Prepared by H3 Studio

for

NuStyle Development Corporation,
The Nebraska Investment Finance Authority,
and The City of Omaha
Acknowledgements

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Finished in December of 2012, this Neighborhood Development and Housing Study was completed for the NuStyle Development Corporation on behalf of The Nebraska Investment Finance Authority and the City of Omaha. Described in greater detail later on in this document, the nine (9) month process was intended to look in greater detail at the opportunities for a declining area between Downtown Omaha and the Midtown Crossing where a renewed interest in urban living has been sparked due to a sequence of successful planning efforts and a few adventurous new developments. It is the purpose of this document to articulate the vision developed for this area through the stakeholder engagement and public planning process.
In 2011, NuStyle Development Corporation and H3 Studio were awarded a grant from the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA) through the Housing Study Grant Program. This funding, in conjunction with matching funds from NuStyle Development Corporation, was utilized to conduct this Neighborhood Development & Housing Study for a declining area between Downtown Omaha and Midtown Crossing. The planning process was initiated to identify target areas for catalytic and new development projects with particular attention to the need for equitable/quality housing within the area; as well as to identify potential key re-development sites and areas for public improvements.

NuStyle Development, as one of the key stakeholders and land owners in the area, seeks to facilitate the creation of a plan that will encourage more private and public investment in the once vibrant district. H3 Studio was consulted for their expertise in public engagement and consensus planning, envisioning sustainability planning principles, and planning comprehensively for land use, transit, housing, and livability. The grant required the team to propose future housing opportunities in the district, particularly ones that can earn more NIFA funding; it stipulated that the planning process must include the public and should encourage residents to actively participate in the future of their community.

With this grant as a guide, the consultant team developed a detailed scope of work for the Neighborhood Development and Housing Study that includes the creation of a neighborhood master plan to address key economic, social, and environmental issues. The goal is to develop a holistic plan that identifies catalytic development projects, recommends redevelopment projects and new developments, public spaces, streetscape improvements, transit opportunities, and pedestrian and bicycle connections. Contained herein, this master plan is based on a phased development strategy which will identify appropriate building uses, locations, typologies, and parking configurations for the area.

The following page shows the phased scope of the study:
PHASE ONE: **INVENTORY & ANALYSIS...**
Focused primarily on an extensive, parcel-by-parcel survey of the entire project area, the team reviewed site history and context, relevant planning proposals, building conditions and occupancy, typology, materiality, existing landscape, streetscape character, public space, and community assets.

PHASE TWO: **INVESTIGATION & RESEARCH...**
Commenced the initial engagement with the community, the city, and the client. It included individual interviews with local stakeholders, work sessions with the client, and technical advisory committee meetings; whereby the planning consultants identified the primary opportunities and challenges within the area. The first public kick-off meeting was held in conjunction with a district walking tour to build support and get feedback from the attendees. A market assessment and local typologies study was also conducted to assist in developing a variety of preliminary neighborhood development scenarios for the charrette.

PHASE THREE: **CHARRETTE...**
Included an open-design studio to establish a preferred development scenario and refine details and recommendations for that scenario. This week-long on-site public engagement event included multiple work sessions and presentations by the project team to the public, stakeholders, and the technical team in order to receive input, continue plan development, formulate development principles, and establish a preferred development plan.

PHASE FOUR: **REFINING & DETAILING...**
Concluded the charrette process and is where the project team refined and finalized the neighborhood development and housing study. It includes further exploration of housing opportunity sites, public realm improvements, open space design and amenities, and economic development potential.

PHASE FIVE: **DELIVERING & IMPLEMENTATION...**
Concluded the charrette process and involved the delivery of all research, analysis, market information, design options, plan recommendations, and the master plan into a final report for public consumption. This phase also included review and comment by City staff, as well as the plan adoption process.
PROJECT PROCESS

Although the grant allows for an eighteen month planning process, this study was divided into five phases of work completed in roughly nine months. The planning process was designed to provide interaction between the project team, stakeholders (including neighborhood institutions, local business owners, residents, and interested parties) and the public at-large through community coordination work-sessions at the public meetings. Simultaneously, the project team worked with the City of Omaha to determine key constraints and issues surrounding future development within the area. Through this technical advisory process, the team was able to focus the vision for the area around realistic constraints and develop a series of alternate solutions for specific components of the project. The primary engagement efforts included five basic types of meetings and interactions, where the team listened to and documented issues and ideas from the attendees (photographs of which are shown on the opposite page):

1. Neighborhood & District Walking Tour: This was an opportunity for the attendees to walk through the district, observe and discuss issues, and point out opportunities while on-site in the project area.

2. Open House Meetings: The general public and stakeholders were able to have casual conversations with the project team, get an update on the progress of the plan, and provide input into the process.

3. Public Meetings (Community Coordination): This was an opportunity for the attendees to work closely with the project team documenting their concerns and ideas onto basemaps of the project area. Here many of issue and ideas were visualized and geographically located within the project area.

4. Stakeholder Interviews: These confidential interviews were an opportunity for the project team to speak directly with property owners, residents, business owners, developers, politicians, and institutional leaders in order to catalog and define issues and ideas surrounding the area.

5. Technical Team Meetings: This was an opportunity for the project team to meet with city / governing bodies to work through any constraints surrounding the project area, and document areas of concern and opportunities for the project.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

PHASE 1.0: INVENTORY & ANALYSIS
(December 14, 2011 to March 4, 2012)

- Field Surveys & On-Site Surveys (Jan 5 - 7, 2012)

PHASE 2.0: INVESTIGATION & RESEARCH
(March 5, 2012 to April 16, 2012)

- Stakeholder Interviews (March 5, 2012)
- District Walking Tour (March 5, 2012)
- Public Kick-off Meeting #1 (March 6, 2012)
- City Technical Team Meeting #1 (March 6, 2012)

PHASE 3.0: CHARRETTE
(April 17, 2012 to April 21, 2012)

- On-Site charrette (April 17 - 21, 2012)
- Public Meeting #2 (April 17, 2012)
- City Technical Team Meeting #2 (April 20, 2012)
- Project Open Public Meeting #3 (April 20, 2012)

PHASE 4.0: REFINING & DETAILING
(April 22 - July 18, 2012)

- Stakeholder Meetings (July 18, 2012)

PHASE 5.0: DELIVERING & IMPLEMENTATION
(July 18 - December 2012)
NEIGHBORHOOD & DISTRICT WALKING TOUR

OPEN HOUSE MEETINGS

PUBLIC MEETINGS (COMMUNITY COORDINATION)
STAKEHOLDERS

• Downtown Improvement District Association
• Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA)
• Restored Hope
• Omaha Children’s Museum
• Midtown Crossing & Omaha Chamber of Commerce
• Omaha Public Schools
• Economic Development Department of Omaha
• Physicians Mutual
• Scholar Properties
• Jensen Consulting
• Lutheran Family Services
• The Joslyn Museum
• North Downtown Alliance
• J. Development Company
• Parkeast Neighborhood Association
• The Rose Theater
• Old Market Business Association
• Fraternal Order of the Eagles
• All Makes Office Equipment

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

TECHNICAL TEAM MEETINGS
**PROJECT AREA**

The project area (shown above) is a disconnected portion of the downtown Park East neighborhood which is encompassed by the area from ½ block north of Dodge Street to ½ block south of Harney Street; and from ½ block east of South 20th Street to ½ block west of South 25th Street. This area includes very few residential buildings (therefore very few residents), a new high rise residential renovation (the Highline), a number of low-quality commercial buildings and strip centers, and a number of the city’s important institutions including the Omaha Federal Reserve Building, the Joslyn Art Museum, the Rose Children’s Theater, the Scoular Building, and Central High School. Basic details of the project area:

- **Actual City Blocks** = 19 (59.3 AC)
- **Typical City Blocks** = 36 (Based on TYP. = 1.65 AC)
- **Land Area** = 74.6 AC
- **Streets Space** = 7 Total (15.3 AC)
- **Lots / Parcels** = 108 Parcels (48.9 AC)
- **Surface Parking Lots** = 16.2 AC / Roughly 1400 Spaces
- **On-Street Parking Spaces** = Roughly 400
- **Tree Canopy Coverage** = 4.75 AC / 6.4% of the Project Area
- **Topography (East/West)** = 80’ Drop from (A) to (B)
- **Topography (North/South)** = 36’ Drop from (C) to (D)
- **Pervious Surfaces** = 7.1 AC / 9.5% of the Project Area
- **Impervious Surfaces** = 52.2 / 90.5% of the Project Area
Westward expansion was rife with opportunities for the fledgling nation of the United States, and one of the most important frontier towns was Omaha, Nebraska, founded on July 4th, 1854. The City of Omaha was quickly settled and grew to become the largest city in Nebraska almost overnight. Omaha took advantage of its location along the Missouri River as a gateway to the west and became a hub for trading, travel, shipping, and manufacturing. Arguably the most significant event in the early development of Omaha was the passage of the Pacific Railroad Act on June 24, 1862. Omaha became the eastern terminus for the transcontinental railroad, capturing economic growth and spurring development from within its core. With this growth came the need for infrastructure such as wastewater and treatment, garbage collection, fire prevention, water delivery services, street improvements, and above all, transit.
THE MIDDLE 1850’S
EARLY CENTRALIZED GROWTH & TRANSPORTATION

As the City developed and densified, many of the streets throughout downtown underwent improvements to better serve the needs of local business. The Omaha Horse Street Railway System in 1867 was the first sign of Omaha’s expansion westward. The line ran from Ninth and Farnam Streets to Eighteenth and Cass Streets. A cable car system was added in 1884, with the powerhouse located at Twentieth and Harney Streets. In 1887 an electric streetcar line opened between Omaha and South Omaha, Nebraska and the Omaha Motor Railway Company began operation in 1888.

In 1889 the cable car system combined operations with the horse street railway. Omaha’s first true suburb, Dundee, was added to the line in 1891. The major lines connecting east-west included Cuming, Leavenworth, and of course, Farnam Street, which connected to major north-south lines at 16th, 20th, and 24th Streets. Streetcars allowed residents to become commuters, with easy access between residential neighborhoods and downtown and business areas, supporting westward expansion of the city and the separation of home and work.

THE EARLY 1900’S
THE DECLINE OF TRANSIT & URBAN VITALITY

The City suffered greatly during the Great Depression. Federal intervention throughout the 1930s was critical for many residents. But, in the decades before World War II, Omaha went through a prosperous period marked with rapid development, cultural growth and a massive increase in population throughout the city. Growth was accommodated in neighborhoods built to the north and south of Downtown Omaha.

The early 1910s saw the introduction of automobiles onto city streets which started the transformation from a rail and streetcar based transportation system to the current automobile based system. For example, Automobile Row along Farnam Street, was a commercial district that featured dealers such as the Hupmobile and Reo Speed Wagon, garages, and parts stores serving automobiles; where its influence can still be seen today. The early 1900s saw the decline of the streetcar as the wide streets that once accommodated them were transformed into major thoroughfares for a growing number of cars.
THE MIDDLE 1950’S
DOMINATION OF THE AUTOMOBILE & SPRAWL

As the automobile became the focus of transportation from the 1950s through the 1970s, suburbanization and highway expansion led to “white flight” toward newer housing on the peripheral, and the development of the middle and upper class areas in West Omaha. Race riots in Omaha’s traditionally diverse neighborhoods, particularly North and South Omaha, became ethnically concentrated, and poverty became a common feature of many neighborhoods remaining within the City. These ethnically diverse and economically challenged neighborhoods began to decline, fueled by a crumbling transit system.

On August 8, 1954, many of the main streets in downtown Omaha, including Dodge Street, Douglas Street, Farnam Street, and Harney Street were converted from two-way to one-way streets. This conversion to a one-way system enabled vehicles to travel in, out, and through downtown at far greater speeds, increasing safety concerns and surrendering concentrated urban-economic growth to the automobile. This traffic pattern elevated automobiles as the absolute priority transportation mode on the streetscape. The middle and upper class suburbs continued to spring up around the exurban fringe of Omaha.

OMAHA NOW
RE-INVESTMENT IN DOWNTOWN & MIDTOWN

Today, downtown Omaha is still the central business, government and social core of the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area. It is home to more than thirty buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, two historic districts, and many company headquarters. The Old Market is a well preserved historic area with a vibrant mixed-use and entertainment scene, just twelve blocks to the east of the study area.

Current revitalization efforts are contributing to the success of smaller, more distinct areas of downtown such as North Downtown (sports & entertainment area) and Market West. To the west, a recent development called Midtown Crossing has established a vibrant mixed-use and residential area with greater density and more modern urban forms, leading to more reinvestment and development projects. The project area, located in the Park East neighborhood, is home to many historic buildings including the Scoular Building, Westbrook Tower, and the Highline (old Northern Natural Gas building which is currently being renovated). The area has been somewhat vacant for many years, providing surface parking lots for many of the near by institutions. The adjacency of the project area to downtown and the surrounding reinvestment areas makes this a prime location for further study, and an ideal opportunity for future housing.
Downtown Omaha, like other American downtowns, is experiencing investment, growth, and revitalization after the urban decline of the 70s, 80s, and 90s. Omaha’s downtown core has seen neighborhood revitalization in the Old Market, Market West, and the newly popular North Downtown. Midtown has experienced significant development and revitalization in this decade and is known for its historic districts as well as its economic success, mixed-use typologies, housing and job opportunities, and major institutions and research centers. The Park East neighborhood where the study area is located, sits between Midtown and Downtown and is considered the gateway to downtown. It has historic buildings, wide streets, and is adjacent to important institutions such as the Rose Theatre, Joslyn Art Museum, and Creighton University, but is troubled by a lack of investment, large surface parking lots, inactive streets, and a low residential population.
THE EXISTING CONDITIONS

The study area is located about one mile from the Missouri River, one-half mile from Midtown Crossing, and one-quarter mile from Creighton University. About eighty percent of the study area is zoned as Central Business District while the other twenty percent is zoned as a Downtown Service District and redevelopment plans designate the entire district as Downtown Mixed-Use. The study area has a number of positive and negative assets that should be improved to establish a vibrant downtown neighborhood.

Currently, development and redevelopment opportunity within the study area is being negatively affected by several factors. The following denotes a few of those factors: First, there is very little housing stock which decreases the chances for activity and livability in the area. Second, there is an abundance of low-quality, auto-centric convenience retail and automotive services littered throughout the area. Third, there is an endless supply of surface parking lots, some vacant and some utilized. Fourth, in all cases, the streets are extremely wide, resulting in an added sense of vacancy, reduced intensity of uses, and lack of character. Fifth, the three blocks that comprise the study area from east to west are very long, which results in high vehicle speeds, impaired district circulation, pedestrian safety issues, and the establishment of a “cut-through” area.

Looking at some of these factors from a positive perspective, the wide streets allow for taller more dense construction and opportunities to redesign the right-of-way for not only cars, but alternative forms of transit such as street car or bicycles. Although there are plenty of sidewalks, a lack of active ground floor uses, frequency of parking and vacant lots, and poor tree canopy coverage significantly impair walkability. Basic streetscape improvements, increased tree canopy and development of more active buildings can contribute greatly to walkability and the livability of the district, further incentivizing development within the area.

The major institutions and schools (such as the Joslyn Museum and Central High School) are beneficial to the area, but poor connectivity and lack of branded identity decreases the positive impact of these assets. With the existing buildings and vacant sites, new development will create a vibrant and eclectic mix of new and old development that can create a unique and desirable character, building the identity of the area. Additionally, there are green and open spaces within the study area, in particular the area of the Federal Reserve Building. However, the green and open spaces are not officially publicly accessible and are certainly not programmed to meet the needs of changing urban demographics, including twenty to thirty something professionals, empty-nesters, and families.
REVIEW OF THE EXISTING CONDITIONS & URBAN ANALYSIS

In order to gain a better understanding of the planning context for this project, the team conducted a review of the existing conditions and an urban analysis for the project site. This review and analysis was intended to provide the project team with a holistic view of the project area by revealing key existing adjacencies and critical connections; as well as future planning conditions. For this portion of the study, the project team conducted on-site field surveys and visual assessments at three scales, which are each described in a brief summary on this page.

ANALYSIS & REVIEW SUMMARY

This review and analysis resulted in a series of summary conclusions which were discussed with the stakeholders and technical committees throughout the process. These conclusions include:

- This area contains a large percentage of under utilized parcels and surface parking lots, contributing to a sense of vacancy, and negatively affecting perceptions on safety.
- The streets within this area are too large, wide, and for the most part contain one-way traffic; which, allows vehicles to achieve high speeds contributing to the negative perceptions of safety and the feeling of a “pass-through” area.
- This area is heavily trafficked, serving the west Omaha population and access from Interstate 480 into downtown.
- This area is underserved from a public space perspective, and if there is more population then there will need to be more green, civic, or open space that can help frame the district.
- This area has a mixture of multiple-property and single-property land owners, making catalytic development possible.
- This area has very few residents and contains an abundance of low-quality convenience retailing.
- This area exhibits poor quality streetscapes including very little tree canopy, landscape vegetation, and pedestrian amenities.
- This area consists primarily of poor condition, commercial use, brick buildings which are one to two stories tall.
- This area contains a number of historic buildings which are operating as key assets within the area, including the Rose Theater, Central High School, The Scottish Rite Cathedral, and the Old Northern Natural Gas Building (the Highline).

CONTEXT AREA

INFORMATION REVIEWED

The Context Area is the largest region of interest for the project team, where it is important to understand the Project Area’s relationship to the broader trends such as development patterns, transportation connectivity, and future planning proposals. This area is roughly seven square miles (4,500 Acres), and includes specific areas such as the North Downtown Area, 16th/Cuming Sports & Entertainment Area, Midtown Crossing, the Missouri River, the Old Market, and Little Italy. In addition to reviewing plans relevant to the future conditions (shown on the following page) at this scale, the team looked into the larger framework of physical planning elements including:

- Street Network & Highway Connections
- Possible Enhanced Transit Connections
- Existing Buildings & Development (as shown above)
- Urban Growth & Development (History)
- Water Bodies & Rivers
- Parks & Open Space Network (as shown above)
- Bike Routes & Greenways
- Plans Relevant to the Future Conditions
The Study Area represents the roughly six block region surrounding the Project Area, where it is important to understand the immediate adjacencies. This area extends to the boundary of Interstate 480 to the north and west, and to approximately 18th street on the east, and Howard Street to the south. This area includes significant adjacencies such as access to Interstate 480, the Joslyn Art Museum, Central High School, The Children’s Museum, and the edge of Creighton University. The review at this scale allows for an understanding of the immediate connections that can be made with and through the study area. Examples of information reviewed at this scale include the following:

- Zoning Districts
- City Council Districts
- Neighborhoods
- Business Associations & Community Groups
- Access, Circulation & Parking
- Historic Districts & Landmarks
- Street Network & Traffic Counts

The Project Area represents the scale at which the team developed the master plan for the study. This area is bound by a region ½ block north of Dodge Street to ½ block south of Harney Street; and from ½ block east of South 20th Street to ½ block west of South 25th Street (as shown in the diagrams above). At this scale the team analyzed detailed data provided by the City of Omaha and field surveyed the immediate criteria affecting future developments. Examples of information reviewed at this scale include the following:

- Ownership Information
- Building Condition (Good, Fair, Poor)
- Building Height & Uses
- Building & Site Occupancy
- Pedestrian & Vehicular Entrances
- Vacant Parcels
- Building Materiality & Transparency
- Street Lighting & Amenities
- Tree Canopy, Vegetation & Ground Cover
The City of Omaha has a rich history of planning, and a long track record of successful implementation projects. Relevant plans exist for multiple areas surrounding and encapsulating the project area. These plans address, to various levels, recommendations for housing, transit, and economic development in their respective districts or areas. This master plan is closely coordinated with these plans to ensure that the vision for development of this area will become an integral part of the overall future of downtown Omaha, furthering the previous efforts. The Downtown Omaha 2030 Master Plan was of particular importance to this study; including a variety of recommendations for the area including conversion of one-way to two-way streets, possible locations of future enhanced transit, economic forecasting, and potential catalytic projects. These relevant plans and their impacts on the project area are shown here:

**PLANS WITH IMPACTS**

(More details shown to the right)

- Downtown Omaha 2030 Master Plan
  - "JOSLYN" DISTRICT (SEE PLAN ABOVE)
- Destination Midtown Plan
- Omaha Transportation Master Plan

**PLANS WITH MINIMAL IMPACTS**

- North Downtown: Omaha’s New Urban Neighborhood Plan
- Village Revitalization Plan
- Creighton University Master Plan
- Clean Solutions for Omaha
- North Omaha Development Project
- South Omaha Development Project
- Omaha Urban Design Handbook
  - SUGGESTED URBAN DESIGN STANDARDS
- Green Streets Plan for Omaha
  - STREETSCAPE DESIGN & LANDSCAPE STANDARDS

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**DOWNTOWN OMAHA 2030 MASTER PLAN**

- Adopted by City Council, 2009
- Establishment of “Joslyn District” (See Plan Above)
- Area of Civic Importance (ACI) - 1(PL)
- Key Corridor (Farnam & Harney)
- Street Car Future Improvements
- Phase 1 – E/W including Farnam and Harney
- Phase 3 – N/S including 24th
- Traffic Strategy
- Dodge & Douglas – 1 way pair
- 19th & 20th – 1 way pair
- Farnam & Harney – Potential to convert 2 way
- 24th & 25th – Potential to convert 2 way
- Open & Green Space (Joslyn Terrace, Joslyn Heights, Civic Square & Safety Town)
- Street Improvements
- Farnam Street & Harney Street (E/W)
- 20th & 24th (N/S)
- Major Development Opportunity
  - Design Standards (Lots & Building Types)
  - Green Street (Green Streets Plan)
DESTINATION MIDTOWN PLAN
- Completed in Summer of 2004
- Focus on Dodge Street & Leavenworth Street through redevelopment & infill guidelines.
- Streetcar Improvements – Farnam Street & Harney Street Car
- Turner Park Master Plan (Midtown Crossing)
- Recommendation for Park East Master Plan

OMAHA TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN
- Adopted by City Council, 2012
- Ongoing, Prioritized Projects:
  - B-100 Bicycle Lanes | Routes: Harney Street Bikeway (Downtown). 10th Street to 24th Street; Reconstruct for two-way dedicated bike lane and one lane median. Length = .92 Miles
  - NS-PUB-019 New Street: Capitol Avenue Extension. Capitol Avenue from 19th to 20th Street; Allow Capitol Avenue to connect directly with 20th Street. Length = .07 Miles
ISSUES & IDEAS

While simultaneously performing the review of existing conditions, urban analysis, and review of relevant plans; the project team conducted a series of confidential interviews with stakeholders. The purpose of these interviews was to extract from the participants a comprehensive list of issues and concerns to be addressed within the planning process; while discussing specific ideas and opportunities for exploration in the plan. Contained on the following pages, these issues and ideas are shown verbatim, and in no specific order; along with sample imagery for visual description.

COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF ISSUES

The district has been de-prioritized, Critical to increase safety for children, Liberty Elementary and Central High School at max enrollment, Lack of retail, groceries, entertainment opportunities, restaurants, Difficulty attracting the creative class/employees to live in neighborhood, Lack of family amenities, daycare services, family friendly entertainment, and play spaces, Lack of public green space, Corporate plazas are inaccessible from the street, Lack of adequate street tree canopy, Area lacks sufficient historic building stock to support residential rehab, Area lacks affordable housing, Very low rates of home ownership, The district is nameless and has no recognizable identity, purpose, niche, or vision, The district has no clear boundaries or gathering places, Buildings are set back 20-30': creates a negative pedestrian experience, The cost of converting the one-way pairs is prohibitive, One way pairs are a challenge to retail and residential development, High speed one-way streets are dangerous. Incidents of accidents are high, and pedestrian safety is a major concern, Buildings and storefronts are often vacant, The neighborhood is single use: vacant after six pm, 24% of the neighborhood is surface parking, Lots of code violations, Area has wide streets without medians, unfriendly intersections, sidewalks in disrepair, and pedestrian-dead-zones, How do we connect the district to surrounding stronger areas of Midtown, Downtown, the Old Market, Creighton University, and housing areas to the south?, Businesses require safe and easily accessible parking, How to achieve density levels that support bus/trolley lines?, Trolley system is hard sell to the community: people look down on public transportation, Drugs, nuisance crime, car break-ins, and prostitution are problems in the district, Low income users of social services lend the area a reputation of poverty and indigence, Potential problems with high school students in public green space, Leavenworth and 16th Street have reputations as being unsafe.
COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF IDEAS

Leverage existing successful private sector projects to attract development to the district. Form partnerships with the city’s young professional, arts, and cultural groups. Focus development energy and density on the district’s strongest existing streets. Expand the Study Area to include I480 to 24th Street, Leavenworth to Dodge Street. Seek to expand the designated Downtown Improvement District to include the project area, with 24th Street as its western border. Develop 20th street, 24th street, and Dodge Street as major Cultural corridors. Develop Farnam and Harney as multi-purpose “main-streets” including many community amenities. Designate 20th Street as Omaha’s Children’s Corridor, Omaha’s first family oriented cultural, arts, and entertainment district. Develop neighborhood retail that provides healthy amenities and services for residents. Encourage the city to develop strategically located and actively programmed park spaces for the project area. Develop greenways and designated pedestrian paths that cut through the District’s long blocks. Encourage private and corporate owners of green space to open these resources to the public, provide seating and other amenities. Encourage the placement of proposed charter and magnet schools, public elementary and middle schools, early childhood and head start programs within the. Continue to study and develop proposals for a branch library or relocation of the Dale Clark Library to the. Develop for-sale, single family, housing that is affordable for low/middle income residents. Develop mixed-income live/work rental housing units, with neighborhood retail on ground floor. Develop an identifiable name, brand, signage, and marketing campaign for the district. Encourage development that is street fronting, in-fill, dense and mixed-use. Continue to study the costs and benefits of repaving one-way street pairs as two way streets. Implement changes where they would have the most positive impact. Improve the pedestrian experience through repaving and widening sidewalks, placing additional street trees, lighting, and furniture. Implement traffic calming measures such as street diets, rumble strips, and reduced speed limits. Implement plans for a two-way bicycle track along Harney-Dodge. Provide an accessible multi-modal connection between Downtown, Midtown and the area. Initiate a bike-share program with a major bike station in the area. Develop additional streets to cut through the district’s long blocks in key areas. Develop a district shared parking system. Encourage parking structures to allow mixed-uses on the ground floor. Encourage the development of a special taxing district to fund improvements to safety, streetscape, and cleanliness in the district. Develop strategies to bring national retailers, major employers, cultural events and creative businesses to the area.
SHARED STREETS

MIXED-USE DISTRICT

PUBLIC PARK WITH PUBLIC ART

EXAMPLE STREETSCAPE

EXAMPLE STREETSCAPE

EXAMPLE BIKE L ANES & TRANSIT STOP

EXAMPLE MIXED-USE

PUBLIC PARK

URBAN PUBLIC PARK

EXAMPLE TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT
SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this planning process, the team reviewed many documents, conducted field surveys on a variety of conditions, and recorded numerous issues and ideas from stakeholders. Shown on the opposite page, these summary conclusions of the existing conditions and possible opportunities relate to the layers of the built environment including the public realm, neighborhood connectivity, building form, and land uses.

In addition to these built environment scenarios, a variety of policy concerns and planning uncertainties were also discussed in length throughout the process, necessitating the application of a series of policy approaches for the Master Plan. Collectively these built environment scenarios and policy approaches result in a set of planning assumptions that are founding the Master Plan:

PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

- Eminent domain will not be recommended to implement this plan.
- A public-private partnership between the City and development community will be needed to implement this plan.
- Enhanced transit is not a given for this area, and the plan must work with or without the possible transit futures that are currently being assessed as part of another study.
- Any recommendations to amend street directions, capacities, or rights-of-way would need further detailed traffic analyses for consideration by the City.
- Much of the area to the south of Harney Street and west of 24th Street will consist of incremental development and redevelopment, depending primarily on public improvements and new catalytic development.
- The future of the Federal Reserve building and the majority of the block is uncertain, and should therefore have a variety of planning options and alternate futures.
- This area should be composed primarily of residential uses, supported by mixed-uses and neighborhood services as they are supported by the new population.
- The area needs a new central space and new “heart of the community” in order to establish the character necessary to create a genuine place.
- New north/south connectivity will be essential to connect existing and new assets, while increasing connectivity.
- Farnam Street will become the main street for this area, connecting downtown to Midtown Crossing where it should have the densest development and most variety of uses.
- This area should be served by multiple modes of transportation including enhanced transit, buses, bicycles, and cars.
CIVIC SPACE & PUBLIC REALM
Key ideas generated through the process include the need for a strong North/South pedestrian connection through the project area that can connect existing assets to the neighborhood, breaking the large blocks into smaller scaled blocks; need for improvements to existing streetscapes to create walkable, pedestrian friendly streets; and the need for a centralized space that can operate as the “heart of the community” and could include new cultural amenities.

DISTRICT SCALE & URBAN FORM
Key ideas generated through the process include the need for more dense developments along Farnam Street which will create a building wall that reinforces the connection from Downtown to Midtown Crossing; medium scaled, development within the two north blocks consisting of 3 to 5 story heights with parking lots and garages centralized to the block; and lower-scale development and infill development in the remaining areas, roughly 2 to 3 stories.

CONNECTIONS & ACCESSIBILITY
Key ideas generated through the process include the focus on Farnam Street as the main street of the neighborhood with optional transit configurations; potential conversion of a number of streets; possibility of a new north/south street; potential pedestrian connection across the Federal Reserve block; the need to establish a safe connection across 20th Street into the existing Downtown; bike lanes on Harney Street; and the possible long-term reconfiguration of 25th Street.

DEVELOPMENT & LAND USES
Key ideas generated through the process include the focus of mixed-use (and any commercial) along Farnam Street, further reinforcing the connection from Downtown to Midtown Crossing; the capitalization on the institutions along 20th Street (such as the YMCA and the Children’s Museum), as well as along Dodge Street; the allocation of residential throughout the two northern blocks; the connection to existing Downtown mixed-uses; and future development to the west and south.
Through the process and with this analysis and planning context in mind, the project team developed a master plan for the neighborhood development and housing study that would embrace all of the ideas supplied by the community and address all of the concerns expressed by the stakeholders and leadership. This master plan was created to establish a clear vision for the future of the area, and to act as a guide for future growth; while simultaneously remaining flexible to a variety of outside factors that may affect future outcomes. This master plan is based on a series of key catalytic projects, private development and redevelopment opportunities, new public spaces, and essential public realm improvements necessary to establish the area as a neighborhood, capture new growth, and provide a safe, vibrant, and pedestrian-friendly environment for future housing, services, and civic amenities.
THE VISION

Within the past few years, the City of Omaha, local developers and vested neighborhood associations have seen the opportunities in this area. Through various planning efforts and development projects, they have focused on catalyzing positive change for the future; and the renewed interest in downtown comes with a change in demands from the status quo. National and international trends show that urban and suburban residents are recognizing the benefits of walkable and urban mixed-use communities. With rising gas prices and ongoing infrastructure maintenance concerns, new transit options are in demand to provide citizens with alternatives. Omaha has recognized these changing demands and this study is intended to foster this change.

The vision for this area can be described as a vibrant, dense mixed-use urban neighborhood centered around an active public space with many cultural arts and family oriented amenities; connected to the city through enhanced transit, safe pedestrian access, and alternative modes of transportation. Primarily this vision is defined by an east-west main street connecting Downtown Omaha to Midtown Crossing where the neighborhood is anchored by a central open space that connects north to the districts existing cultural amenities. Farnam Street is the ideal main street for the neighborhood, clearly providing the neighborhood with the capacity to inspire catalytic change, as has been accomplished in Midtown Crossing where it has been converted to two-way traffic. A new north-south street (shown above) will connect from the Joslyn Art Museum to the new central open space. This new street will be a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented, environmentally friendly, arts-based experience; providing the neighborhood with an intimate “hang out place” where transit and cultural amenities can be accessed. Facing the new open space, the north side of Farnam Street will act as a continuous building wall framing the new public space, and helping to activate the streetscape throughout the entire area. Private development and redevelopment will fill the areas between 24th Street and 20th Street. As an edge between Downtown Omaha and this area, 20th Street will be treated as a major seam absorbing some of the vibrance of downtown into the future neighborhood. This immediate adjacency to Downtown Omaha makes it an ideal location for future housing; and it is imperative that this area develop a mixture of both affordable, market-rate affordable, and market-rate housing to establish the area as a socially-equitable, diverse community. To support this housing, the neighborhood must also contain a variety of mixed-use buildings and neighborhood services, which will ultimately establish the area as a great centralized neighborhood and affordable place to live, work, and play.
REDEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Forming a basis for the vision, the following principles are intended to guide decision making and uphold the vision for the area, as the unforeseen challenges of implementation unfold:

1. Promote policy changes for economic, social, and environmental improvements within the area.
2. Create an authentic place rooted in the specific nature, culture, and history of the area.
3. Create a walkable, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use, and mixed-income neighborhood in the area.
4. Expand on existing assets and develop new centers of innovation, education, and culture in the area.
5. Increase the appropriate range, scale, and density of uses within the area.
6. Create a vibrant public realm of civic spaces and complete streets within the area.
7. Create a healthy, humane and active living environment to improve the quality of life within the area.
8. Provide and promote varied forms of transportation and connectivity through the area.
9. Adapt and re-use sites, landscapes, and existing buildings within the area.
10. Build the area in a holistic manner for multi-generational, long-term sustainability.
PLAN COMPONENTS
THE FOLLOWING ARE THE COMPONENTS OF THE PLAN:

KEY CATALYTIC PROJECTS:

1. The Highline Building
   (Currently Undergoing Renovation)
2. Harney Street Bikeway
   (Currently in Planning Stages)
3. New North/South Street Connection
4. Farnam Main Street
   (See Options)
5. The Rose Theater Park
   and building expansion
6. Joslyn Pedestrian Connection
7. 20th Street Family and
   Children’s Corridor
8. The Federal Reserve Site
   (See Options)

PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS:

9. Douglas Street Improvements
   (Currently Undergoing Construction)
10. Dodge Street Improvements
11. Harney Street Improvements
12. 24th Street Improvements
13. 25th Street Improvements
    and Re-Alignments

DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

14. Proposed Residential Development
15. Proposed Mixed-Use Development
16. Infill Development and Redevelopment
17. Non-Profit and Corporate
    Redevelopment
18. Future Infill Development and
    Redevelopment
1 - THE HIGHLINE BUILDING
CURRENTLY UNDERGOING RENOVATION

The Northern Natural Gas building is an iconic structure on the Omaha skyline. Standing on the top of the slope at the west edge of Omaha’s downtown, the building has been purchased and plans are underway for its redevelopment. The exterior of this prototypical international style building will be restored to its 1957 character. Steps are currently being made to determine the tint of the original windows and new state-of-the-art insulated glazing units with a matching tint will be used in the restoration process. On the interior, the redevelopment will renovate all office areas of the building into 194 units of market-rate apartments, where there will be a mix of approximately 2/3 two-bedroom units to 1/3 one-bedroom units. Public areas of the building, including the auto concourse and employee entrance, the public entrance, and the core elements will be restored to their 1957 era appearance. A rooftop deck and community room will be located on the 7th floor. There will be a fitness room, larger community room, and leasing office on the ground floor. There will be no commercial space to lease in the building. The two parking structures south of the tower shall be restored to their 1960s era character and will include a total of 463 stalls.

In the end, this adventurous project will house a mixture of families, students, and young professionals; representing, in many ways, a microcosm of the goals for the entire project area. Furthermore, the Highline Building along with undergoing improvements to the Douglas Street streetscape, will add a significant population into the area and foster the beginnings of a mixed-income, diverse neighborhood and a renewed interest in downtown living.
The Omaha Transportation Master Plan, which was adopted by the City Council in September of 2012, is a vision for a high quality of life for the people of Omaha. The plan seeks to provide balanced options for enhanced mobility by attaining a safe and healthy environment; while creating livable and connected neighborhoods, and promoting economic returns with fiscal stability. Downtown Omaha has a dense roadway network, but poses a different set of challenges for mobility. Through a process of existing conditions analysis, public involvement, project development and evaluation, and recommendations, this Transportation Element is a guide for the City of Omaha’s future transportation investments by prioritizing key projects throughout the area. The total list of projects was a starting point to evaluate a prioritized list of transportation improvements. To help determine priorities, projects that were neighborhood-level bicycle improvements, recreation trails, or dependent on private development were removed from further consideration.

As part of the Omaha Transportation Master Plan, the Harney Street Bikeway is the most prioritized project (B-100) in the city. This project will involve a bicycle route/lanes from 10th Street extending west to 24th Street (roughly one mile in length), where a two-way dedicated bike lanes with median will be constructed.

(This text was extracted from the final revised draft of the Omaha Transportation Master Plan in August of 2012)
**3 - NEW NORTH / SOUTH STREET CONNECTION**

This catalytic project will be the first new significant public street and right-of-way improvements recommended for the project area. Using vacant parcels and under-utilized surface parking lots, the team recommends the insertion of a new north/south public street connection from Dodge Street to Farnam Street. This new street should be negotiated to protect existing residential properties (such as the Westbrook Tower) and allow for the appropriate reconfiguration of other items such as the drop-off circle in front of the Scoular Building, and access the gym in the basement area. By working closely with a select few property owners to negotiate these land purchases, a critical pedestrian and vehicular connection across the Project Area will be achieved, establishing four clear development blocks framed with new frontage.

This new public street will shorten the two east-west central blocks of the project area, increasing connectivity by providing an easier, more flexible circulation through the area, rather than forcing circulation through and around the district. In turn, this would add a more intimate public street frontage for development which will link the open space on the south block with the Joslyn Museum, plaza, and Central High School on the north by means of a wide, vibrant streetscape with public art, an eco-landscape, and many outdoor amenities such as exterior dining. Additionally, this street will reduce speeds through the area, providing a reason for people to slow and stop within the area, further enhancing the pedestrian-friendly and safe qualities of the environment. In the end, a traffic study of the three new intersections would confirm or disconfirm the need for signalization.

Long-term, this new street will set up the four development blocks for the prime location of residential development and redevelopment; while connecting the Joslyn Art Museum to the potential enhanced transit along Farnam Street and new cultural institutions on the Federal Reserve block. This new catalytic connection would provide much needed neighborhood services and hang-out places for new area residents; as well as, establishing a brand for the area as the new heart of Downtown Omaha.
STREET DESIGN & CROSS-SECTION

The elements of this new street connection should be designed to facilitate an engaging, mixed-use pedestrian experience between the Joslyn Museum and Farnam Street. It is important to note that this new street should receive careful consideration in terms of design detailing and engineering review of longitudinal (North/South) grade changes in order to negotiate the sloping terrain with the new storefronts or cafes. This will ensure smooth transitions from inside to outside, while establishing a signature streetscape and active frontages with vibrant spaces.

Street parking should be considered for specific locations along the new street in order to provide a buffer to traffic and enclose the sidewalk. Street parking should be limited in others to allow maximum functional use of the sidewalk spaces and exterior open spaces; while providing convenient access to buildings.

Dimensions of the new street include: two, eleven foot travel lanes; and two eight foot parking lanes, as necessary.
4 - FARNAM MAIN STREET

FROM DOWNTOWN TO MIDTOWN CROSSING

In order to connect the project area into the larger planning context of Downtown Omaha and Midtown Crossing over the medium-term, Farnam Street should become a major focus for new cultural facilities and open spaces, development and redevelopment, transportation improvements, and possible enhanced transit. Clearly, Farnam Street is a main thoroughfare connecting the Medical Center and new development to Downtown Omaha. Along this length of Farnam Street, there are many major entrances to key civic buildings and amenities such as Omaha City Hall, Douglas County District Court, the Federal Reserve Building, Midtown Crossing, and the Gene Leahy Mall.

In this context, Farnam Street should act as the main street for the area providing a pedestrian friendly, walkable environment for retail, dining, and entertainment. From this perspective, the transition of Farnam Street to the main street for downtown has already begun in the Midtown Crossing where a mixed-use area of new shops, restaurants, and storefronts has been activated by high-end residential units, narrowing of the traffic lanes, streetscape improvements, branding and the conversion of the street to a two-way traffic system.
LONG TERM CONSIDERATION FOR TWO-WAY CONVERSION & RECOMMENDED FURTHER STUDY

Following in the recommendations of the Downtown 2030 Master Plan, the team performed a brief study of Farnam Street, counting pedestrian and vehicular entrances, building fronts, and anchor projects (such as the Medical Center, Midtown Crossing, and City Hall). The conversion to two-way traffic will allow Farnam Street to act as a major spine throughout Downtown Omaha linking the new neighborhood to both old and new developments, cultural amenities, the open space network, and jobs.

In Midtown Crossing, there is great precedent for this conversion already in place, where the street has been converted to two-way traffic, and set the tone for the future of the street. These recommendations seek to extend this energy and vibrance through the new neighborhood and into Downtown Omaha. This plan asserts to carry forward the recommendation of the Downtown 2030 Master Plan, that in order to fully establish a pedestrian friendly streetscape and facilitate the creation of a main street environment; Farnam Street should be considered for the long-term conversion to two-way traffic from the Midtown Crossing to the Old Market, pending a further detailed traffic study of the area.
OPTIONS A1 & A2:
MODIFICATION OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Should the results of further study prove that Farnam Street be converted to two-way traffic, the following two options would be the minimum modifications necessary to establish a main street environment. Both of these options embrace the one-way coupler system of Farnam Street and Harney Street through the project area in order to connect downtown to midtown crossing. Additionally, both of these alternatives suggest minimum levels of improvements and enhancements to facilitate new private development along the north side of Farnam Street, while ensuring a vibrant streetscape and pedestrian realm.

The significant difference between both of these options primarily resides in the inclusion of enhanced transit (such as a streetcar or bus rapid transit) over the long term. In the event that a streetcar (or any fixed rail infrastructure) is utilized on the one-way coupler system, it will be critical to ensure that the final cross-section is developed such that it will provide for the safe and intelligible use of the new system, while working with the one-way traffic pattern and preparing for a two-way conversion over the long term. See OPTION A1 and OPTION A2 below for further details.

OPTION A1
IMPROVED STREETSCAPE

Shown below, this option would include a variety of enhancements to the existing conditions of the streetscape to facilitate new development including expanded sidewalks, specialty paving materials, new light fixtures, new tree grates and trees, enhanced landscaping, raingardens, and bumpouts.

PROPOSED VIEW

Dimensions would include four, eleven feet travel lanes east (away from downtown); two, eight foot parking lanes, one on either side of the street. These dimensions would allow reclamation of about six feet of sidewalk on either side of the street.
**OPTION A2**

**IMPROVED STREETScape WITH ENHANCED TRANSIT**

Shown here, the existing configuration of Farnam Street includes four westbound lanes of traffic with two parking lanes on either side of the street. This configuration occurs in downtown and through the study area, to Midtown Crossing where the configuration switches to two lanes of travel westbound and a single lane of travel eastbound.

Shown below, this option would include a variety of enhancements to the existing conditions of the streetscape to facilitate the new development including expanded sidewalks, specialty paving materials, new light fixtures, new tree grates and trees, enhanced landscaping, raingardens, and bumpouts; while locating a singular one-way enhanced transit system on the south side of the street, and parking lanes on both sides of the street. This option must be completed in coordination with a similar cross-section established on either Harney Street or Douglas Street in order to allow for a two-way enhanced transit system connecting downtown to Midtown Crossing.

**PROPOSED VIEW**

Dimensions would include three eleven feet travel lanes east (away from downtown); two, seven or eight feet parking lanes on both sides of the street; and one, twelve foot enhanced transit lane (such as a streetcar or bus rapid transit) on the south side of the street. In the event that further study illustrates that conversion to two-way is feasible; the street cross-section can be mirrored across the centerline to achieve the same cross-section as **OPTION B2.**
**OPTIONS B1 & B2:**

**LONG TERM OPTIONS FOR TWO-WAY CONVERSION**

The City of Omaha is currently completing an alternatives analysis to determine feasibility, alignments, and costs of adding an enhanced transit line from Downtown Omaha to the Medical Center. The design for the Farnam Main Street should account for either a future with or without transit. In order to make transit more feasible, the recommendation is as follows: both single and double track systems should be considered to reduce the hard costs of the transit initially, as well as the maintenance and operations costs over the long term. See OPTION B1 and OPTION B2 below for further details.

**OPTION B1**

**TWO-WAY CONVERSION WITHOUT ENHANCED TRANSIT**

Shown below, this option would not include enhanced transit immediately, but would account for it over the long-term by sharing the outside lane of traffic with enhanced transit. This option would include street parking for the full length.

**PROPOSED VIEW**

Dimensions would include two, eleven feet travel lanes east; two, eleven feet travel lanes west; two, nine foot parking lanes, one on either side of the street.
OPTION B2
TWO-WAY CONVERSION WITH ENHANCED TRANSIT

Shown below, OPTION B1 can be reconfigured over the long-term to account for enhanced transit such as a streetcar or bus rapid transit by modifying the lane widths and adding the infrastructure (if necessary; depending on the type) to facilitate transit through the area.

Dimensions would include two, eleven feet travel lanes east/west; two enhanced transit lanes (potentially shared with street traffic) east/west; and two, eight foot parking lanes, one on either side of the street.

EXAMPLE STREETCAR:
SINGLE TRACK VS DOUBLE TRACK

With enhanced transit, specifically in the event of a streetcar through the project area, there is also the option of a two-way, single track or a double track system. The advantages of a single track system include reduced construction cost relative to infrastructure, frequency of stops, and configuration of stations. Drawbacks include higher operation costs due to more coordination of transit schedules, the need for additional pedestrian infrastructure to facilitate passenger loading in the center corridor, and limited long-term capacity of the system. Either single track or double track system, will be more cost effective than two single direction tracks on separate streets, which will increase construction and operations substantially.
5 - THE ROSE THEATER PARK
AND BUILDING EXPANSION

The Rose Children’s Theater is both historically and currently a major anchor and cultural amenity for this area. Based on conversations with leadership, this plan asserts that the Rose should work with the Federal Reserve to expand the existing facilities into a new park, and add an addition on the lot immediately south. The building expansion should include a number of additional spaces for dance and theater training, as well as provide space for relocation of the seamshop from the north side of the building. With the relocation of this seamshop, a new cafe along Farnam Street will activate the area and bring foot traffic into the new park. The park should consist of a combination of hardscapes and softscapes amenable to outdoor classes and exterior programming during the summers. Key elements of the plan are shown below and include a pedestrian plaza connecting from Farnam Street to Harney Street, a tree orchard, open/green spaces for programming, an exterior theater area evening showings, and new angled street parking along the southern portion of the site.
6 - THE JOSLYN PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION

The Joslyn Art Museum is currently disconnected from the district and the new development within the project area. With the new north/south connector street in place, there is opportunity to reconnect the museum (along with the exterior plaza) and Central High School back into the neighborhood, and create a safe, pedestrian street connection from Dodge Street south to Harney Street, the future new cultural facilities, open space, and possible enhanced transit.

The new pedestrian connection should include district wayfinding, pedestrian signalization, crosswalks, streetscape amenities, and other branding elements such as unique paving, specialty lighting, public art, and sustainable landscaping. These improvements will provide easy, safe access between Central High School and the Joslyn Art Museum, further incentivizing students and patrons to migrate south toward the new public spaces.
Along 20th Street, both in the project area and just to the south, there are many significant family and children based institutions such as the Rose Theater, the YMCA, and the Children’s Museum of Omaha. Over the years, they have acted as anchors for the community, providing entertainment for families throughout Omaha. 20th Street should be improved to support these institutions and the atmosphere which forms their missions. Along the west side of the street there should be a wide allee providing a protected, safe walking environment for students walking south from Central High School, as well as mother with a stroller visiting the Children’s Museum. Also along this side, there should be district branding, lighting, parking way-finding, and designated vehicular drop-offs necessary to support the creation of a vibrant, family and children-based environment from Creighton University on the north to several blocks south of the Children’s Museum. 20th Street should become a seam between downtown and the new neighborhood.
8 - THE FEDERAL RESERVE SITE

Perhaps one of the most important sites within the project area, the Federal Reserve site sits at the heart of the area. According to our discussions, we understand that this building has undergone changes in use over the last few years, prompting the question “what could this site be in the future?”
Centrally located and easily accessible, the site faces onto two (2) of the most important streets in the Downtown: Farnam Street and 24th Street. With Farnam Street operating as the new main street, and 24th Street acting as one of the most important north / south connectors in the City; this site has incredible potential to anchor the study area as a cultural destination, and subsequently catalyze new development and redevelopment of the surrounding neighborhoods and adjacent properties. As the future of this site remains uncertain, we have proposed a series of possible future scenarios for the site. These solutions may respond to the varying outcomes during the implementation process, allowing the site to be transformed however little or much the political and development community may be able to achieve.
**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Currently, the Federal Reserve site sits centrally located in Omaha on the southeast corner of Farnam Street and 24th Street. The roughly 6 3/4 acre site contains the existing Federal Reserve Building, an under-utilized surface parking lot, and a green space immediately adjacent to the Rose Theater. Understanding that the realities of development and challenges of property acquisition may not lead to the westward expansion of the Rose Theater, it is important to acknowledge that the green space may continue to function under control of the Federal Reserve for the foreseeable future. Thus one possible future for the site may amount in no change to the existing conditions of the site, building, and subsequently the surrounding area. In this future, the building and parking configurations would stay the same, allowing the varying uses to occupy the building as they do today. With this reality, it would be critical for leadership of the Federal Reserve and the Rose Theater to work together on improvements to the green space and investigate cross-programming possibilities which could activate and animate the outdoor space.

In order to address the far reaching aspirations that we heard throughout the process, we have developed a series of three possible future scenarios for the site. These scenarios do not represent the only outcomes for this site, but rather they incorporate the many ideas we heard from the participants. These possible future scenarios are as follows:
POSSIBLE FUTURE SCENARIO #1
REUSE WITH BASIC IMPROVEMENTS

One possible future scenario for the site may involve the structured re-use of the existing Federal Reserve Building for more inclusive, active uses. In this alternative, the Federal Reserve Building is made available for rehabilitation and basic upgrades to allow for new or alternate uses such as a community facility, a new library, or a new cultural facility. In this case, modifications and upgrades to the existing building should be completed including retrofitting the new use and adding rooftop gardens or green roofs. An addition and a new entrance to the improved building is added on the south portion of the site which will face onto an open green that is framed by an allee on one side and an orchard (with fountains) on the other side. Beneath these active green spaces, a one level parking structure (accessible through the natural grade of the topography on-site) will allow all of the parking needs to be met for the new uses.

The renovated building and associated public spaces will provide a new civic facade to the building, heightening the character of the area, and celebrating the new collective based use. Combined with the improved Rose Theater Park and building expansion, this block will form a central collective space for the new residents, and begin to brand the area as a thriving cultural district.
POSSIBLE FUTURE SCENARIO #2
MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

One possible future scenario for the site may involve transforming the existing Federal Reserve building into a mega mixed-use development. This possible future proposes that the existing building be retrofitted for a mix of uses including commercial and office. A large mixed-use building can be placed along Farnam Street reinforcing the building wall, while a parking garage can be located central to the block (accessible from a drive off of Harney Street) with a residential liner building facing south onto Harney Street and west onto 24th Street. Additionally, a mixed-use liner building on the north face of the existing building to frame the street wall out to Farnam Street. Should this retrofitting of the existing Federal Reserve building be infeasible or undesirable, the building can be demolished and mixed-use development can be extended to face onto the pedestrian plaza or open space of the Rose Theater, and additional residential development added facing onto Harney Street.

A mega development of this scale has the potential to affect substantial change within the surrounding neighborhood, particularly the blocks south across Harney Street and west across 24th Street. Combined with an improved green space, this block will form an active entertainment area for the new residents, and continue to brand the area as a thriving mixed-use, cultural district.
POSSIBLE FUTURE SCENARIO #3
NEW CULTURAL FACILITY & PUBLIC SQUARE

One possible future scenario for the site may involve its complete redevelopment, including the existing Federal Reserve building, parking lot, and green space. In this solution, the existing building has reached the end of its usable life allowing for removal and redevelopment of the site with a new cultural facility and public square. Though programmatically uncertain at this point, a new cultural facility will act as an anchor for the neighborhood, providing momentum for the redevelopment of many sites south of Harney Street and west of 24th Street. The outdoor space will include a great lawn, tree grove, allee (on the north side of the site), fountains, and a cafe/restaurant. Furthermore, as the future of enhanced transit throughout the area is being considered, it would be important to coordinate the new public spaces and facilities with any new transit opportunities as they arise.

This central public space will provide the neighborhood with passive recreation opportunities, along with outdoor educational and community activities coordinated with the new facility. Below this public space, a one story parking garage will provide the facility with parking for daily use and special events throughout the year. The facility, in combination with the Rose expansion, will act both as the “heart of the community” and a destination within greater Omaha.
9-13 PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

Throughout the area, and in association with many of the particular catalytic projects, there should be a variety of public realm improvements within the rights-of-way along streets. In the end, all streets should be improved in order to provide the neighborhood with the highest quality streetscape environment. The following is a list of streets to be improved, along with a basic idea of what the improvements should contain:

**DOUGLAS STREET IMPROVEMENTS**
Currently undergoing construction, this street should be improved throughout the area, connecting the Highline (currently under renovation) with downtown. These improvements should include street trees, tree grates, raingardens, landscape elements, permeable paving in street parking, street lights (both pedestrian and vehicular), benches, and bike racks.

**HARNEY STREET IMPROVEMENTS**
This street should be improved from Downtown to 24th Street. In addition to the Harney Street Bikeway Project, these improvements should include street trees, tree grates, raingardens, landscape elements, permeable paving in street parking, street lights (both pedestrian and vehicular), benches, and bike racks. With further study, Harney Street should be considered for conversion to two-way traffic.

**DODGE STREET IMPROVEMENTS**
This street should be improved from downtown to the Joslyn Museum. These improvements should include specialty paving, environmental branding and way-finding, street trees, tree grates, raingardens, landscape elements, permeable paving in street parking, street lights (both pedestrian and vehicular), benches, and bike racks.

**24TH STREET IMPROVEMENTS**
This street should be improved from North to South Omaha. These improvements should include specialty paving, environmental branding and way-finding street trees, tree grates, raingardens, landscape elements, permeable paving in street parking, street lights (both pedestrian and vehicular), benches, and bike racks. With further study, 24th Street should be considered for conversion to two-way traffic.

**25TH STREET IMPROVEMENTS AND RE-ALIGNMENTS**
This street should be improved within the project area. These improvements should include street trees, tree grates, landscape elements, permeable paving in street parking, street lights (both pedestrian and vehicular), benches, and bike racks. Also, the intersection of 25th Street and Farnam Street should be reconfigured into two “T” intersections with two-way traffic (north/south), when (and if) 24th Street is converted to two-way traffic.
14-18 DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Throughout the plan there are a number of key development and redevelopment projects including residential, mixed-use, and infill projects. Through our conversations with local land owners, non-profits, and developers, most of these projects would occur over the medium-term; a time frame which has been suggested relative to the recommended public realm improvements and the adjacency of these new developments to the key catalytic projects.

With respect to the Project Area which contains many vacant and under utilized parcels, we understand that implementation of the plan may occur over a number of years through a variety of individuals; and that land acquisition may prove very challenging. With this in mind, we are recommending that leadership structure incentives to focus new development and redevelopment along Farnam Street and the new north/south connector street in order to support the potential of enhanced transit, and reinforce the new heart of Downtown.
The plan recommendations contained within this section of the study are primarily founded on a variety of assumptions and assessments drawn from previous planning efforts, and focused through the in-depth input from stakeholders. During the planning process, the team identified demographic shifts, estimated projected trends, and developed basic user-types for the future housing. With these user types in mind, the team then reviewed a number of local building typologies, and proposed a basic approach to affordable housing. In summary of this section, our approach is rooted in the idea that the neighborhood should be constituted by a range of user types and a mixture of incomes living within a variety of building types in an equitable and affordable neighborhood. This should be supported by a vibrant public realm, walkable land uses, and alternate forms of transportation.
MARKET

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Downtown is still the business and cultural center of Omaha, with 50,000 jobs or 11% of City employment (according to the US Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics). Where the CBD is primarily commercial, the downtown area is only home to around 4% of downtown employees. With a high concentration of employment, it would make sense for future policies and development to target the downtown neighborhoods for residential growth, providing homes close to jobs. Although downtown will remain a net importer of workers, providing a balance of uses will bring additional vibrancy and will reduce auto dependence by offering residences and neighborhood amenities close to employment opportunities. Several neighborhoods adjacent to the CBD are poised to capture this market, including the project area.

While much of the employment in Omaha is with larger firms that require 35,000 square feet or more of space, around 43% of the market is for smaller offices requiring less than 17,000 square feet (US Census Bureau). Smaller offices are frequently overlooked by real estate statistics, and under-appreciated as an important market for downtowns. Smaller users frequently do not fit into the floor-plates of large office towers and as creative and entrepreneurial start-ups often prefer smaller buildings in neighborhoods with retail amenities and transportation options. This market may be well suited for commercial space in the project area which could reasonably capture 480,000 square feet of small office use over the next 20 years. As part of the redevelopment strategy for the project area, one possible solution is to plan for neighborhood retail and services in new mixed use buildings which will allow office users to occupy these space until the market matures. Through this approach to new housing, an immediate population and local demand for services can be established.
**DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES**

Between 2000 and 2010 Omaha saw a decrease in population for the 25-44 age bracket, while the 45-64 age bracket saw an increase. Although there was a net decrease in households, the new residents were older and wealthier. At the same time, the City experienced a decrease in households with below average incomes and an increase in households with above average incomes.

The one mile area surrounding the project area experienced a slightly different trend over the same period from 2000 to 2010. Here, the growth was also in upper incomes, but lead by the younger age bracket, 25-44. There was also a growth in above average incomes of all ages. Five year projections to 2015 suggest a continuation of this trend within middle and upper incomes led by the 25 to 44 age bracket.

### CITY OF OMAHA 2000-2010 CHANGE IN AGE AND INCOME

- **< $25,000**
- **$25,000-$49,999**
- **$50,000-$74,999**
- **$75,000-$99,999**
- **$100,000+**

### 1 MILE STUDY AREA 2000-2010 CHANGE IN AGE AND INCOME

- **< $25,000**
- **$25,000-$49,999**
- **$50,000-$74,999**
- **$75,000-$99,999**
- **$100,000+**

### 1 MILE STUDY AREA 2010-2015 CHANGE IN AGE AND INCOME

- **< $25,000**
- **$25,000-$49,999**
- **$50,000-$74,999**
- **$75,000-$99,999**
- **$100,000+**
PROJECTIONS
At the time of this study, growth projections for Omaha are being revised based on 2010 Census data. Previous projections from 2006 suggested the city would grow by 13,000 single family households and 14,000 multifamily households over a 30 year period (MAPACOG). Adjusted for the actual population (2010 Census) the 20 year projection is estimated at around 19,000 households, or 950 households per year. Meanwhile, 39% of existing lifestyle segments in Omaha prefer downtown neighborhoods (ESRI BAO). If future populations reflect current lifestyles, approximately 7,000 new households over 20 years (around 350 per year) will be looking for units in walkable downtown neighborhoods. However, it is reasonable to expect that this percentage is low, as trends suggest a growing preference for urban living, especially among “Generation Y.” Omaha statistics reflect that young professionals like to live downtown, close to amenities, and near other young professionals. Generation Y is only reluctantly leaving their urban lifestyle as they start their families. Many couples are choosing to stay in their downtown neighborhoods, where they are close to their network of friends.

Omaha has a great opportunity to provide downtown housing for these families adjacent to Central High School, where unlike many other comparable cities, the downtown school district is one of the best in the country. Based on capacity determined by the downtown master plan compared to the projected demand for downtown housing, the project area could expect to capture 10% to 20% of households, or 700 to 1,400 new units over 20 years.
WHOLE COMMUNITIES

“Whole Communities” are places that offer housing for all incomes, ages and lifestyles with access to neighborhood services and employment. The loss of younger, lower income households is still a concern for downtown since lower income households are disproportionately impacted by transportation costs. It is important that lower income households have access to the employment opportunities downtown, and that the community provide a mix of housing to serve a range of income levels. Current downtown employment has a mix of 47% earning over $40,000 per year, 35% earning $15,000 to $40,000 and 18% earning less than $15,000 per year (US Census, LED). This should not be confused with household income, since a household may have more than one wage earner. Still, affordable rents (or mortgages) could be targeted with 47% over $1,200 per month, 35% between $500 and $1,200 and 18% less than $500 per month.

There are many ways to achieve mixed income communities. Unfortunately, it is difficult to provide the lowest income units without subsidy. At the same time, Low Income Housing Tax Credits are very competitive and difficult to secure. The project area offers a great opportunity to place new affordable units next to market rate ones, helping to support whole communities.

There are few neighborhoods such as this one, located with the potential to offer units within walking distance to the employment center. Where this proximity is attractive to wealthier households as well, this neighborhood should be a priority for grant-makers to prevent displacement of existing residents. Besides the importance of subsidies, there is room for market solutions to affordability. Not all lower income units are poor families as many may be students or single young professionals. These households are good candidates for smaller units with less expensive finishes. With a smaller household, these residents can afford the same price per square foot on a smaller number of square feet.

Another common strategy to provide for affordability as well as accommodate individual preferences is to offer units with a range of finishes. This works well with loft conversions, which are often found in neighborhoods similar to the project area. Lofts can be finished to a variety of degrees, with “hard lofts” having only the most rudimentary facilities and costing less to provide. These spaces are popular with artists who may prefer the openness for studio space, and are happy to decorate and refinish the units themselves, but have limited income to support the sales price. These residents are very desirable in fringe areas that are not yet established neighborhoods. Empty nesters and young professionals may prefer to have the same space designed with higher end appliances and finishes. In a market rate scenario, the units could be specified by the prospective homeowner to meet their budget.
BACKGROUND

Despite many years of progress in home ownership rates and an increased housing quality throughout the nation, the historic challenges of poverty and the face of the new economy have left, and may leave more of our citizens behind. The “havenots” (as many have described them) are constituted by the homeless and low income populations and in many cases ethnic and racial minorities. To these members of our society, housing opportunities are limited as a result of a number of deficiencies including the lack of affordable housing products and the limitations on financial tools available for use; a lack of knowledge about the home purchasing process; and social injustices that distance minorities and ethnic citizens from real estate and mortgage lending institutions. The City of Omaha is no stranger to the challenges of providing quality, affordable housing for its community members.

Looking back over the last thirty years of housing it has become clearly evident that the ideas of consolidating low-income, very low-income, and affordable housing units in dense, urban areas has not been an effective use of federal housing resources; and it has also not been particularly successful in creating long-term, sustainable communities which remain diverse, vibrant, and economically empowered. Furthermore, the last decade has proven more over that successful affordable housing should be viewed more holistically; and built as part of mixed-income housing developments or mixed-income neighborhoods which will provide a stable, attractive community with price ranges capable of accommodating the needs of a variety of households.

There are a variety of approaches to locating affordable housing units within a community. These approaches range from recommending isolated towers of low-income families together in specific areas of the City (not recommended here) to focusing on a particular percentage of affordable units mixed within a singular buildings. These varying approaches are dictated by the funding sources available to the developers at the time, and often result in the creation of different types of places and character. In any case from a design perspective, affordable housing is identical to market-rate housing, which will have typical sized units, nice finishes, and community/public spaces included within each development; only differing from market-rate housing relative to the funding source for the individual project. In the end affordable housing should appear the same as market-rate housing, thus having no outward differences or visible affects on the quality of neighborhood and creation of place, further accomplishing the social goals of mixed-income communities.
APPROACH
As our approach to affordable housing is rooted in the funding sources available to the development community, the establishment of equitable housing opportunities throughout Downtown and greater Omaha can primarily depend upon a few key programs. Those programs include: the Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) program, the Collaborative Resource Allocation for Nebraska (CRANE) program, and the Multi-Family Tax Exempt Bonds program. With these programs at hand and the aforementioned goals of creating a prosperous mixed-income community in mind, the recommended course of action is to have a blend of projects funded by these three sources mixed throughout the Downtown. The total recommended amount of affordable housing should account for between ten percent and fifteen percent of the total units available on the market. Details on these programs include the following:

LIHTC (TAX CREDITS)*
As part of the Tax Reform Act of 1986, the United States Congress created the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) to promote development of affordable rental housing for low-income individuals and families. To date, it has been the most successful rental housing production program in Nebraska, creating thousands of residences with very affordable rents. The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, rather than a direct subsidy, encourages investment of private capital in the development of rental housing by providing a credit to offset an investor’s federal income tax liability.

CRANE*
The Collaborative Resource Allocation for Nebraska (CRANE) program is a strategic allocation process between NIFA and other collaborating resource providers to accomplish difficult projects. The focus and primary purpose of the CRANE program is to encourage the development of affordable housing through long-term, coordinated job creation/enhancement, housing development and community development strategies in Nebraska. Together, NIFA and other collaborating resource providers work with communities and neighborhoods, who have joined with for-profits and non-profits, that commit to participate in the CRANE Program.

MULTIFAMILY TAX-EXEMPT BONDS*
NIFA has the authority to issue revenue bonds or other debt instruments to finance projects that involve the acquisition, construction or rehabilitation of rental housing projects in Nebraska for low to moderate-income households. If the bonds meet federal tax law requirements, the interest on the bonds is exempt from federal income tax and Nebraska state income tax. The bonds are repaid from the proceeds received by NIFA from the private developer under a revenue agreement (such as a lease, loan agreement or installment sale contract). Projects financed under the Multifamily Financing program are subject to the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program administered by NIFA. Therefore, a specified minimum percentage of units in the project must be set-aside for occupancy by low-income households. All other units must be rented to low and moderate-income households (incomes not in excess of 150% of area median income).

*This information, and further information on these programs may be obtained from the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority.
INFILL & TYPOLOGIES

INFILL STRATEGY & REDEVELOPMENT
As this plan represents an idealized outcome for the project area, it is likely that during implementation there will be infill developments and particular site redevelopments which are not in accordance with this vision. This may be caused by factors ranging from fragmented ownership to the infeasibility of land acquisition and consolidation. In the event that opportunity arises which does not match the plan, the characteristics of these alternate infill and redevelopment should include:

- Include a mixture of new iconic building types and new infill buildings typologies.
- Use successful, local building typologies and relate to the remaining historic buildings in scale, materials, fenestration, forms and textures.
- Use flexible, mixed-use, multi-story buildings that maintain the urban form, building lines, and density.
- Establish relationships and dialogues between buildings and public gathering spaces to strengthen character.
- Create pedestrian-friendly streetscapes through active, vibrant, environmentally sensitive pedestrian amenities.
- Provide access to safe and functional parking zones, which should be located internal to the blocks.
- Encourage ground floor transparency with flexible commercial bays, and multiple entrances.
- Utilize shared amenities within commercial and residential buildings when possible.

BUILDING TYPOLOGIES
The plan for the project area was constructed using a variety of regionally and locally applicable building typologies. Primarily due to the desire for more density and supportive services, the plan was constructed using the Apartment Building and Mixed-Use Building typologies. However, as implementation unfolds over the course of the next fifteen plus years, it may be necessary to infill and redevelop the neighborhood with other applicable typologies more responsive to the evolving user types and market demands. The recommended typologies for use within the project area are shown on the following pages:

1. Apartment Buildings
2. Mixed-Use Buildings
3. Townhomes
4. Rowhouses
5. Condominiums
6. High-Rise Residential Towers
1-APARTMENT BUILDINGS

Apartment buildings are typically three to four story rectangular buildings with multiple apartment units per floor. Buildings in this category are entirely residential or have first floor tenants in support of the upper residential function. Apartment buildings appear as a singular mass with a common entry point or multiple entry points to the commons spaces on the ground floor.

Typical Statistics:
- Lot Size: varies
- Frontage: varies
- Unit Size: 550 sq. ft. to 1,999 sq. ft.
- Unit Mix: 35% 1 BR, 60% 2 Bedroom, 5% 3 Bedroom
- Height: 2 – 5 Stories
- Construction: Varies by height
- Materials: Varies
- Parking Ratio: efficiency: 1 space per unit, 1 bedroom: 1.5 spaces per unit, 2+ bedroom: 2 spaces per unit

2-MIXED-USE BUILDINGS

Mixed-use commercial/apartment buildings are three to four story rectangular buildings with multiple apartment units per floor, with at least a portion of the first floor devoted to commercial space. Historic conversions to commercial apartment buildings convert the upper floors of a multi-story building to multi-family residential. The first story is set aside for retail or other type of commercial use. Commercial buildings appear as a singular mass with multiple entry points into ground floor spaces; and singular entry point into common spaces.

Typical Statistics:
- Lot Size: varies
- Frontage: varies
- Unit Size: 550 sq. ft. to 1,999 sq. ft.
- Unit Mix: 35% 1 BR, 60% 2 Bedrooms, 5% 3 Bedroom
- Height: 2 – 20+ Stories
- Construction: Varies by height
- Materials: Varies
- Parking Ratio: efficiency: 1 space per unit, 1 bedroom: 1.5 spaces per unit, 2+ bedroom: 2 spaces per unit
3-TOWNHOMES

A townhome is a two to three story building with an often individualized rectangular massing, which contains one or more self-sufficient dwelling units with private kitchens and baths. These might be joined to one another by a party wall or be detached with a small side yard separating the individual housing units. Townhomes appear as a series of dwellings side-by-side along a street.

Typical Statistics:
Lot Size: 1,152 sq. ft. Minimum
Frontage: 27 ln. ft. Minimum
Unit Size: 800 sq. ft. to 2,000 sq. ft.
Unit Mix: 80% 2 Bedroom, 20% 3 Bedroom
Height: 2 – 4 Stories
Construction: Wood Frame
Materials: Masonry & Siding
Parking Ratio: 2 Spaces Per Unit

4-ROWHOUSES

A rowhouse is a two to three story building with three or more self-sufficient dwelling units (with private kitchens and baths) of simple rectangular massing. These might be joined to one another by a party wall, do not have another dwelling above or below, and are commonly sheltered by a flat roof. Rowhouses appear as a series of dwellings side-by-side along a street.

Typical Statistics:
Lot Size: Varies
Frontage: 21 ln. ft. Minimum
Unit Size: 800 sq. ft. to 2,000 sq. ft.
Unit Mix: 85% 2 Bedroom, 15% 3 Bedroom
Height: 2 – 4 Stories
Construction: Wood Frame
Materials: Masonry & Siding
Parking Ratio: 2 Spaces Per Unit
6-HIGH-RISE RESIDENTIAL TOWERS

High-rise residential towers are five or more stories tall with multiple apartment units per floor. The units are accessed by elevators and a corridor system; stairs are provided principally as emergency exits. These were not constructed in Omaha until after 1950. Historic conversions usually convert an office building to new uses such as multi-family residential. High-rise residential towers may contain a mixture of uses on the ground floor, and typically appear as tall buildings with multiple points of entry, and or a common point of entry.

Typical Statistics:
Lot Size: 18348 sq. ft. TO 164584 sq. ft.
Frontage: varies
Unit Size: 550 sq. ft. to 1,999 sq. ft.
Unit Mix: 33% 1 BR, 66% 2 Bedroom, 1% 3 Bedroom
Height: 6 – 20+ Stories
Construction: Steel frame; slab on deck
Materials: Varies
Parking Ratio: efficiency: 1 space per unit, 1 bedroom: 1.5 spaces per unit, 2+ bedroom: 2 spaces per unit

5-CONDOMINIUMS

A condominium is an individually owned set of rooms within a larger structure separated from other sets by party walls. Unlike rowhouses, a condo unit cannot be easily separated from its adjacent units. It may appear as an apartment building, but its ownership structure leaves it more often associated with attached dwellings. Condos can be mixed-use projects or single-use buildings (like Swanson Tower and Riverfront Place). Condos may appear as singular buildings or individual units.

Typical Statistics:
Lot Size: varies
Frontage: varies
Unit Size: 650 sq. ft. to 8,000 sq. ft.
Unit Mix: 10% 1 BR, 60% 2 Bedroom, 30% 3 Bedroom
Height: 1 – 20+ Stories
Construction: Varies by height
Materials: Varies
Parking Ratio: efficiency: 1 space per unit, 1 bedroom: 1.5 spaces per unit, 2+ bedroom: 2 spaces per unit
The successful implementation of this plan is clearly dependant upon a combination of incentivized private development and focused public investment. And while no dedicated funding sources are currently available, this strategy has been structured to provide an implementation guide for the next fifteen to twenty year period. This strategy is based on sequence of projects which will strategically build upon one another in order to establish the neighborhood framework necessary to induce revitalization and leverage redevelopment. Contained herein this section, this implementation strategy consists of four phased timeline for redevelopment which will result in the establishment of a vibrant and centralized neighborhood, which is structured by an engaging public realm and constituted by a mixture of private commercial and residential development and cultural / civic amenities.
PHASE 1.0: NEAR-TERM
ONE (1) TO THREE (3) YEARS (CURRENT PROJECTS)

Current and on-going efforts to revitalize the north block of the project area should continue forward momentum, and new efforts to redevelop the entire block should begin immediately. A variety of projects including the redevelopment of the Highline Building (the Old Northern Natural Gas Building) will become an anchor for the district, catalyzing further new private development and establishing a resident population for the area. Additionally, streetscape improvements along Douglas Street will connect the new developments into Downtown, establishing a safe and pedestrian friendly environment for the new residents of the area. Through the addition of a new north-south street, the large scale blocks of the area will be scaled down to a more appropriate size which will allow for better circulation, increased building frontage, and more opportunities for redevelopment.

SPECIFIC PROJECTS INCLUDE:

1. The Highline Building: Construction/renovation of this project is currently underway and expected for completion soon.
2. Streetscape Improvements: Currently underway, improvements to Douglas Street between 24th and Downtown, on 24th between Douglas Street and Dodge Street, and along the south side of Dodge Street will connect the new developments and existing parking facilities into Downtown Omaha establishing a safe, pedestrian friendly environment for the new residents of the area.
3. Harney Street Bikeway: Continue design, development, and construction of the Harney Street Bikeway project.
4. New North / South Street Connection: Pursue a new pedestrian friendly, low-traffic street from Farnam Street to Dodge Street aligning at the mid-block between 24th Street and 20th Street. This street will increase circulation through the area, and connect the Joslyn Museum into the neighborhood.
5. New Private Development: The new north/south street will open up a number of new private development parcels, which should be balanced with surface lots and parking garages internal to the block, utilizing liner buildings whenever possible.
6. Private Redevelopment: the new north/south street will open the possibility of the redevelopment of a number of existing properties.
PHASE 2.0: SHORT-TERM
THREE (3) TO FIVE (5) YEARS

Current on-going projects will renew interest, but the next real step will be to establish a new centralized space and connect it to all of the existing assets in the neighborhood. Farnam Street will act as the neighborhood’s main street; where bolstered by new private developments, it will connect from the Old Market to Midtown Crossing as the transportation and economic development spine for the new neighborhood. Along with the new street in place, the existing open space between the Rose Theater and the Federal Reserve Building will provide a signature space for the new residents. Additionally, safe pedestrian connections across Dodge Street to the Joslyn Museum and across 20th Street into Downtown Omaha will foster a new vibrancy within the neighborhood, and usher in a distinctive, local character based on the neighborhood institutions, family atmosphere, and urban-living feel.

SPECIFIC PROJECTS INCLUDE:

1. **Farnam Main Street**: This street should be pursued as the main street connecting between Midtown Crossing and the Old Market, which focuses on mixed-use and commercial development, the inclusion of multiple-modes of transportation (See Options in Plan section), and considered for two-way traffic in order to establish a pedestrian friendly, walkable environment to encourage new private development and redevelopment.

2. **New Private Development & Redevelopment**: With the new street and Farnam Street improvements, new private development and redevelopment should occur facing onto Farnam Street, edging the open space.

3. **The Rose Theater Park & Building Expansion**: Encourage the Rose Theater to develop agreements with the Federal Reserve to purchase/utilize the existing green space, and redevelop it as a community park and outdoor activity area for children’s programming; along with expanding the theater building south onto Harney Street. Parking should be accommodated by angled parking on the north side of Harney Street.

4. **Joslyn Pedestrian Connection**: Working with the Joslyn Museum and Central High School, establish a safe, branded pedestrian connection across Dodge Street; connecting across to the new street.

5. **20th Street Family and Children’s Corridor**: 20th Street should be considered for two-way traffic and improved as family & children oriented corridor with safe pedestrian connections & crossings into Downtown and north-south from Central High School to the Children’s Museum.

6. **Streetscape Improvements**: With new development and a strong north/south connection, Dodge Street should be improved with paving, trees, bumpouts, and branding appropriate to the cultural institutions.

7. **Private Redevelopment**: Streetscape improvements will encourage private redevelopment by adjacent non-profits and corporations.
PHASE 3.0: MEDIUM-TERM
FIVE (5) TO TEN (10) YEARS

As the neighborhood builds out with private development and revitalization begins to occur around the streetscape improvements, new opportunities for cultural institutions will be presented. Though currently there is uncertainty around the future of the Federal Reserve Building, possible alternative futures for this site should be considered as implementation proceeds. The catalytic redevelopment of this site, in combination with the adjacent improved Rose Theater Park will anchor the southern portion of the project area, and provide a catalyst for the redevelopment of the surrounding neighborhoods to the south and west. Commensurate with this redevelopment, it will be necessary to enhance the connectivity of the new cultural district into north and south Omaha through streetscape improvements, way-finding, and district branding.

SPECIFIC PROJECTS INCLUDE:

1. The Federal Reserve Site: The Federal Reserve property should be considered for future development or redevelopment as a cultural facility or community building, in the event that the building reaches the end of its usable life, and is found available for such purposes. This development should be accompanied with an adjacent open space which will connect to the Rose Theater park establishing a central heart of the new community, ultimately leveraging private developments and re-investment of the surrounding areas. Other options (see Options in Plan section) for the site suggest re-using the existing building with minor modifications to establish a public space, along with a suggesting of transforming the site into a mixed-use development and re-utilizing the building as leasable space.

2. Streetscape Improvements and North / South Connections: With the introduction of a new cultural facility, the district will be solidifying a new identity. It will be necessary to connect the new anchor into north and south Omaha through street improvements to along 24th Street, including the possibility of converting it to two-way traffic.

3. Streetscape Improvements: Pursue streetscape improvements along Harney Street connecting the Midtown area to Downtown, further advancing revitalization to the south and west.
PHASE 4.0: LONG-TERM
FIFTEEN PLUS (15+) YEARS

The final stages of implementation will occur very quickly if private redevelopment has responded to public investment in the streetcapes and new cultural institutions. At this point, currently declining areas such as south of Harney Street and the areas west of 24th Street will be prime opportunities for redevelopment. A large portion of these areas will allow for incremental infill development and redevelopment such as on Harney Street or along 25th and 24th Street; and total redevelopment such as areas along both sides of Farnam Street.

SPECIFIC PROJECTS INCLUDE:

1. New Private Development & Redevelopment: New street improvements and multiple-modes of transportation will allow for the total redevelopment and redevelopment of the areas, pushing revitalization to the west.
2. Infill Development & Redevelopment: New cultural facilities and street improvements will make this area a prime opportunity for infill development and incremental redevelopment of targeted properties, bringing the revitalization momentum south into the declining areas.