacent Miami Heights development and promote the reuse of the many vacant lots around the park.
- **Create a development corridor that links Adams Park to the rest of the city.** The Belt Line corridor, incorporated into the expanded Adams Park, can be part of a greenway and parkway system that connects 30th and Ames and Levi Carter Park on the northeast with Midtown and UNMC to the southwest. This greenway could also be connected to proposed street and open space improvements along Saddle Creek Road, under study as part of the Destination Midtown program. This connected system would also create a spine for residential development, using open space, trails, and some new road segments to promote major economic and residential development on vacant or blighted sites along the way.



Possible Lake and Trail Feature at Adams Park

Park Programming

A process that involves the community in programming this unique open space opportunity is an important part of the Adams Park/Malcolm X Birthsite development. This plan illustrates one concept, with a lake as a signature feature. The park also includes a lakeside promenade, activities center, fishing, rowing and kayaking, and swimming. Des Moines' Gray's Lake Park displays the impact that a heavily used water feature can have in turning a lightly used open space into a major community asset. (See sidebar: Gray's Lake: Creating a "Central Park" For Des Moines)

The Adams Park concept illustrated here also includes playing fields, multi-use open space, gardens, picnic areas, children's water playground, and other features, and makes neighboring Howard Kennedy School an important part of the park environment. This idea is presented only to show possibilities; a number of other ideas will inevitably grow from a successful park planning process.

The Implementation Concept

Funding for Adams Park and the Malcolm X Birthsite is likely to come from a combination of public and private sources. Association of the Malcolm X site with a major public park can open new avenues for private and charitable fund-raising. A wellness emphasis, combined with neighborhood development in a low-income neighborhood, can also open funding possibilities from national foundations such as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, with its focus on national health issues. Other charitable funding, combined with traditional sources like city park bond issues and transportation enhancement funds for road and trail development, can help put the bulk of necessary financing in place.

An implementation sequence for the Adams Park project follows:

TABLE 5.3: ADAMS PARK IMPLEMENTATION SEQUENCE

Project Component	Increment One: Short term	Increment Two: Medium Term	Increment Three: Long Term
Property Acquisition	◆		
Park Programming and Master Plan	◆		
Land Re-grading		◆	
Street Extensions		◆	
Adams Park Development		◆	◆
Malcolm X Birthsite Development		◆	
Residential Development			◆
Trail Extensions			◆

Adams Park: Action/Response Summary



Base of the hill at Adams Park

16th and Cuming West

The Development Concept

The 16th and Cuming West development opportunity area touches the 24th Street Corridor, Creighton University, and the North Downtown (NoDo) District, and is affected by contradictory forces and land uses, ranging from services to the homeless, salvage yards, new single family houses, older industries, Creighton, Kel-lom School, and the Educare child development center. The proposed new baseball stadium north of the, Qwest Center and Creighton's recently announced Ryan Athletics Center and D.J. Sokol Arena will add to the development potential of the Cuming corridor. The 16th and Cuming West concept seeks to resolve these conflicts with strategies for five subareas: the Cuming corridor, the Human Services Campus, an industrial buffer, a residential district, and expansion of the Kel-lom/Educare campus. The concept also proposes significant changes in the area's street system to support these strategies.

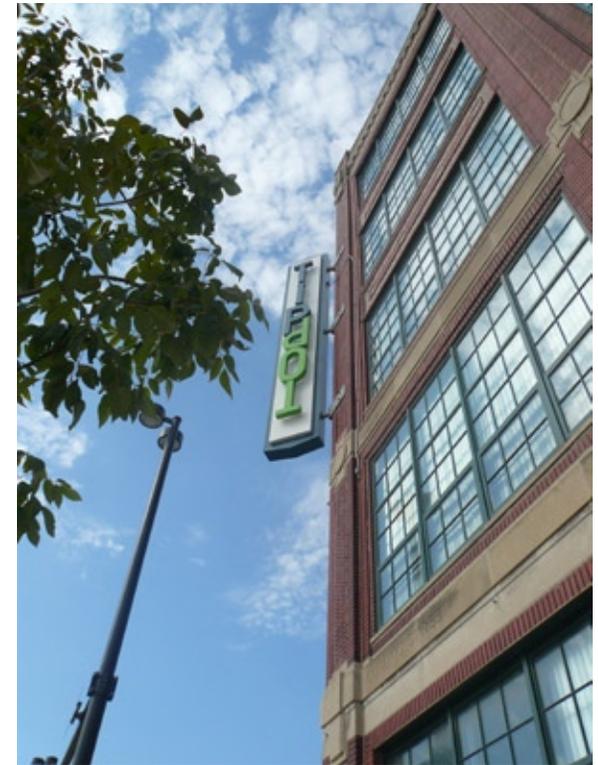
THE CUMING CORRIDOR

The private sector will be very active along the Cuming corridor, with its adjacency to the Creighton campus and current development in NoDo east of 16th Street. The corridor concept provides guidance for private development, and has two specific areas of focus: "NoDo West", between 16th and 18th Street, and "Cuming Quads," from Florence Boulevard to 21st Street, including the Modern Equipment Company. The NoDo West blocks would continue the development pattern established by the Tip-Top building, creating a mini-district that:

- Reuses the Bloom Monument building and former Fire Station, for commercial redevelopment; and the Fitzgerald Hotel for housing.
- Develops new multi-family development west and north of the Tip-Top Building, giving a neighborhood context.
- Preserves the historic Holy Family Church, which receives new emphasis as a neighborhood anchor.
- Enhances 16th Street as a parkway between Cuming and Nicholas Street, strengthening the street's role as a downtown gateway and supporting adjacent new development.

Cuming Quads, west of Florence Boulevard, envisions mixed use private redevelopment that includes:

- Apartment blocks oriented to the campus community, in a quadrangle design that features covered parking, street definition, and private interior courtyards. Corners of quadrangle buildings could accommodate commercial mixed uses depending on market demands.
- Shared Creighton and MAT parking on part of the Modern Equipment property. The Retail Village proposed as a key part of the 24th and Cuming corridor requires availability of about 60 stalls, using some combination of existing Creighton parking immediately south of MAT or new parking on the Modern Equipment property just east of the MAT building.
- Street landscaping along Florence Boulevard, 20th Street, and Izard Street to create a unified apartment neighborhood with residential scale.



Tip Top at 16th & Cuming



20th & Nicholas

THE HUMAN SERVICES CAMPUS

This key concept recognizes both the critical need for services to the homeless and other people in need furnished by Siena/Francis House and the Campus for Hope, and the impact that these uses have on existing and prospective businesses and residents. We believe that a project can be created that respects the dignity and humanity of people served by these institutions, addresses the effects that a concentration of homeless people have on surrounding properties, and improves the neighborhood environment. The Human Services Campus concept:

- Creates a larger campus with subtly but strongly defined boundaries, containing all the spaces and features that clients need, including quality green space and recreational facilities. The campus would acquire blighted salvage yards along 16th Street north of Cuming Street; and deteriorating industrial buildings on the south side of Nicholas Street. A landscaped wall would define the south, west, and north edges of the campus; the wall's design would read as an amenity and site feature rather than a barrier.
- Extends Charles Street to 16th Street and realigns the street to the north, incorporating part of the existing Kellom Greenway as an internal green space for the Human Services Campus. The greenway is now used largely by Siena/Francis House clients.
- Creates a main campus entrance on Nicholas Street and establishes a campus circulation loop with access off 16th Street. Nicholas Street would provide local access to the Campus only and would not extend as a through street west of 16th Street.



Siena Francis House



Bloom Monument Building

- Builds several new projects within the Campus, including two building sites on either side of the entrance circle off Nicholas Street; an industrial rehabilitation building providing a place for productive work and training for Siena/Francis House clients connected to the Barright Shelter; up to 18 units of transitional housing; an "Empowerment Center," providing additional service and training facilities north of the Siena/Francis House building; three new pavilion modules for the Campus for Hope; and additional parking.

INDUSTRIAL BUFFER

The 16th and Cuming West area has a number of solid commercial and industrial uses, and these stable businesses, offering both economic strength and jobs, should remain in the area. New light industrial buildings can both wrap the Human Services Campus, buffering it from nearby residential and civic uses; and create more business and employment opportunities. These sites line 18th Street's east side and occupy other sites on the east side of Florence Boulevard between the Airlite Plastics and Industrial Plating buildings.

RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

The Charles Square single-family development has extended new housing along 20th Street south to Paul Street. Single-family development will be major part of development in the 16th and Cuming West area and should eventually extend between Charles and Clark Street east to 16th Street. Public improvements to support residential development would:

- Change the character of 20th Street and Florence Boulevard by converting the street to two-way circulation (see transportation recommendations below).
- Create a new urban open space, Nicholas Green, as part of the street redesign. This public space could be surrounded by new homes, and would ease the transition between residential and non-residential uses.
- Reconnect Charles Street to 16th Street on an alignment that provides an internal open space for the Human Services Campus and a buffer for future residential growth.



- 1 Tip Top West Residential
- 2 Bloom Monument Building
- 3 Cuming Quads Residential
- 4 16th St. Boulevard
- 5 New Apartments
- 6 Firehouse Cafe
- 7 Fitzgerald Apartments
- 8 Human Services Campus
- 9 Siena Francis House
- 10 Industrial Rehabilitation Center
- 11 Human Services Campus Expansion
- 12 Human Services Empowerment Center
- 13 Community Green
- 14 Transitional Housing
- 15 Expanded Parking
- 16 Campus of Hope Expansion
- 17 Extended Charles Street
- 18 Light Industrial Transitional Area
- 19 Nicholas Square
- 20 Youth Development Center
- 21 Current Tip Top Apartments

KELLOM/EDUCARE CAMPUS

This important campus, now including an elementary school and an innovative child development center, could be expanded to 20th Street. This would allow an expansion of the campus to include a new educational and youth development concept, along with a soccer field and expanded open space. The site is large enough to accommodate a building footprint of about 60,000 square feet, a soccer field, and shared parking with Educare. Several historic Omaha school district buildings on the north side of Nicholas could be incorporated into the architectural design of a new project.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

Transportation changes that would support the 16th and Cuming West development concept would:

- Convert Florence Boulevard and 20th Street to two-way circulation north of Paul Street. This, accompanied by a street landscaping program, would give these two streets a more residential character north of Paul and Charles Streets. The two streets would transition to one-way traffic south of Nicholas, creating “Nicholas Green,” a high-quality, small urban open space that would help residential and industrial uses co-exist.
- Connect 18th Street and Paul Street, providing better street connections.
- Change Nicholas Street from a through street to the primary entrance to the Human Services Campus.

16TH STREET CORRIDOR

While not specifically part of the 16th and Cuming West development area, the rest of the 16th Street corridor is an important element of overall North Omaha policy. The Human Services Campus concept would redevelop salvage yards on the west side of the street, an important improvement. However, the ConAgra grain elevator and the former Storz Brewery, now used for auto salvage, present considerable challenges. We recommend:

- Street landscaping along the 16th Street corridor north from Nicholas Street.
- Painting and improving the appearance of the ConAgra elevator.
- Continued multi-family infill and new construction north of Clark Street. This reinforces Omaha Housing Authority’s Ernie Chambers Court and re-establishes the historic apartment character of the one-time Sherman Avenue to Lake Street.
- Property improvements and rehabilitation for viable commercial businesses at 16th and Locust, a commercial cluster that can serve both the eastern part of North Omaha and the Carter Lake, Iowa market; and removal of blighted buildings, holding vacant land for future development.



Educare

Implementation Concepts

Each component of the 16th and Cuming West development opportunity area may develop independently and with its own funding source:

- *The Cuming Corridor* is likely to develop on the private market, propelled by growth in NoDo, the prospect of a new Downtown ballpark, and Creighton University’s continued investment and campus expansion across the street. Assistance may be needed with land assembly and “conventional” incentives like Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
- *The Human Services Campus and Kellom/Educare campus expansion* will probably be supported by charitable contributions and grants. City assistance may be necessary for land assembly and street vacations and redesign.
- *The Industrial Buffer* will follow the model of the 30th and Ames/Metro South business parks, assembling land that is in most cases blighted and offering the

land for redevelopment. TIF and other incentives should be available to assist with redevelopment.

- *Single-family residential development* should use the same implementation structure recommended for the 24th Street Corridor, including land assembly, construction financing, market-rate incentives, and second mortgage loans.

- *Transportation improvements* will use city transportation bonds and federal aid for the Florence Boulevard/20th Street modifications; and project-related funding for other relatively small-scale changes.

Table 5.4 presents an implementation sequence for the 16th and Cuming development area.

TABLE 5.4: 16TH AND CUMING WEST IMPLEMENTATION SEQUENCE

Project Component	Increment One: Short term	Increment Two: Medium Term	Increment Three: Long Term
Cuming Corridor			
Private Development	◆	◆	
16 th Street Enhancement		◆	
Shared Parking for MAT and Creighton	◆		
Human Services Campus			
Land Acquisition	◆		
Facility Development	◆	◆	◆
Street Redesign	◆		
Industrial Buffer			
Site Acquisition and Preparation		◆	
Building Development		◆	◆
Residential Development			
Site Acquisition and Preparation		◆	
Development		◆	◆
Site Acquisition and Prep			
Kellom Campus			
Site Acquisition and Preparation	◆		
Development	◆	◆	



Campus for Hope



Charles Square

16th and Cuming West: Action/Response Summary



16th & Cuming West



Business around 16th & Cuming

NODP Actions

Housing Development

- Production incentives

Facility Funding

Industrial Development

- Site Assembly

Transportation Improvements



Private Response

Housing Development

- 232 new units

Commercial Development

- 20,000 square feet of new commercial
- \$4,000,000 in annual sales
- 50 jobs

Human Services Campus



Holy Family Church

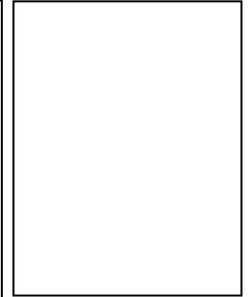
Better Access for North Omaha: An Improved Transportation System

The detailed concepts for the four development opportunity areas included transportation-related improvements. These are part of a balanced transportation framework that over time will improve access for residents and businesses by streets, public transportation, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

The Street System

Despite a web of local streets, collectors, and arterials, North Omaha has serious street connection problems. These include:

- Poor east-west connections.
- Poor local circulation through the center of the neighborhood, where the abandoned belt line corridor and topography interrupt the street grid.
- Barriers to easy movement, including the North Freeway and the abandoned belt line, that limits the number of through streets and intra-neighborhood connections.
- Congestion at the 30th and Ames intersection.
- Some streets with more traffic capacity than needed, including 30th Street and the one-way segments of Florence Boulevard and 20th Street. These issues result in streets that do not fit their contexts and encourage excessive speeds.





Cuming Street now



Cuming Street as a Green Street (Omaha Green Streets Master Plan)

The plan proposes several street projects that address these problems, including:

- **Two new east-west collectors, including Sprague/Paxton Boulevard connecting 16th Street and Fontenelle Boulevard; and Lake/Grant/Military between 16th Street and the Northwest Radial.** As discussed above, the Sprague/Paxton connection is created by redesigning the Creighton/Paxton/31st Avenue/Sprague Street intersections into a single roundabout. Sprague Street, which crosses the North Freeway with an overpass, should be upgraded to collector standards, and should also include bicycle lanes which could connect to Levi Carter Park and the Riverfront Trail.

The second east-west collector, the Lake/Grant/Military connection, uses Lake Street between 16th and 40th Street. At 40th, the concept follows the belt line right-of-way to Grant Street, and continues along Grant to a redesigned 45th and Military intersection. The route then uses Military Avenue to connect to the Northwest Radial. Lake from 40th to 45th would become a local street. Grant Street would be upgraded to satisfy its new role, while maintaining a residen-

tial street character. The connection should comply with “complete (or multi-modal) street” standards, including continuous sidewalks and bicycle lanes. In addition to improving transportation, this project, combined with local street connections discussed below, opens many currently blighted areas for new development.

- **A new circulation system in the center of the neighborhood that restores local street connections, removes dead ends, and creates a number of new development sites in the center of the study area, near 40th and Lake.** This “Orchard Center” concept, illustrated in this chapter, extends the local street network through areas that are now inaccessible and, consequently, unused or blighted. In addition to the Lake/Grant connection, this proposed system:
 - Converts portions of the Belt Line Railroad to a landscaped local parkway with a parallel trail. The parkway sections would extend from Bedford Avenue along the edge of Adams Park (see the Adams Park concept described above) to Lake Street; and from Grant Street to Military Avenue via Seward Street. The parkway would provide

frontage for new homes.

- Connects east-west local streets across the Belt Line Parkway, restoring connections through the neighborhood.
- **Bridge and right-of-way improvements at the North Freeway.** Hamilton Street, Lake Street, and Ames Avenue have interchanges over the North Freeway; Parker, Bristol, and Sprague Street have overpasses without access; and a pedestrian overpass crosses the freeway near Pratt Street. These very utilitarian overpasses should be upgraded to more contemporary standards with attractive railings, new lights, and improved and protected walkways. In the future, the city and State should also consider replacing the Pratt Street pedestrian crossing with a new “signature” overpass with high design quality. Des Moines’ pedestrian bridges built as part of its Interstate 235 reconstruction have been very successful both functionally and aesthetically.
- **Improvement of the 30th and Ames intersection with development.** The parkway upgrade of 30th Street, designed to complement quality business park and commercial development, would also im-

prove this key intersection with adequate turning movements and pedestrian accommodations.

- **Two-way conversions of Florence Boulevard and 20th Street from Ohio to Paul Street.** This change will reinforce these streets' residential context and calm traffic. Traffic along 20th and Florence Boulevard no longer warrants one-way traffic. The streets would convert to one way circulation between Nicholas and Paul, as illustrated by the 16th and Cuming West concept plan.

Green Streets

North Omaha includes major links in Omaha's historic boulevard system. Many of these once beautiful streets have lost their tree cover or have otherwise changed in character. These important and historic streets should be reforested and returned to their original role as parklike settings for both transportation and delight. To this end, North Omaha should feature a Green Streets Loop, made up primarily of the historic boulevard system and other new connections. This loop should include the Paxton Boulevard/Sprague Street collector, Fontenelle Boulevard, the Lake/Grant collector, John Creighton Boulevard, Florence Boulevard, and Carter Boulevard. Where possible, sidewalks should be set back to provide a tree lawn of at least eight feet, street trees should be re-established, and trails, continuous sidewalks, and bicycle lanes should be established according to a street design plan. In addition, Cuming Street on the south edge of the study area and Ames Avenue on the north side should be retrofitted as green streets. *Green Streets for Omaha*, the city's green streets master plan illustrates how Cuming can

be redesigned. This policy, implemented over time, will create stronger investment environments along these strategic corridors and create environments that make moving through North Omaha a distinct pleasure.

Public Transportation

North Omaha is Metro Area Transit's largest market and includes two of the city's three most heavily used bus routes. However, east-west mobility through the center of the neighborhood and access to major West Omaha job centers pose significant problems. Improvements to the North Omaha Transit Center are part of the 30th and Ames development, and a streetcar extension to 24th and Lake would have great benefits for the 24th Street Corridor. Other important public transportation initiatives include:

- *"Counterflow" expresses from North Omaha to major suburban job centers.* These express services could originate at the North Omaha Transit Center near 30th and Ames and the MAT garage at 24th and Cuming and operate in express mode. Their return trips would be used for center city-bound suburban commuters. MAT's Route 34 currently operates in this way, serving industries in the OIF corridor from the start of its route at the MAT garage.
- *Modified North Omaha local services*, such as Routes 5/35 and 3, to provide more direct east-west connections with service to community features.
- *Service routes within North Omaha designed to connect major destinations in North Omaha with people who need access.* Service routes may provide different services at different times of the day. For exam-



Lake Street Before



Lake Street After Improvements

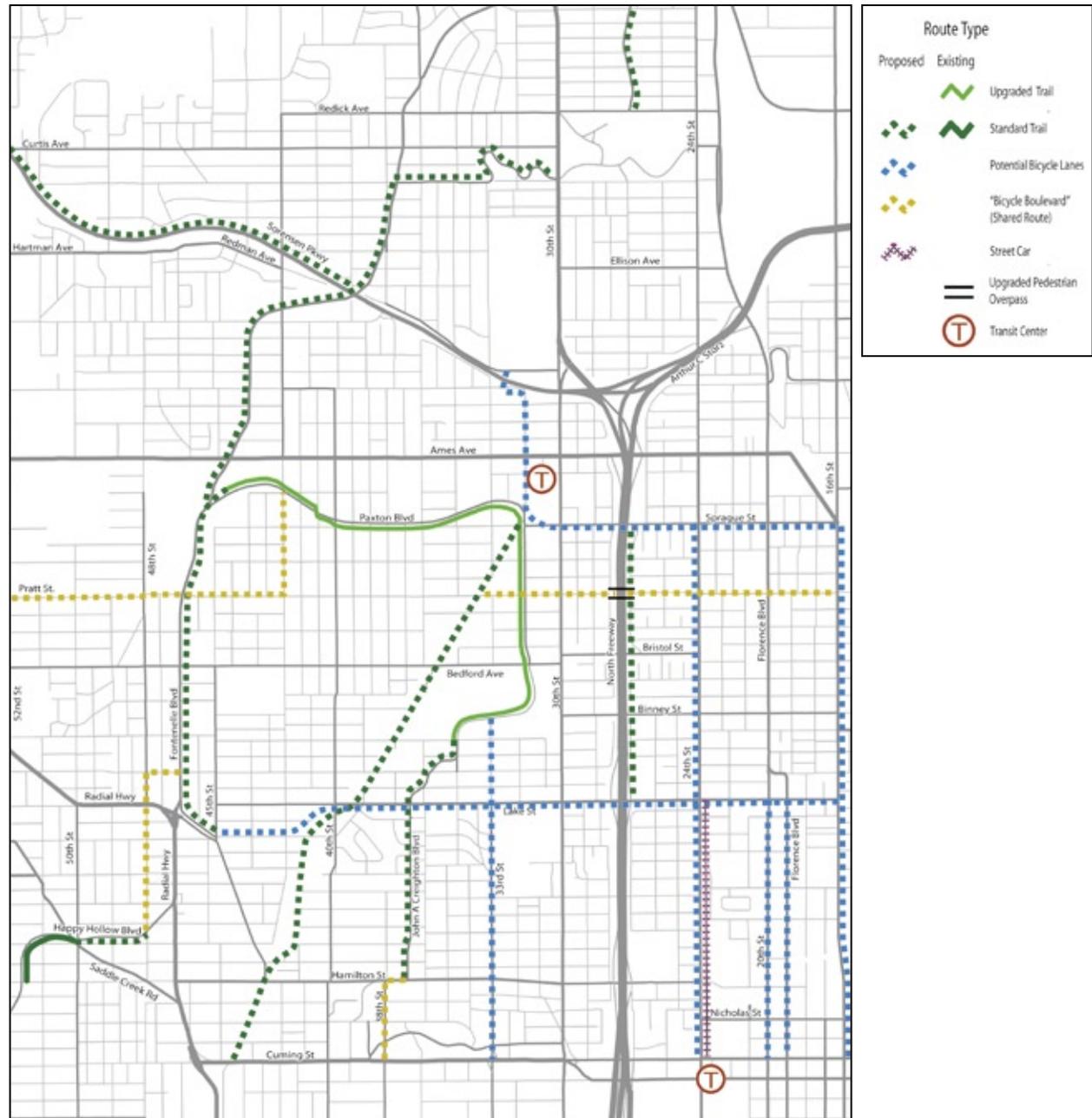
ple, a route during the middle of the day may transport seniors to medical and retail services, while a later afternoon route could use the same vehicle to carry young people from school to recreation centers and other after-school activities. Service routes should employ new technologies to provide more flexible and responsive services.

Trails and Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities

Multi-use trails, providing safe and attractive routes for pedestrians and bicyclists, have been very popular in Omaha but are scarce in North Omaha. A pathway was developed along Paxton and Creighton Boulevards between Fontenelle and Adams Park in the early 1980s, but it should be redesigned to contemporary standards. The City of Omaha also plans to extend the Boulevard Trail from 50th and Happy Hollow Boulevard to Fontenelle Park, although details of the route are not determined. Non-motorized access should be a part of North Omaha's transportation picture, and trails and pathways also have significant recreation and health benefit, consistent with the wellness themes of this plan. This plan proposes:

- Completing the Boulevard Trail from 50th and Happy Hollow to Fontenelle Park.
- Upgrading the existing Paxton and Creighton Boulevard Trails from Fontenelle to Adams Park.
- Developing a north-south trail along extra North Freeway property. Because of grades, the most accessible areas for trails and related open space improvements are between Lake and Sprague Streets.

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION



- An improved pedestrian overpass over the North Freeway at Pratt Street, replacing an existing structure.
- A true trail along Sorensen Parkway, along with connections along Fontenelle Boulevard to Miller Park and eventually to the Riverfront Trail. These links indicated on the Metro Area Trails Map.
- Bicycle lanes and good sidewalks along the Paxton/Sprague and Lake/Grant east-west collectors, upgrading these corridors to complete street standards.
- A Belt Line Trail with eventual residential development along the railroad corridor and completion of segments of the Belt Line Parkway. This trail and greenway will be a centerpiece for new residential development, but should be built only as new construction occurs. Eventually, this trail could link 30th and Ames, the Malcolm X/Adams Park complex, new neighborhoods, the Saddle Creek corridor, and UNMC.
- A connection from the Sprague Street bikeway at 16th Street to Boyd Park and Levi Carter Park via Cornish Boulevard.
- Bicycle lanes on north-south urban streets. The most likely candidates are streets with extra width that once accommodated streetcar lines. Candidates include 16th Street, 24th Street, 33rd Street south of Adams Park, and 40th/Hamilton/Military.
- Bicycle boulevards (marked on-street routes that provide crosstown continuity) along Pratt Street/Paxton Boulevard from Military Avenue near Benson Park to 16th Street; and 48th Street as a possible route for the Boulevard Trail connection.

Future Project Directions

This plan has focused on four development opportunity areas – areas that, if fully developed, would most effectively launch North Omaha on the path to a self-sustaining economy. It also proposes projects with special promise for the community. However, North Omaha has many other sites that will present major opportunities if the market grows. Some of these sites have less public exposure than the four opportunity centers; others will not become available until sometime in the future; and for still others, the market has yet to emerge. Yet, we must consider them in this discussion. Developers or property owners may have proposals for them, and they certainly will develop as the market grows. These “Stage 2” sites include:

- Pleasantview Homes/Highlanders
- The City of Omaha’s Public Works Facility
- The 24th and Ames area
- Spencer Homes
- Orchard Center
- The Belt Line Triangle
- Nebraska School for the Deaf campus
- 51st and Ames/Baker Place
- Fontenelle Park West

Pleasantview Homes/Highlanders. The Pleasantview Homes site, while highly important, will require a detailed development plan and a more mature market. A larger project area, roughly between the North Freeway and 30th Street from Cuming to Lake Street extends beyond Pleasantview Homes and the Charles Drew Health Center to include surrounding vacant lots. Omaha Housing Authority may choose to replace

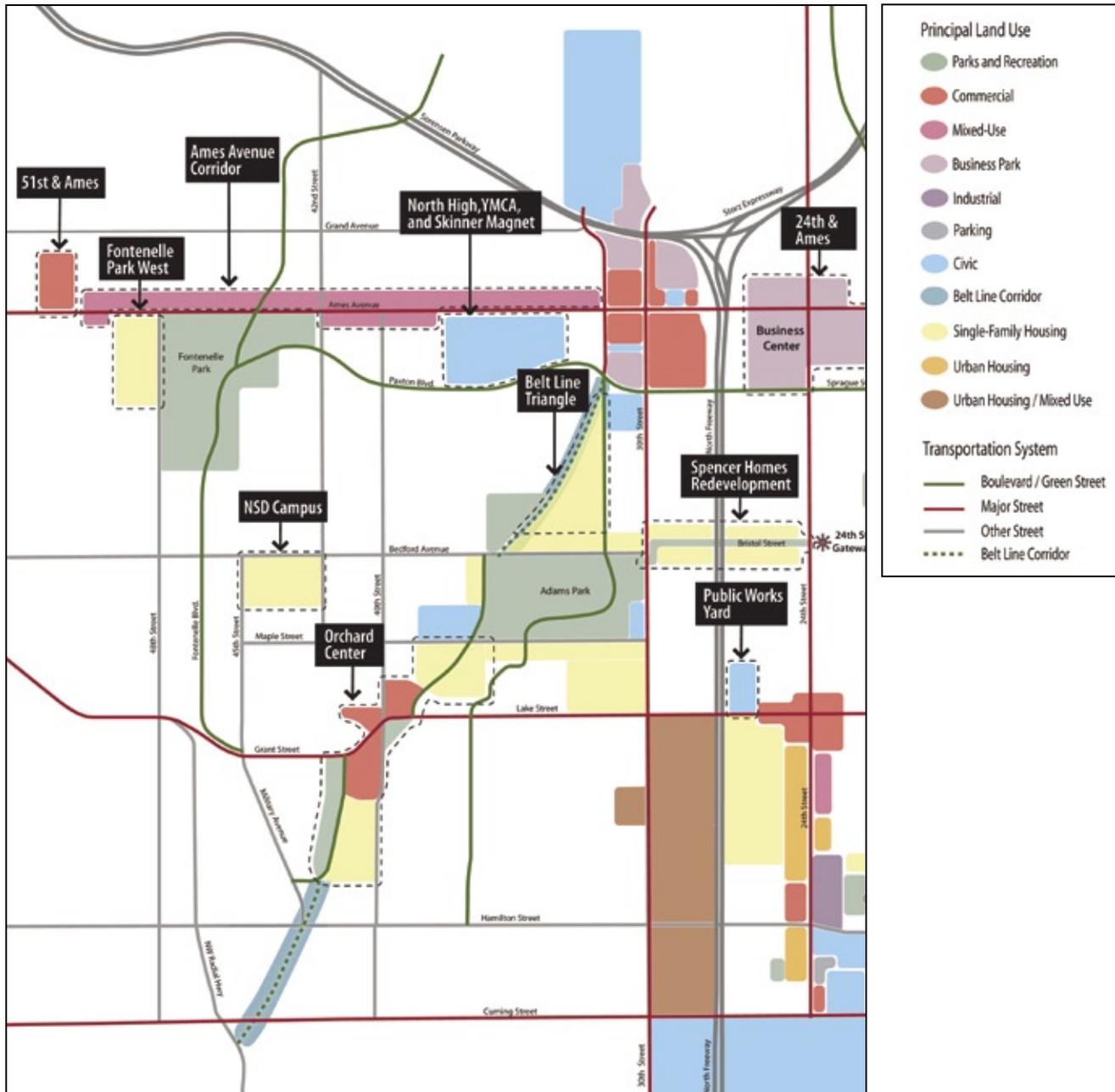


Paxton Boulevard



Pleasantview Homes

DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



Pleasantview with new housing on lower-density sites around the city, making the site, and adjacent land available for new uses. Private single-family development is already occurring north of Iazard Street along 28th Street; this is likely to continue in the south part of the area, encouraged by nearness to Creighton and Midtown and excellent views to the east. City policy that makes abandoned land available to private builders can help continue this desirable trend. Substantial large-scale uses, such as a senior living development or a major educational project, could accelerate redevelopment of the Pleasantview Homes site.

Public Works Yard. The Public Works maintenance yard, between 26th and the North Freeway, is a public use with industrial impact in a residential area that has many vacant lots. If the City moved the yard to a larger site, this strategic piece of land would become available for redevelopment. One suggested reuse is new, mixed density residential development with the possibility of commercial use along Lake Street, related to the North Freeway interchange. Commercial or office development could also take advantage of historic buildings on the site. Residential site development should also include assembly and new construction on vacant lots east of 26th Street. In the short-term, site landscaping along the Lake Street frontage would complement Lake Street enhancement, proposed as part of the 24th Street Corridor opportunity center.

24th and Ames. The 24th and Ames area extends from Sahler to Fowler from Florence Boulevard to the North Freeway. This largely industrial district originally developed along the Belt Line, but also includes commercial uses and a streetcar barn at the 24th and Ames

intersection. Continued industrial use in an upgraded setting is likely for the site, with more emphasis on manufacturing than at the smaller business parks in the 30th and Ames/Metro South area. Uses proposed in this district should minimize impact on adjacent residential areas.

Spencer Homes. The Spencer Homes development is divided by the North Freeway, and was modernized when the Freeway was built. In the future, the Omaha Housing Authority may replace this over 50 year old development. Spencer Homes could be redeveloped with new, mixed income housing, organized around a greenway that connects Adams Park to a gateway near 24th and Bristol. This linear park and green street would cross the North Freeway on an upgraded Bristol Street bridge.

Orchard Center. This Stage 2 concept proposes mixed use development of marginal industrial sites in the 40th and Lake area and new housing construction along the Belt Line corridor north and south of Lake Street. Orchard Center suggests a residential and greenway corridor between Adams Park and 42nd and Seward Streets, with neighborhood services or mixed use development near 40th and Lake. It grows from transportation improvements described earlier, including the Lake/Grant Connector, Belt Line Parkway, and improved east-west local street connections. A linear park would be developed between 42nd Street and the Belt Line Parkway from Seward to Grant, and the Belt Line Trail would link this development area to Adams Park.

Belt Line Triangle. This triangle, defined by Adams Park, the abandoned Belt Line right-of-way, and John



Public Works Yard



Lozier at 24th and Ames

ner Magnet civic cluster, Fontenelle Park, and Baker's Place. As development momentum builds, Ames Avenue should link nodes together with right-of-way enhancements, and mixed use development between 36th Street and Fontenelle Boulevard.

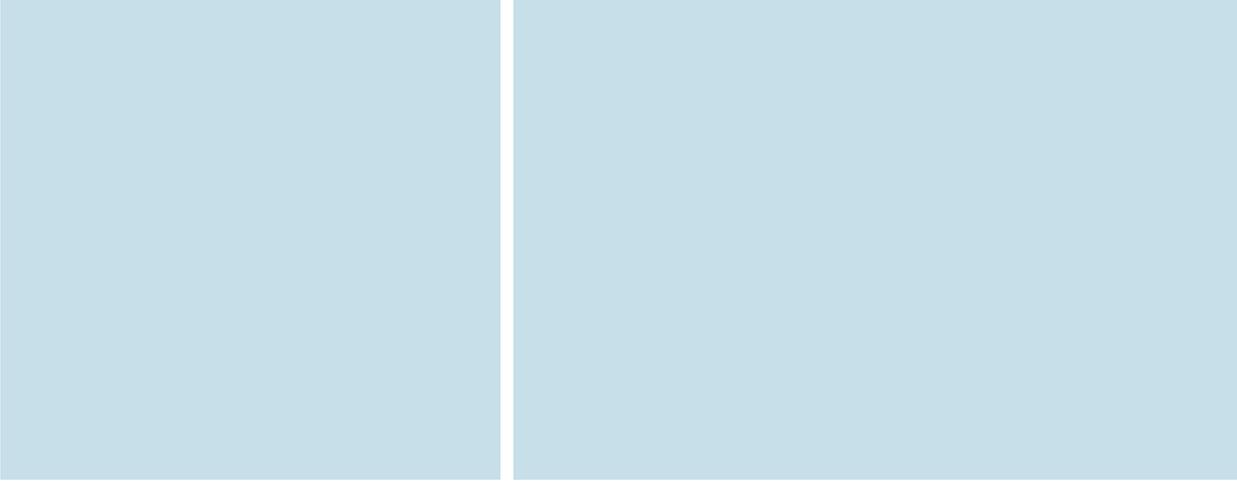
Fontenelle Park West. Much of this site is occupied by severely deteriorated apartments, many of which were built as market-rate housing during the 1950s and early 1960s. These buildings, built along dead-end streets west of 48th Street, have had a variety of problems and several have been closed for code enforcement violations. However, the site, located between Fontenelle Park and the Omaha Home for Boys (OHB), is extremely attractive and is adjacent to both a major park and a solid single-family neighborhood. The plan recommends site assembly and demolition of deteriorated structures, and their replacement with new single-family or urban-family development. Townhomes may be built along the 48th Street frontage, facing Fontenelle Park. This site may be combined with some OHB land to the west if available as part of a unified project.



Former Nebraska School for the Deaf Building



Vacant Belt Line Corridor





PART 6

IMPLEMENTING
THE NORTH OMAHA
DEVELOPMENT
PROJECT





Chapters 4 and 5 present a development vision that can start North Omaha on the road to continued, self-sustained economic development. These ideas speak to the issues that citizens of North Omaha articulated so effectively during the planning process – the need for more housing, more retailing, more jobs and businesses, more amenities, more opportunity, and finally, more security through more hope. But these concepts on paper are only expressions of potential. They are also for the most part physical development proposals – projects and buildings that must be filled with people, business, and life.

This chapter addresses specific implementation issues –how to realize the North Omaha Development Project. In it, we discuss:

- The potential initial impact of the North Omaha Development Project in development value, jobs, and sales.
- Related programs and activities that complement physical property investment.
- Special funding and organizational challenges that the North Omaha Development Project faces.
- A review of existing and potential funding sources and how they apply to different elements of the North Omaha Development Project.
- An organizational outline for managing the Project.

Table 6.1. Estimated Economic Returns of NODP Stage 1 Development

Project Component	Housing Units	Commercial (SF)	Industrial/ Business (SF)	Employment (Jobs)	Annual Retail Sales (\$)
24th Street Corridor	315	25,000		156	5,000,000
30th and Ames/Metro South	0	220,000	340,000	2,300	30,000,000
Adams Park Area	350				
16th and Cuming	232		50,000	200	4,000,000
Total	897	275,000	390,000	2,656	39,000,000

The North Omaha Development Project: Economic Potential

We begin considering plan implementation by looking at the economic returns of the Project. It is important to note that the four development areas discussed in detail in Chapters 4 and 5 are the first stage of a continuous economic development process in North Omaha. If this program succeeds, the results presented here are only the first dividends of a much larger, long-term return.

Table 6.1 summarizes an estimate the projected investment response to the development framework established by the NODP, tabulated by area. These Stage one projects produce over \$200 million in private development, add about 900 new homes and apartments to North Omaha’s housing supply, build about 390,000 square feet of new business and industrial buildings and up to 275,000 square feet in commercial development, create an estimated 2,600 per-

manent jobs, and generate about \$41 million in annual retail sales. Some of this added value can help generate front-end financing needed to start the program.

Complementary Programs

When fully developed, the investment in the four development opportunity areas produces sites, buildings, streets, and parks, prerequisites for but not the reality of economic growth. These brick and mortar projects must be filled by people and enterprises, which in turn require people to start and staff businesses. Other efforts are occurring in Omaha to build human and business capacity, and it is important to relate them to the North Omaha Development Project. These necessary, complementary programs include:

- Business Capitalization
- Employment Capacity Building
- Entrepreneurial and Contractor Capacity Building
- Education with Career Tracks



Mike's Community Cafe

Business Capitalization

North Omaha must present a great environment for enterprise. Professional, high amenity sites and buildings with good access to roads and the airport and excellent exposure are vitally important, but so is access to business capital. The Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA) has conceived a targeted program that would use a substantial initial NIFA commitment to leverage private, community-oriented investment to expand access to capital. Investors would earn interest sufficient at a minimum to keep pace with inflation. This combined NIFA/private fund would then provide loan guarantees, direct loans, and equity investments in appropriate North Omaha projects, with NIFA's funds taking a risk position ahead of private funds. The business capital program would complement the NODP's proposed physical development efforts. While remaining open to a variety of enterprises, the program may specialize in businesses of strategic importance to North Omaha, such as health-related enterprise, construction, and spin-offs from Metropolitan Community College's key programs.



LeFlore's New Look Fashion

Employment Capacity Building

Skill training provides the human resources necessary to staff a growing North Omaha economy. The neighborhood boasts extensive education and training facilities, led by Metropolitan Community College. Metro's adjacency to the four business park sites in the 30th and Ames area will be especially attractive to businesses and industries considering these locations. Logistics are a significant issue, tailoring training programs to specific needs and making the connections between available jobs and training for prospective employees. The Chamber recently established the North Omaha Workforce Development Task Force, an organizing entity created through the North Omaha Steering Committee. This organization is establishing goals and identifying program experiences to date, and addressing opportunities and barriers to provide improved services to all participants.

As part of an overall employment capacity building program, we recommend increasing training partner-



Construction at Salem

ships with major employers who have their own substantial training capabilities. For example, health care providers like Creighton, UNMC, and Alegent could integrate some of their training and educational functions at convenient North Omaha sites such as Metropolitan Community College, Charles Drew, or the proposed Health Village.

Entrepreneurial and Contractor Capacity Building

Omaha has long offered programs to build business capacity. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, for example, a minority contractors program, operated by United Contractors Association of Nebraska and Community Equity Corporation offered technical assistance and performance bonds to participating minority contractors. Ultimately, this program failed because it did not build adequate capacity in business operations or construction performance. During the mid-1980s, the Omaha Small Business Network (OSBN) began operations, providing space, shared services, and technical assistance as part of the Business and Technology Cen-

ter at 24th and Lake. UNO's Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC) and other organizations also provide technical assistance and business planning services. In common with employment capacity building, logistics is a major issue for business capacity building efforts – matching candidate businesses with available existing resources.

Contractor capacity building is an especially important area for business development. The North Omaha Development Project itself will create extensive building activity. A strong local construction industry can help retain some of the economic benefits of this activity at home. In addition, the aging and eventual retirement of many workers in the industry, along with a scarcity of younger people moving into skilled trades, creates major employment opportunities.

The Chamber has begun a substantial effort toward minority capacity building that will learn from the lessons of the past and move forward to take advantage of new possibilities. The objectives of this program are to:

- Create an environment that fosters long-term viability and sustainable growth for minority contractors, by strengthening the existing contractor base and providing better access to resources.
- Develop a strategic plan and coordinating stakeholder resources with the participation of all stakeholders and potential service providers.
- Implement a plan of educational programming, training and services for a pool of existing minority contractors through the utilization of strategic partners.

The final capacity building program design, developed

through this partnership, should build strong construction management and business administration skills, backed up by substantial trades experience and technical construction expertise. Ultimately, the business and contractor capacity building programs are indispensable in building long-term businesses that are positioned to take full advantage of an economic renaissance in North Omaha.

Education

The process put in motion by the North Omaha Development Project should change the dynamic of the neighborhood and, by so doing, accomplish perhaps the most important goal of all – changing youth's view of their prospects for the future. Stakeholders spoke poignantly during the planning process about the lack of hope among the neighborhood's young people. However, we are struck by the disconnect between the perceived hopelessness that can lead to poor achievement, poverty, gangs, violence, substance abuse, and a host of other problems; and the real opportunities that North Omaha presents. The place to begin closing this gap, and opening new vistas, is the educational system.

The Building Bright Futures initiative reflects a deep community understanding of the importance of the urban education system. As a link between the Brighter Futures initiative and the North Omaha Development Plan, we recommend:

- Intervening early in the educational process to identify rich career paths open to young people, some with a special relationship to North Omaha's particular strengths and opportunities. These include such

areas as medicine, research, health care, design and construction, and other opportunity areas.

- Integrating special career tracks with traditional school curricula. For example, an emphasis on such areas as life sciences or even construction trades may be integrated into literature and mathematics programs.
- Considering special magnet facilities or educational buildings on sites that are connected to community systems and serve other development objectives.

Special Funding Challenges

Financing redevelopment projects always requires creativity, and Omaha over the years has developed considerable expertise in assembling complex redevelopment packages. Typically, financing operates on a project-specific basis. For example, in projects that use Tax Increment Financing (TIF), the added taxes created by a redevelopment project fund improvements or pay back a portion of the project's mortgage loan. However, the long-term nature of the North Omaha Development Project and the neighborhood context create special financing challenges:

- *Need for front-end, large-scale land acquisition.* The 24th Street Corridor development opportunity area requires site control at the beginning of the development, much like more conventional development. This means some sites will be secured well before they are developed. This is also true to some degree for the business parks in the 30th and Ames/Metro

South area. Funding must be available to buy land at the beginning of the process, and this land may be reserved for a number of years.

- *High cost of acquisition and relocation.* Some land assembly involves buying single-family, owner-occupied homes. These purchases can be a great opportunity for homeowners, who will have the resources to buy new homes in the neighborhood, but are also very expensive. For single-family redevelopment, the actual cost of land may be as high as 60% to 70% of the sale price of the new house. In contrast, the typical cost of land for suburban development on open land is about 20% of the sale price.
- *Incentives for higher-income buyers.* Federally-funded programs like Community Development Block Grants and HOME funds are only available to low- and moderate-income homebuyers. Therefore creating mixed income neighborhood will require incentives for buyers whose incomes are too high for these programs. Funding for these programs must come from non-Federal sources.
- *Image and perception of risk.* We must acknowledge that perception of risk and concerns over safety dampen enthusiasm about development and investment. The North Omaha Development Project's initiatives must include the funding to produce very high-quality environments that counter these perceptions and transform neighborhood image. This, in turn, requires more funding, not all of which produces short-term return. In West Omaha, development of a retail center or business park is routine and follows established formulas. In North Omaha, these same projects require special investments and amenities.

- *Community interest and the public nature of redevelopment.* Conventional private development is just that – private. Land is assembled, financing is arranged, and projects built without a great deal of public attention. On the other hand, community interest in North Omaha development is very high, and a variety of people and points of view will be engaged throughout the process. Every major project, rightly, will be newsworthy. As a result, the development process must be transparent, participatory and representative, and organized to maximize community credibility and acceptance.

Existing and Potential Funding Sources

The issues discussed above complicate funding for the North Omaha Development Project. A significant private fund-raising effort will be necessary to address them. Fortunately, however, the community does have a variety of available financing tools that adapt to the specific components of the Project. In addition, legislative and constitutional changes can also create financing tools that can make the job of redeeming North Omaha easier. This section describes some of the tools that are most applicable to the North Omaha Development Project and some legislative changes that can accelerate the process.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax increment financing (TIF) has been a staple of city redevelopment financing since 1980. TIF uses the added value and tax revenues created by a redevelopment

project to finance improvements specifically related to the project. Under current law, taxes may be “allocated” to finance improvements for a period that does not exceed 15 years from the date of approval of a redevelopment plan. Under these terms, TIF can finance about 10 to 15% of the added value, and TIF districts are generally narrowly defined around a specific project. For example, if a project produced \$1 million in increased valuation, TIF would produce about \$100,000 to \$150,000 that could be used for project-related improvements.

TIF will be a very important component of the Project. Two changes in law or policy should be considered to make the technique even more useful:

- *Extension of the 15-year TIF allocation sunset for very highly-targeted areas.* Increasing the number of years that TIF may be used also increases the program's capacity, and is especially important for projects that will develop over a long period of time. Long-term TIF, for example, could provide greater front-end financing for land acquisition activities, especially important in the 24th Street Corridor and 30th and Ames development areas. This change requires a state constitutional amendment, and could also benefit low-income or distressed portions of other communities in Nebraska. However, to prevent abuses, eligibility criteria for long-term TIF must be very strict and precisely drafted.
- *Large area TIF.* In Omaha, TIF has been used on a project specific basis and district boundaries have been tightly drawn. This has been partly the result of city policy to use the technique very surgically and partly because of the 15-year limit on tax allocations.

However, in North Omaha, the possibility of a large area TIF may be considered, where all or part of the study area is designated a TIF district. With natural increases in property values, this can create a very large bonding capacity, albeit at the cost of freezing tax revenues for general distribution to jurisdictions at a specific level for a number of years. For example, between 2004 and 2007, the total assessed value of property in the North Omaha study area increased from about \$728 million to about \$929 million, or an average annual increase of about 8.4%. If the entire study area were declared a TIF district and property tax revenues increased at just 2% annually, a large area TIF could provide potential bonding capacity of up to \$5.3 million per year. While this may not be practical, it demonstrates the ability of a large area TIF to provide substantial financing.

Sales Taxes

Sales taxes are one of the city's primary funding sources for government operations. Currently the city cannot direct sales tax revenues back to redevelopment in specific areas, although there is significant national experience in using this funding technique. The Qwest Center was partly financed by a "sales tax increment" device, by which additional sales taxes attributable to the arena/convention center help repay bonds. A "directed sales tax" mechanism to finance North Omaha improvements would require legislative action.

Two possible routes can be explored to use sales tax revenues related to North Omaha redevelopment:

- *Directing added sales taxes to project-related or areawide improvements.* This technique would al-

locate sales tax from retail redevelopment projects back into project- or area-related development. This concept, in effect, would be analogous to tax increment financing, although it uses sales rather than property taxes. For example, if the 30th and Ames and 24th and Cuming retail projects were developed under this concept, the two projects together might generate an estimated \$35 million in additional taxable retail sales annually. Assuming a 7% sales tax rate, this added revenue new to the neighborhood would generate about \$2.45 million in annual sales taxes. If these tax proceeds were entirely directed to bond repayments over a 15-year period, they would generate up to \$18 million in bonding capacity. This would require state legislation and a possible constitutional amendment. As with a long-term TIF, any legislative initiative must be highly targeted.

- *Establishing a tax-free zone for retail projects in a highly targeted area.* If this exemption applied to the entire state and local sales tax, it too would require state legislation and a possible constitutional amendment. In addition, this might be politically difficult, because it would give one part of the city a specific retail advantage over other areas.

Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA)

NIFA is a key participant in the North Omaha development process. In addition to its mortgage programs, the Authority is likely to be involved with lending for specific development projects. NIFA funds can also be used to leverage private investment through a business capitalization fund, discussed earlier in this chapter.



North Omaha Business Park



New Retail in the NoDo District

Construction Loan Pool

A construction loan pool, with capital derived from a consortium of financial institutions, would provide interim financing to nonprofit and for-profit homebuilders working in the specific project areas identified by this plan. This shared-risk program could help reduce the individual risk of homebuilders, reducing the private sector's resistance to building in North Omaha in early phases of the project. A loan pool commitment of about \$8 to \$10 million is sufficient to fund projected

*Adams Park*

annual absorption in the 24th Street Corridor development area. This fund's focus may shift as redevelopment areas become established as stable housing markets. The construction loan pool should not be used to build up a large inventory of vacant, speculative homes. Rather, it will typically provides interim financing for a combination of speculative homes sufficient to establish a critical mass and pre-sold units in various stages of construction.

General Obligation Bonds

The City of Omaha uses general obligation (GO) bonds to finance public improvements, including streets, sewers, parks, trails, and other public improvements. As the city develops Street, Sewer, and Parks and Recreation bond issues, specific North Omaha projects should be incorporated into them. Potential GO bond projects in the development program include the following:

STREET & HIGHWAY BONDS

- 30th Street Parkway between Sprague Street and Sorensen Parkway
- Metro Gateway and 31st Avenue from Sorensen

*Park Boulevard Trail*

- Parkway to John Creighton Boulevard
- Paxton Boulevard to Sprague Connection, including improvements to Sprague Street
- Lake/Grant/Radial Connector
- Lake Street Upgrade and Enhancement, with an initial phase from 24th Street to the North Freeway and future enhancement from the Freeway to 40th Street.
- Belt Line Parkway and Trail, with separated street segments and continuous trail from Hamilton to Sprague Street.

ENVIRONMENTAL (INFRASTRUCTURE) BONDS

- Infrastructure projects to support 30th and Ames development.

PARK & RECREATION BONDS

- Adams Park and Malcolm X Birthsite Development
- Trail development and upgrades
- Belt Line Greenway

Other Transportation Funding

Transportation Enhancements funds are Federal transportation funds that may be used for trails development and major street enhancements. These funds are allocated on a competitive basis and administered by the Nebraska Department of Roads, and have been used extensively in the Omaha area for trail development. Metro Area Transit receives capital and operating grants from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). These funds may be used for fixed projects such as a redeveloped North Omaha Transit Center as well as subsidies for new services.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Funds

The CDBG and HOME programs have been the traditional foundation of the city's community development program and will continue to be used extensively in North Omaha. These funds generally must be used to benefit low and moderate-income households and individuals, but also can be used to eliminate conditions of blight. Priority uses of CDBG/HOME funds in the project may include:

- Soft-second mortgages in the 24th Street Corridor, Long School, and other housing development areas.
- Financial participation in property assembly and relocation.
- Development of the Human Service Campus.
- Completion of the 24th Street streetscape project.

Tax Credits

Tax credit programs provide important Federal and State incentives and are significant for their ability to raise project equity. Several types of tax credits have special application to the North Omaha Development Project:

- *New Markets Tax Credits.* This program provides tax credits for Quality Equity Investments made through Community Development Entities (CDE's). CDE's are able to use capital derived from tax credits to make loans or investments in businesses and projects in low-income neighborhoods, and are directly applicable to the business and retail development components of the project.
- *Low Income Housing Tax Credits.* These credits provide major equity-raising potential for qualified low-income rental housing projects. They can also be used for rent-to-own developments, and have been utilized extensively in such projects as the Holy Name Housing Corporation's CROWN (rent-to-own) developments, Omaha Economic Development Corporation's Kellom Heights projects; and New Community Development Corporation's Grace Plaza apartment development.
- *Historic Tax Credits.* These credits provide one-time credits to qualified investors in projects that rehabilitate buildings listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
- *State Tax Credits.* The state has a variety of tax credit programs, including the Community Development Assistance Act Tax Credit, that encourage assistance

to community development organizations and other economic development activities. Potential legislation could broaden these credits to investments, in parallel with federal tax credit programs. Information on economic and community development tax credits is available from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development – www.neded.org.

Private Funding

The mechanisms described above can fund major parts of the North Omaha Development Project, especially with specific legislative changes. However, execution of the program will require a substantial private fund-raising effort. Private funding should be based on filling the economic gaps: calculating amount of reasonable support raised by various programs and using private financing as necessary to complete funding requirements. In some cases, the gaps will be programmatic – private sources will be necessary to fund project elements that cannot be financed through public or community sources.

Local and national foundations can provide assistance through both grants and program related investments (PRI's). PRI's are applicable to components that require long-term "patient" money that nevertheless will be repaid at some point. These uses include the NIFA business enterprise fund, long-term TIF bonds, or front-end investments in land assembly. Grants are more appropriately directed to public realm projects, such as the Adams Park/Malcolm X development. With current local and national priorities, the NODP's wellness components might be attractive to local and national foundations that emphasize community health

issues, such as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation with funding for the promotion healthy communities and lifestyles. Corporate and private contributions and investments are appropriately used for many of the same purposes.

Application to Project Components

Tables 6.2 through 6.5 relate elements of the initial North Omaha Development Project to various funding sources. This provides guidance to eventual project managers and implementers in assembling financing packages.



Table 6.2. 24th Street Corridor (South): Applicable Funding Sources

	Retail Village	Live/Work	Urban Housing	Long School Infill	Completion of Long School Market Place	Streetscape
Private Development Financing	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	
Tax Increment Financing	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
NIFA/Equity, Loan Guarantees	◆	◆	◆	◆		
CDBG		◆	◆	◆		◆
Street & Highway Bonds (CIP)						
Park & Recreation Bonds (CIP)						
National and Local Foundations						
Loan Pools	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	
Transportation Enhancements						◆
Tax Credits	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	
New Targeted Initiatives	◆	◆			◆	
Private/Corporate Fundraising, deferred investments		◆			◆	
Environmental Bonds (CIP)						◆



Table 6.3. 24th Street Corridor (North): Applicable Funding Sources

	24-Lake Retail	Museum and Theater Center	Lake Street Streetscape
Private Development Financing	◆	◆	
Tax Increment Financing	◆		
NIFA/Equity, Loan Guarantees		◆	
CDBG			◆
Street & Highway Bonds (CIP)			
Park & Recreation Bonds (CIP)			
National and Local Foundations		◆	
Loan Pools	◆		
Transportation Enhancements			◆
Tax Credits		◆	
New Targeted Initiatives	◆	◆	
Private/Corporate Fundraising, deferred investments	◆		
Environmental Bonds (CIP)			◆

Table 6.4. 30th and Ames/Metro South: Applicable Funding Sources

	Business Parks	Community Commercial	Health Retail Village	Neighborhood Retail Upgrades	Transportation Improvements	Streetscape Improvements
Private Development Financing	◆	◆	◆	◆		
Tax Increment Financing	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
NIFA/Equity, Loan Guarantees	◆					
CDBG				◆		◆
Street & Highway Bonds (CIP)					◆	◆
Park & Recreation Bonds (CIP)						
National and Local Foundations						
Loan Pools	◆	◆	◆	◆		
Transportation Enhancements					◆	◆
Tax Credits		◆				
Private/Corporate Fundraising, deferred investments	◆	◆	◆			
Environmental Bonds (CIP)					◆	◆
New Targeted Initiatives		◆	◆	◆		





Table 6.5. Adams Park: Applicable Funding Sources

	Adams Park Redesign	Malcolm X Birthsite	Housing Infill
Private Development Financing		◆	◆
Tax Increment Financing			◆
NIFA/Equity, Loan Guarantees			◆
CDBG		◆	◆
Street & Highway Bonds (CIP)			
Park & Recreation Bonds (CIP)	◆		
National and Local Foundations	◆	◆	
Loan Pools			◆
Transportation Enhancements			
Tax Credits			
Private/Corporate Fundraising, deferred investments			
New Targeted Initiatives			

Table 6.6. 16th and Cuming West Area: Applicable Funding Sources

	Tip Top West	Human Services Village	Business Park	Cuming Quads	Nicholas Square	Charles Place	Educational Services Campus
Private Development Financing	◆	◆	◆	◆		◆	◆
Tax Increment Financing	◆		◆	◆			
NIFA/Equity, Loan Guarantees	◆	◆	◆	◆		◆	
CDBG	◆	◆				◆	
Street & Highway Bonds (CIP)					◆		
Park & Recreation Bonds (CIP)							
National and Local Foundations		◆					◆
Loan Pools	◆		◆			◆	
Transportation Enhancements					◆		
Tax Credits	◆					◆	
Private/Corporate Fundraising, deferred investments			◆				
New Targeted Initiatives			◆				
Environmental Bonds (CIP)					◆		





Organizational Elements

The organizational structure to manage the North Omaha Development Project will emerge as the community begins to implement this plan. An effective organizational structure must respect the array of stockholders in North Omaha fairly and openly. An outline of the organizational structure should include:

- *A coordinating organization or steering committee, likely to be a continuation of the North Omaha Development Plan Steering Committee. A smaller executive committee, composed of at least the chair of the Steering Committee and standing committee chairs, will be continued to coordinate the effort. The NODP Steering Committee has created a number of specific subcommittees, which will be instrumental in setting priorities and developing detailed implementation and financing programs. The NODP Committee will also determine the type of organizational structure necessary to fill such functions as raising funds, acquiring and holding land, and assembling development packages and deals.*
- *A North Omaha Development Project executive director, who will staff the Steering Committee.*
- *The City of Omaha, as a key partner in the North Omaha Development Project process.*
- *The North Omaha Neighborhood Alliance, as a primary mechanism for neighborhood input into the NODP process.*
- *A housing infrastructure that includes a Housing Development Corporation that organizes and administers the cooperative construction loan pool; housing counseling services; and specialized mortgage financing through an organization such as Omaha 100.*





Conclusion

For more than 18 months, members of the North Omaha Development Project (NODP) steering committee, the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce along with public/private investors, and the consulting team have focused on developing a strategy that results in significant business investments in North Omaha. The strategy itself is a result of a year-long process involving the steering committee, the Chamber, African American business leaders, the North Omaha community, corporate leaders and elected leaders. We announced at a public meeting Oct. 3, a development strategy for community and business investment. The strategy outlines next steps for infrastructure improvements, public transportation, community development opportunities, entertainment options and housing initiatives—all of which are geared toward creating job opportunities.

The NODP holds tremendous promise for this vitally important part of Omaha and builds upon the economic rebirth already taking place throughout North Omaha. We've seen what public/private partnerships can do with investments like Charles Drew Health Center, Love's Jazz and Arts Center, Miami Heights and Salem Village at Miami Heights, Salem Baptist Church, Jobash, Cintas, Wes & Willy, Educare, Concord Square, Dreamland Plaza, Long School Marketplace, Ernie Chambers Court, Family Housing Advisory Services, Aldi grocery store and Metropolitan Community College, just to name a few.

This is a long-term initiative — as many have said, it is a marathon, not a sprint.

The initial projects proposed in the four “development opportunity areas” described in this document will generate over \$200 million in private development, \$3 million to \$3.5 million in annual sales tax revenue, more than 2,500 jobs and nearly 1,000 housing units with a spin-off affect for more.

The NODP steering committee and the newly-created position of executive director, along with the support of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this plan. Seven task forces, chaired by members of the steering committee have been established. They are:

TASK FORCES

Capacity Building

Chair Rex Fisher and Vice Chair Chris Rodgers

Communications

Chair Vicki Quaites-Ferris and Vice Chair Rev. Leroy Adams, Jr.

Business Development

Chair Mike Green and Vice Chair Courtney Dunbar

Finance

Chair David Kramer and Vice Chair Dennis O'Neal

Housing

Chair Ken Lyons and Vice Chair Tim Kenney

Transportation

Chair Cathy Wyatt and Vice Chair Dan Burkey

Workforce Development

Chair Brenda Council and Vice Chair Jim Grotrian

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IS MADE UP OF:

Co-Chair – Dennis O’Neal

Co-Chair – Mike Green

City Council Representative – Frank Brown

Chamber – David Brown

At-Large – Dick Davis

At-Large – Mike Maroney

Capacity Building – Chair Rex Fisher

Communications – Chair Vicki Quaites-Ferris

Business Development – Chair Mike Green

Finance – Chair Dennis O’Neal

Housing – Chair Ken Lyons

Transportation – Chair Cathy Wyatt

Workforce Development – Chair Brenda Council

In addition, the Chamber has designated additional staff to focus on workforce solutions and capacity building for minority-owned businesses:

The workforce solutions staff is focused on developing customized solutions that draw on existing community resources and partnerships. They will initially address business employment opportunities, employee recruitment and job training issues.

We are building the framework within which the capacities of local minority-owned businesses will be expanded, enabling them access to the resources needed for long-term viability and sustainable growth.

The NODP is another example of how public and private partnerships work in Omaha. Bringing this plan to reality will require significant investments. The rewards and stakes are great. The opportunity to transform a specific community area for the benefit of North Omahans — present and future — and for our entire city is extraordinary. We invite you to be a part of it!

The members of the North Omaha Development Project steering committee

October 2007

