



# 2023 Development Action Plan

## City of Lexington, Nebraska

### Introduction:

The City of Lexington places high importance on setting and achieving goals for community and economic development issues. Such planning is intended to be done in collaboration with area local governments, development groups, and residents. An annual Development Action Plan and ongoing planning process is employed to increase community participation, strengthen communication between entities, educate local stakeholders, and enhance area partnerships.

When building an action plan, it is essential that it conform to the adopted general development plan of the community. This action plan is designed to follow the guidelines of the Lexington Comprehensive Development Plan, which identifies development goals and action strategies that were developed via input received at public meetings involving the Planning Commission, Plan Steering Committee, development groups, local government subdivisions, City Council, City Staff, and residents. The Comprehensive Development Plan is intended to be reviewed and amended in five-year increments.

This action plan incorporates various action strategies identified in ongoing planning efforts (e.g., comprehensive planning, housing studies, business targeting sessions, infrastructure needs assessments, etc.) in a workable one-year “to do list.” This plan identifies general action strategies to be accomplished in 2023 based upon the recommendations of the City Council and local partners. Amendments of these strategies over the course of the year are reasonably anticipated due to unforeseeable circumstances; however, employing an organized effort toward specific goals is intended to lead to orderly community development activities.

### **Acronyms commonly used in this plan are:**

|      |   |
|------|---|
| CCC  | Central Community College                           |
| CDA  | Community Development Agency of Lexington, Nebraska |
| DAD  | Dawson Area Development                             |
| GLC  | Greater Lexington Corporation                       |
| LCF  | Lexington Community Foundation                      |
| LHA  | Lexington Housing Authority                         |
| LRHC | Lexington Regional Health Center                    |
| NDED | Nebraska Department of Economic Development         |
| NDEE | Nebraska Department of Environment & Energy         |
| NPPD | Nebraska Public Power District                      |
| RDA  | Redevelopment Area                                  |



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## **1. Support the creation of marketable and affordable housing in the community, including owner-occupied, rental, and transitional units.**

Housing market studies indicate that Lexington is in need of new and rehabilitated housing opportunities across all population and income classifications, and that the existing housing market will not reasonably support the expansion or relocation of workers and families to the area. The community has an estimated housing vacancy rate less than 2%, compared to a healthy rate of approximately 7%.

The 2013 Comprehensive Development Plan provides conservative population projections of Lexington to be 11,715 by 2030, based upon historic and desired growth rates. In 2013, the existing housing demand and forecasted growth called for the provision of 900 new housing units by 2030 to accommodate the anticipated growth; the City committed to that goal.

Substantial progress has been made to address the housing need since 2013, with strategic investments in land and infrastructure to support housing development. To date, approximately 500 units of the 900-unit goal has been realized. The community will need to provide for the development of approximately 400 new housing units thru 2030 (50% owner-occupied and 50% rental units). This represents an average construction pace of around 60 housing units annually.

Steps will be taken in 2023 to continue to move housing development in a positive direction.

- South/Southwest Housing Development—RDA #5 was established in south Lexington with a plan for subdivision/infrastructure development for new housing, as well as infill housing opportunity through demolition/removal or rehabilitation activities in existing neighborhoods.

In 2017, two housing projects in the Southwest First Addition were initiated which intend to provide up to 320 new housing units phased over several years. To date, 154 housing units have developed within the project area, being a combination of single-family, duplex, and multi-family units; including 20 LIHTC units.

In 2022, a redevelopment project was approved in the South Lexington First Addition (in RDA #1). The first phase of the redevelopment project involves the construction of multi-family housing units. Subsequent phases intend to develop both multi-family and single-family units.

In 2023, the City will continue to support ongoing phasing of the housing projects in Redevelopment Areas #1 and #5.



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| Action  | Responsible Party                          | Timeframe | Cost     |
|---|--|-----------|----------|
| Develop housing projects within RDA #5 and RDA #1 | City, CDA, Private Developers and Builders | Jan-Dec   | Variable |
| Remove substandard/dilapidated units in RDA #5    | City, CDA                                  | Jan-Dec   | \$50,000 |
| Promote infill housing development in RDA #5      | City, CDA, Private Developers and Builders | Ongoing   | Variable |

- Northwest Housing Development—the City and CDA control approximately 70 acres of residential property in the northwest area of the community; being portions of the Northwest Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Additions, as well as vacant lots in Paulsen’s First Addition and Parkview Addition.

Approximately 72 build-ready single-family residential lots are available, as well as 13 acres of land intended for medium-density (townhome/condominium) residential projects. The City will continue to market the available housing lots over the course of the planning period.

Green spaces and pedestrian trails to augment the northwest area will be planned and constructed in 2023.

| Action   | Responsible Party                          | Timeframe | Cost       |
|--|--|-----------|------------|
| Support private and speculative housing construction activities  | Private Developers and Builders, City, CDA | Jan-Dec   | Variable   |
| Park/green space and trail development planning and construction | City                                       | Jan-Dec   | >\$600,000 |

- Northeast Housing Development—the City controls approximately 15 acres of property suitable for residential housing development in the northeast area of the community; being portions of the O’Donnell Addition, O’Donnell Second Addition, O’Donnell Third Addition, and other unsubdivided lands.

The City replatted a portion of the area into the O’Donnell Fourth Addition, which contains 14 build-ready residential lots. In 2023 the city will market these lots and prepare a conceptual development plan for the remaining property in the area.

| Action  | Responsible Party                                  | Timeframe | Cost     |
|---|--|-----------|----------|
| Market single-family lots                                       | City, CDA  | Apr-Dec   | Variable |
| Develop conceptual development models                           | City, CDA  | Apr-Dec   | Variable |
| Support private and speculative housing construction activities | Developers and Builders, City, CDA, Local Partners | Jan-Dec   | Variable |



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- **East Housing Development**—in 2020, the City worked with St. Ann’s Catholic Church to develop approximately 48 acres of St. Ann’s property along the east side of Taft Street from 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to 7<sup>th</sup> Street for workforce housing purposes; platted as St. Ann’s Second Addition.

In 2021, the City installed infrastructure to support development of the area. The Phase 1 infrastructure will support an ongoing 50-unit LIHTC housing project, 40 additional single/two-family housing lots, and a 6-acre parcel for multi-family residential projects.

The first phase of this development has the potential to accommodate up to 170 housing units based upon average density considerations. This will provide opportunity to private developers and the Lexington Housing Authority. In 2023, the City will promote housing development for the area.

| Action  | Responsible Party   | Timeframe | Cost     |
|---|---|-----------|----------|
| Market housing lots   | City, CDA   | Jan-Dec   | Variable |
| Support private and speculative housing construction activities | Private Developers and Builders, City, CDA, LHA, Local Partners | Jan-Dec   | Variable |

- **Improvement Planning**—as the private market has historically been slow to adequately address housing demand in Lexington, recent development projects have required public assistance in terms of infrastructure and utility extensions to be viable, a trend that is anticipated to continue into the foreseeable future. To proactively stimulate future housing projects, it is advisable for Lexington to improve suitable vacant land to a build-ready state to accommodate low, medium, and high-density housing projects.

In 2023, the City will maintain and update an existing inventory of feasible development properties, estimated infrastructure costs per property, and a cost/benefit analysis per property to adequately evaluate investment and growth opportunities. The City will plan land acquisition and infrastructure improvements that are warranted, as resources allow.

| Action  | Responsible Party | Timeframe | Cost     |
|---|-------------------|-----------|----------|
| Study, plan, and implement land and infrastructure improvements to support housing development. | City              | Jan-Dec   | Variable |

- **Flex Housing**—a concept that involves planned developments of medium-density housing that is cost effective for individuals to access and improve over time. The concept provides for single-family units with a minimum finished living space, an unfinished living space for future expansion, paved off-street parking facilities (driveway), minimum landscaping requirements, and a detached garage facility that can be built during initial construction or added over time.



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Site and construction plans for the housing units would be pre-approved by the local Building Department, and any construction activities would be held to minimum specification and design standards. The units could be built directly by individuals or on a speculative basis.

In 2023, the City will take steps to develop functional plans and evaluate the market viability of a pilot flex housing project.

| Action                                       | Responsible Party         | Timeframe | Cost     |
|--|---------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Flex housing project planning and evaluation | City, CDA, Local Partners | Ongoing   | Variable |

- **“Age in Place” Community**—a concept that involves the development of medium to high-density residential housing units within a senior (55+ years of age) community setting, where general maintenance and area amenities are financially supported by the owner and tenant population.

In 2014, LRHC, the City, and a private developer partnered on a first phase development which involved the extension of Liberty Drive from 13<sup>th</sup> Street to Buffalo Bend and the construction of 10 duplexes (20 housing units) on the east side of the new roadway to accommodate low to moderate income level seniors. This phase was operational and fully occupied in early 2016.

The City is currently working with area partners and a private developer on the next phase of senior housing in the newly subdivided Wycoff Addition. In 2023, the City will continue to support the provision of increased housing opportunities for seniors.

| Action  | Responsible Party                | Timeframe | Cost     |
|---|----------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Continue project planning, evaluation, marketing and development. | City, Local Partners, Developers | Ongoing   | Variable |

## 2. Promote redevelopment activities in all areas of the community, including infrastructure improvements, land acquisition, and removal of dilapidated structures.

- **Commercial Development and Aesthetic Improvements—HWY 283 Corridor—RDA #1** includes the entryway and highway corridor that carries the largest volume of traffic which enters and exits Lexington daily. This point of entry and route of travel is envisioned as an opportunity to give individuals a positive first impression as they enter Lexington and a pleasant reminder of the community as they depart. This area also provides opportunity for industrial, commercial, and residential development.



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The 2023 Action Plan is not intended to provide a definitive plan regarding future beautification, infrastructure, or development activities; however, it will provide steps to assist in the removal of obstacles that have prevented such activities in the past.

| Action  | Responsible Party | Timeframe | Cost              |
|---|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Evaluate and negotiate for the acquisition of property along the Hwy 283 corridor | CDA, City Manager | Jan-Dec   | \$5,000           |
| Market CDA property for development   | CDA, City, DAD    | Ongoing   | \$15,000          |
| Plan and implement area aesthetic improvements                                    | CDA, City         | Ongoing   | \$25,000-\$50,000 |
| Plan and implement infrastructure projects  | CDA, City         | Jan-Dec   | Variable          |

- Downtown Revitalization**—in 2010, Lexington was awarded a grant under the Downtown Revitalization (DTR) Program, administered by NDED, to study and develop a plan to strengthen the downtown business atmosphere, improve and rehabilitate the downtown, and reduce substandard and blight conditions that currently exist. In April 2010, a study that analyzed the condition of the downtown was completed, which contained general and specific recommendations for improvements, and an implementation schedule. The City Council accepted the findings of the study and took several steps to implement improvements.

The City intends to develop a general master plan for downtown projects in 2023 and beyond, utilizing community involvement and the 2010 study as a foundation for planning. The projects will involve infrastructure improvements, property redevelopment, building renovation, and aesthetic enhancements. This program will be long-term and will require public and private investment to be successful.

Additional DTR funding may be available to communities that have previously used such grant funding and have substantial needs remaining. Lexington will evaluate and seek additional DTR funding to further the goal of the downtown master plan as appropriate.

As the downtown area is included in RDA #3, the City will also employ available redevelopment assistance to support viable redevelopment projects.

| Action                                      | Responsible Party          | Timeframe | Cost         |
|---|----------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Plan and implement 2023-beyond improvements | City, CDA, Local Partners, | Jan-Dec   | Undetermined |
| Seek improvement funding                    | City, CDA                  | Jan-Dec   | Variable     |
| Assist viable redevelopment projects        | City, CDA                  | Jan-Dec   | Variable     |

### 3. Improve the public transportation network in the community.

- 1 & 6-Year Street Improvement Plan**—the City’s 2023 capital improvement plan for road and street improvements summarizes the projects the City has prioritized for design



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and/or construction in 2023 and a list of prioritized projects for future years. The plan summary may be viewed at:

- o <http://info.cityoflex.com/1&6yearplan2023.pdf>

The 2022 plan summary may be viewed at:

- o <http://info.cityoflex.com/1&6yearplan2022.pdf>

- **Rural Viaduct—East Lexington**—a viaduct location study in the vicinity of Road 435 and the at-grade crossing of UPRR was completed in 2008; a collaborative effort between the City and Dawson County. Following acceptance of the study recommendations by both City and County, the Dawson County Railroad Transportation Safety District (RTSD) was formed to assist funding the improvement project into the future. The project was programed through the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) to receive state and federal funding, with the City of Lexington as the contracting entity.

In 2023, the City will work with NDOT to move the project through bid letting and begin construction activities in late 2023.

| Action                       | Responsible Party               | Timeframe   | Cost      |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Project bid and construction | City, County, NDOT, consultants | Jan-ongoing | \$400,000 |

- **Dawson County Transit**—the public transportation system in the Lexington area is operated by Reach Your Destination Easily (RYDE) Transit, a regional public transportation provider under the Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska, under contract with Dawson County. RYDE is taking steps to make the program more efficient while expanding services to better meet the needs of area residents.

As public transportation is an important component to the Lexington community, continued and expanded service is a concern. In 2013, the City made a commitment to partner and financially support the transit program. Such support is anticipated to continue in 2023 and efforts to improve the public transportation services into the future will be encouraged.

| Action  | Responsible Party         | Timeframe | Cost              |
|---|---------------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Support the provision of public transportation services | City, Dawson County, RYDE | Jan-Dec   | \$25,000-\$30,000 |

## 4. Continue and improve inter-local cooperative programs in the community and county.

- **Cooperation**—it is important for groups within Dawson County to cooperate on planning, financing, and implementing projects and programs, not only for efficiency, but effectiveness and responsiveness. The following is a general list of local entities that have a collaborative relationship with the City:





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- Dawson Area Development (DAD)
- Lexington Housing Authority (LHA)
- Greater Lexington Corporation (GLC)
- Dawson County
- Lexington Public Schools
- Lexington Regional Health Center (LRHC)
- Lexington Rural Fire District
- Lexington Community Foundation (LCF)
- Lexington Area Chamber of Commerce

| Action   | Responsible Party    | Timeframe | Cost              |
|--|----------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Participate in DAD direction, operation and planning | City representatives | Ongoing   | \$30,000 annually |
| Support Local Partner activities                     | City, CDA            | Ongoing   | Variable          |
| Organize joint meetings                              | City, Local Partners | Ongoing   | Variable          |
| Develop joint projects/programs                      | City, Local Partners | Ongoing   | Variable          |

## 5. Improve community education on programs and projects.

- Website/Newsletter/Social Media—the City maintains a general website, as well as publishes an email newsletter called “City Happenings.” The website and newsletter are seen as semi-successful; however, technology advancements and an increase in ways consumers choose to receive information (i.e., text messaging, social media, etc.) allow enhanced opportunity for local governments to communicate with citizens, customers, and visitors.

In 2023, the goal of the City is to use electronic media to improve information sharing, public relations, public participation/input, and interaction with all individuals, businesses, and public entities.

| Action                             | Responsible Party | Timeframe | Cost         |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Increase electronic media coverage | City              | Ongoing   | Undetermined |

- Work Sessions—the City will continue to hold regular Council work sessions with Staff and local partners to evaluate short and long-range planning efforts, as well as local projects and programs. These sessions help strengthen collaborative efforts in the Lexington area.

| Action                 | Responsible Party                   | Timeframe | Cost |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|------|
| Continue work sessions | City Council, Staff, Local Partners | Ongoing   | N/A  |





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## 6. Support educational and business support programs in the community.

- Education/Training Center—the ability to provide a capable and educated workforce is a pressing issue across Nebraska, as well as the nation. Learning centers are an accepted and indispensable part of worker training programs and a source for educational systems to reach new groups of non-traditional or disengaged students. Two main factors support the operation of learning centers: the growing need for continual skills upgrading and retraining, and the technological advances that have made it possible to teach more and more subjects away from main campuses.

The Dawson County Opportunity Center is a local effort to provide educational, training, and support services to individuals and businesses in the region in a “one-stop” environment. Local partners with a current presence in the facility include: Central Community College, Nebraska Workforce Development, Dawson Area Development, City of Lexington, Lexington Chamber of Commerce, and Lexington Public Schools.

In 2023, the City will continue to support education, workforce training, business retention, entrepreneurial development, and business development programs; as well as encourage the implementation of further collaborative initiatives.

| Action   | Responsible Party              | Timeframe | Cost         |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Support current programs and encourage new and expanded programs | City, DAD, CCC, Local Partners | Jan-Dec   | Undetermined |

## 7. Support economic development efforts in the community.

- Project Opportunities—over the course of a year, there are numerous prospective projects that look at site or building locations in Lexington. These include new or expanding business, as well as existing businesses that need retention assistance. The City is committed to providing technical or funding assistance as projects arise. Projects that are viable and in the best interest of the area will be supported to a level that resources allow.

| Action                | Responsible Party              | Timeframe | Cost         |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Support area projects | City, DAD, CDA, Local Partners | Ongoing   | Undetermined |

- Speculative Building(s)—the availability of industrial and commercial building space in the community is needed into the future. The goal of constructing speculative buildings is to encourage business development and/or expansion. As is typical of most business decisions today, site and building searches happen quickly. Generally, building availability becomes a key factor in location or expansion decisions; to remain competitive, a community must have both suitable and available space.

The Community Development Agency (CDA) has initiated the development of a speculative commercial center for the property located at 205 W. Pacific Avenue in



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Lexington. In 2023, the City will assist the CDA and other entities in the development of speculative buildings for commercial and industrial development initiatives.

| Action                        | Responsible Party     | Timeframe | Cost         |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Assist spec building projects | City, CDA, Developers | Jan-Dec   | Undetermined |
| Market available buildings    | City, CDA             | Ongoing   | Undetermined |

## 8. Encourage the development of leadership in the Lexington area.

- Leadership Development—the continued growth of leadership in the community is a concern moving into the future. With a diverse cultural make-up, Lexington has an exceptional opportunity to foster a broad-based leadership program for future generations. Effort to identify opportunities should be undertaken over the planning period.

| Action   | Responsible Party    | Timeframe | Cost         |
|--|----------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Identify opportunities to initiate leadership programs in the area | City, Local Partners | Jan-Dec   | Undetermined |

## 9. Upgrade public facilities and programs in the community.

- Park and Trail Development and Rehabilitation—although improvements have been completed incrementally over the last several years, the landscape, equipment, shelters/restrooms, sidewalks, lighting, water systems, and other facilities in the City’s older parks continue to show the effects of age and deferred maintenance. It is important for the City to upgrade and maintain these facilities for the benefit of the citizens.

Additionally, as the community continues to develop onto new lands, it is also important that the City plan for the development of new parks, recreational fields, green spaces, and pedestrian trails. The park and trail component of the 2013 Comprehensive Development Plan serves as a planning guide.

Improvements to the park system will require a substantial investment over a long-term period. In 2023, the City will update and prioritize the park and trail capital improvement planning. Moving forward, projects will be implemented as resources allow; funding will be aggressively solicited from a wide range of public and private sources.

Two notable park facility projects that are in the various phases of development are the “Veterans Pavilion at Kirkpatrick Memorial Park” and the “Lexington Racquet Center”. The Veterans Pavilion is an open-air amphitheater in the central portion of Kirkpatrick Memorial Park which will (1) provide recognition for military veterans, (2) educate the public about the role of the military in society, and (3) provide a venue for community events. This project is currently under construction with a mid-2023 completion date.



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The Lexington Racquet Center will provide a climate-controlled environment for youth, adult, and senior activities on a year-round basis, based around racquet sports. The facility is intended to support and increase recreational programming and community participation rates. The facility will be built in the southwest portion of Plum Creek Park and will include the redevelopment of two outdated baseball/softball fields in that area. The project is under contract for construction, with a completion date of late November 2023.

| Action   | Responsible Party                | Timeframe | Cost         |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Update the park and trail CIP and prioritize a 2023 work plan    | City                             | Jan-May   | Undetermined |
| Design and implement viable projects                             | City, Local Partners             | Jul-Dec   | Undetermined |
| Solicit funding and cooperative agreements for priority projects | City, Consultant, Local Partners | Ongoing   | Undetermined |
| Update the park and trail CIP and prioritize a 2024 work plan    | City                             | Oct-Dec   | Undetermined |

- Electric System Improvements—as the community continues to develop, the demand for residential, commercial, and industrial electric capacity increases. In 2007, a system distribution study was completed in cooperation with NPPD. Following review of the study in early 2008, the City Council adopted a long-range capital improvement plan.

In 2008, the first phase of the capital improvement plan was implemented with success. Additional phases of the capital plan will be implemented in 2023 and beyond as resources allow; accompanied by continued system evaluation by NPPD and City Staff.

| Action  | Responsible Party | Timeframe | Cost        |
|---|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Complete system capacity and reliability improvements | City, NPPD        | Jan-Dec   | \$1,210,000 |
| System study and evaluation                           | City, NPPD        | ongoing   | Variable    |

- Green Activities—as technologies continue to advance, more and more options become available to incorporate environmentally friendly solutions to the delivery of public services. It is important that communities across the nation strive to conserve resources and minimize pollution. Common practices employed are in the areas of energy efficiency, renewable energy generation, solid waste reduction, recycling, storm-water management, infrastructure, and water conservation, to name a few.

The City has long been active in many of these areas; however, improvements can be made to foster a greater impact and reduce our ecological footprint. In 2023, the City will evaluate opportunities to increase green activities in the community.

| Action                           | Responsible Party | Timeframe | Cost     |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|----------|
| Study and evaluate opportunities | City              | Jan-Dec   | Variable |



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- WWTP—over the last decade, the City has made several improvements to the wastewater treatment plant to meet increasingly stricter effluent discharge regulations, replace aging and/or failing facilities, and provide capacity for residential and business growth.

In mid-2021, a contract was approved to build new headworks and primary clarifiers to meet operational demands, the project is scheduled to be complete in mid-2023. In 2023, the City will plan and complete work to rehabilitate the existing digesters and upgrade solids dewatering facilities.

| Action                       | Responsible Party | Timeframe    | Cost        |
|------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Construct plant improvements | City, consultants | January-June | \$6,000,000 |