

Staff Report

LINCOLN WAY CORRIDOR DRAFT PLAN

April 11, 2017

The City's consulting firm on this project, Houseal and Lavigne (H&L), will provide a presentation of the Corridor Plan at the City Council's April 11th meeting. At the conclusion of the presentation, City Council will be asked to provide direction on how to proceed with finalizing the plan and how to approach implementation priorities. City staff will then return with the final plan and implementation steps for approval by the Council.

The Lincoln Way Corridor Plan was previously made available to the City Council during the week of March 20th. It is also available online through the Planning Division's website under ["What's New."](#) Background materials from the past 14 months are also available at the same link.

The original objectives for the Lincoln Way Corridor Plan were to create identity along Lincoln Way as a place and not just a thoroughfare, to support enhancements for multi-modal transportation, and to identify opportunities to revitalize properties with land uses that are contextual and that support Corridor identity and placemaking. To meet these objectives, the consultants have prepared a complete draft plan that looks at the corridor in two ways – as the entire corridor through the Framework Plan, and as more detailed Focus Areas.

The Framework Plan identifies the overall principles for the corridor by looking at the various "districts" within the corridor for land use, mobility and community character. The Framework Plan looks at development potential through redevelopment areas, bike, pedestrian, and vehicular improvements, and opportunity for streetscape improvements to increase the overall aesthetics and character of the corridor. The Framework Plan is intended to guide overall strategies that improve the corridor and connect it together.

The Focus Areas address five different local areas along the corridor. The Focus Areas allow for more in-depth review of contextual redevelopment options, rather than broad and general interests in redevelopment and intensification along the corridor. The Focus Area concepts also could be applied to other areas along the Corridor that are of a similar nature. The five Focus Areas identified in the plan area as follows:

1. Downtown Gateway (Clark Avenue to Duff Avenue)
2. Lincoln Way and Grand Avenue (Oak Avenue to Grand Avenue)
3. Oak to Riverside Neighborhood
4. Campustown Transition (Sheldon Avenue to Campus Drive)
5. Westside Mixed Use (West Hy-Vee Area, Beedle Drive to Colorado Avenue)

Staff believes that some clear priorities emerged from the planning process, and that the objectives identified in the recommendations are appropriate for the focus areas. Priorities along the corridor varied from improving access management and mobility to promoting additional infill development to the west and for significant redevelopment adjacent to Downtown. Due to development and community interest, staff believes the greatest priority for identifying a vision and expected redevelopment is the Downtown Gateway area centered upon Kellogg Avenue. The likely lowest priority for redevelopment is the Grand/Lincoln Way area due to availability of land and lack of priorities for reuse compared to other areas in the corridor.

The draft plan relies heavily upon the visualizations of the Focus Areas to communicate the intent for the areas. To assist in Council’s review of the draft plan and to provide context to the visualizations and Focus Area, staff has identified general policy questions or issues that are associated with the proposed changes. Additionally, staff has outlined some basic next steps needed for implementation of the policies that support the vision of each Focus Area.

1. Westside Retail Focus Area:

Policy Issues:

- Moderate intensification of residential uses (2-4 stories)
- Adjacent neighborhood concerns about intensification
- Allowance for Mixed-Use development (3 stories)
- Maintain small business opportunities vs. redevelopment for commercial options
- Vacation of Beedle Avenue/Frontage Road for redevelopment with apartments.
- Redevelopment of single family homes fronting the north side of Lincoln Way between Colorado and Wilmoth for multi-family residential or mixed use development

Implementation Steps:

- LUPP amendments to change from the Single-Family Residential land use designations along west and east ends of the Focus Area
- Rezoning to allow for attached residential, small apartment, or mixed use unit types
- Mobility and streetscape enhancements

2. Campustown Transition Focus Area:

Policy Issues:

- Moderate increase in density near Campus and Wood Street without apartments
- Limit access onto Lincoln Way by removing driveways with redevelopment
- Commercial redevelopment at Lincoln Way and Hyland
- Preservation of residential frontage on Wood Street

Implementation Steps:

- New zoning districts and building types:
 - Courtyard housing
 - Attached homes (townhome)
 - Neighborhood Commercial
- Limiting curb cuts and enhancing streetscape

3. Oak Riverside Focus Area:

Policy Issues:

- Adjacent neighborhood concerns about intensification, changes to existing homes
- Best means to support core neighborhood vitality
 - Property conditions
 - New housing opportunities
 - Balance of ownership and rental properties
- Changes to Lincoln Way configuration for pedestrian crossings and enhanced pedestrian and bike facilities
 - “Road Diet” to narrow from four to three lanes

Implementation Steps:

- Allow for accessory dwelling unit with single-family dwellings to encourage small scale redevelopment with single family homes
- Rezone to allow small apartments between Maple and Oak Avenue
- Add road diet configuration to the CIP for Lincoln Way

4. Grand and Lincoln Way Focus Area:

Policy Issues:

- Maintain commercial service uses that exist today or allow for residential redevelopment with commercial uses
- If redeveloped, promote unique “flex” or “live-work” type housing and commercial use opportunities
- DOT property is a critical site for the entire area
- Consider land use transition at Oak Avenue at the time of redevelopment
- Changes to Lincoln Way configuration for pedestrian crossings and enhanced pedestrian and bike facilities
 - “Road Diet” to narrow from four to three lanes with the exception of the Grand Avenue intersection

Implementation Steps:

- Work with DOT on any future sale of property to meet goal for this area
- Rezoning from the Highway Oriented Commercial (HOC) Zone to allow for residential use types and “live-work” use opportunities
- Creation of development standards for a “flex” or “live-work” use type
- Add road diet configuration to the CIP for Lincoln Way

5. Downtown Gateway Focus Area:

Policy Issues:

- Encourage/require specific uses to accent downtown:
 - Boutique hotel
 - Entertainment/events
 - Office space
- As part of an entertainment/event use, determine need for a public parking structure in this area, potential support for downtown parking needs
- Priority to retain commercial in the area and not just accommodate housing
- Promote residential use as either mixed-use or for some stand-alone apartment building, with all apartments intended to typically be 1 to 2 bedrooms
- Zoning and design requirements as transition area from pedestrian orientation to vehicle orientation
- Martin House is a designated historic landmark
- Plan for right of way changes:
 - Wider sidewalks
 - Bike facilities
 - Lane configuration (Road Diet)
 - Potential for jurisdiction change from Highway 69 and IDOT to City

Implementation Issues:

- Rezoning from Highway Oriented Commercial (HOC) Zone to allow for residential use opportunities
- Mobility and streetscape enhancements
- If transfer of jurisdiction on Lincoln Way, consider changes to Lincoln Way configuration for pedestrian crossings and enhanced pedestrian and bike facilities
- Additional ROW dedication for street and sidewalk enhancements
- Plan for public facilities or explore opportunities for development partnership
- Relocation of utilities or vacation of rights-of-way to support redevelopment

Planning and Zoning Commission:

The Planning and Zoning Commission reviewed the draft plan at their meetings on March 28th and April 5th. The Commission discussed implications of the Plan on changes to specific properties, timing of changes, and how the plan would be implemented. The Commission noted their overall support of the plan with their comments focused mainly around two of the focus areas, the Downtown Gateway focus area and the Oak-Riverside focus area.

For the Downtown Gateway, Commission members felt that the mix of uses was key to the overall redevelopment of the area with a focus on the need to have the design of the buildings be a visual extension of the Downtown. This was clarified with the following points of emphasis:

- redevelopment needed to have buildings up to the street
- parking would be necessary to support commercial uses
- parking should be to the side or behind buildings

- design guidelines are needed for the overall look and feel of the area regardless of the individual uses within the buildings

They also noted a desire to push for mixed-use opportunities as a way to encompass residential into the area, but felt a limited amount of standalone residential might be an option if location and design were appropriate to the overall goals for the area.

The Oak-Riverside neighborhood has been the most involved neighborhood during the past year of plan development. Residents of this neighborhood have been very clear about the value they place on the existing mix and types of single-family homes in the area. The draft plan shows the most limited versions of intensification of all the areas, but introduces an option for a second unit or accessory living unit to be part of redeveloped properties. Initial options considered creating attached single-family housing and versions of courtyard housing to provide for additional density.

The Commission questioned the need to show the south side of Lincoln way as a redevelopment area due to its similarity to existing conditions and lack of alley access to facilitate any significant change. Some members of the Commission noted concern for the road diet due to peak traffic levels in the area. Other members felt the road diet was an opportunity to support pedestrian and bike facility improvements. One representative from the Oak-Riverside neighborhood spoke regarding his concerns for maintaining the historic homes in the neighborhood, his concern for traffic with a proposed road diet, and that the plan was inappropriate in that it leads to demolition of homes that could be rehabilitated as contributing homes to the neighborhood quality. He was specifically concerned about any changes on the south that required construction of a new alley to facilitate redevelopment.

Other Public Comments:

Additional comments were received from residents via email with comments addressing concerns for bus facilities, adding housing choices for increased density to Colorado and Wilmoth, preservation of the Martin House, expansion of the Westside Retail area beyond Dakota further to the west, and concerns for traffic at the Wilmoth and Franklin intersections with the new development currently under construction and anticipated redevelopment areas.

Next Steps:

At this meeting the City Council is asked to provide feedback to staff on the Draft Corridor Plan to enable completion of the final plan. Council does not need to provide feedback on every issue or detail of the focus areas if there are no concerns with the visualizations shown in the Corridor Plan.

Based upon City Council's feedback on the draft plan, a final plan will be prepared for Council acceptance. City Council will then have two options on how to proceed once the final plan is complete.

Option 1 –

Accept the final plan as complete, but do not require that the Plan be a formal amendment to the Land Use Policy Plan. The Plan would then act as an **advisory policy document** for implementation strategies that could include individual LUPP amendments, rezoning actions, or street improvements with the Capital Improvements Program.

Due to the significant amount of changes described in the plan, it cannot all be implemented at one time. With the final plan, staff will provide a more detailed implementation program for prioritization by the City Council. Staff believes the number one priority will be to work with the Downtown Gateway Focus area for specific use, rezoning, and design interests. However, staff also believes that if the document is accepted as the generally preferred policy for the Corridor, it should facilitate changes that may be desired by individual property owners to advance the concepts of the Plan. This approach would allow for individuals to directly propose LUPP Amendments and Rezoning for properties when they are consistent with the Plan without revisiting initiation and referral questions with the Council in advance of the applications. Individual requests would then go through the public hearing process and review to determine consistency with the City overall policies and standards.

This option provides for tackling the issue of implementation and priorities in a manner that accelerates implementation for the preferred areas, such as the Downtown Gateway, but would lag in other areas of the Corridor since the City would address the Corridor Plan recommendations sequentially. The option of allowing individual applications for changes consistent with the Plan is meant to help facilitate some near term projects that might be of interest while the City focuses on its highest priorities.

Option 2 –

The Lincoln Way Corridor Plan is a far reaching policy document that in some ways alters the vision and policies of the current LUPP. As the first implementation step, the City Council could choose to proceed with the Corridor Plan as a **major amendment to the LUPP** and make changes to the LUPP to make it consistent with the Corridor Plan in its entirety. Once this was accomplished, additional steps for implementation would begin for zoning changes or design work for individual areas. Individual proposals for changes would not advance until the City completes its LUPP Amendment process.

This option would provide the most comprehensive and complete implementation of the Plan all at one time. However, it would take additional time to complete and does not set priorities for one area over another until the LUPP Amendments are complete. Furthermore, with the expectation that the City will rewrite its LUPP over the next couple of years, it may not be worthwhile to invest time heavily in significant changes to the LUPP at this time.