

# **City of Lexington Development Action Plan 2008**

**Approved 3-25-08**

## **Introduction:**

The City of Lexington has a history of being proactive in setting and achieving goals for community and economic development issues; in collaboration with local governments, local development groups, and area citizens. An annual Development Action Plan and ongoing planning process has been initiated to increase community participation, strengthen communication between entities, educate local stakeholders, and enhance area partnerships.

When building an action plan, it is imperative that the plan conforms to the adopted general development plan of the community. This plan was designed to follow the guidelines of the 2005 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, local development groups, local governments, City Council, City Staff, and local residents. The Comprehensive Development Plan is intended to be reviewed and amended in five year increments.

This plan incorporates action strategies identified in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan into a workable one-year “to do list”. Action strategies also fit into other ongoing planning efforts such as housing studies, business targeting sessions, and community development planning meetings. This plan identifies general action strategies to be accomplished in 2008 based on the recommendations of City Council, local development groups, CRA, and Dawson Area Development. Amendments of these strategies over the course of the year are reasonably anticipated due to unforeseeable circumstances; however, employing an organized effort towards specific goals will lend to orderly and healthy community development.

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

ABLE	Advocating for Business Labor Education
CED	Lexington Council for Economic Development
NDED	Nebraska Department of Economic Development
CRA	Lexington Community Redevelopment Authority
GLC	Greater Lexington Corporation
CRA	Lexington Community Redevelopment Authority
DAD	Dawson Area Development
PIC	Park Improvement Committee
M&A	Miller & Associates
RDA	Redevelopment Area
LCF	Lexington Community Foundation
NPPD	Nebraska Public Power District
CEL	Cornhusker Energy Lexington, LLC

**1. Support the creation of marketable and affordable housing lots in the community for construction of new housing units across various price ranges.**

- South/Southwest Housing Development—the City, in cooperation with local development groups, completed a housing study in 2004 for the Lexington area. The study indicated that Lexington was in need of new and rehabilitated housing opportunity across every population and income category. The study indicated a 2.24% housing vacancy rate, as compared to a healthy 5-6% vacancy rate; proposed the development goal of 240 housing units over a 5-year period, 55% owner occupied and 45% rental; and proposed the demolition and removal of 53 units over that same 5-year period.

It is certainly a concern that the local housing market will not reasonably accommodate the expansion or relocation of industry workers to the area. Orthman Manufacturing, the Lexington Public Schools, Tri-County Hospital, the City of Lexington, and CEL (to name a few) have increased the number of jobs in the community by approximately 100 individuals over the past 5 years. About 50% of the total workforce for these businesses does not live in Lexington, primarily due to the lack of available housing units.

The City has identified 112 units of existing housing that is in a dilapidated condition and in need of condemnation and/or demolition; however 85% of these units are currently occupied pending inspection and corrective action. Lexington has a housing unit demand; the addition of new housing units is necessary prior to or in concert with the removal or rehabilitation of dilapidated units. The City, in cooperation with the CED through a Redevelopment Contract, has developed a new mixed income subdivision with approximately 70 housing units to help address the housing needs in the community and to assist the local businesses in their growth and expansion. Phase I of the project will begin in 2008 and consist of a 22 lot subdivision.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Plan and bid infrastructure improvements	City, CRA	Jan-Mar	\$10,000
Build infrastructure	Contractor, City	Mar-Jun	\$500,000
Housing Construction	Private Builders, CED, ABLE, CROWN Program, Housing Authority	Jan-Dec	\$2,000,000
Market available lots to developers, online, non-local employees	City, CED, DAD	Jan-Dec	\$1,500
Recruit builders for 2009	City, CED, DAD	Sep-Dec	N/A
Plan Phase II for 2009	City, CED, CRA, DAD	Mar-Dec	N/A
Acquisition and removal of dilapidated housing in RDA #5	City, CRA	Jan-Dec	\$100,000

- Northwest Housing Development—per the 2004 Area Housing Study, the total estimated housing demand, or housing potential in Lexington by the year 2030 is 1,203 units. This includes the combination of new households, replacement housing, and a pent up demand for alternative housing for existing residents. The 1,203 new unit demand is divided into 550 owner occupied units and 650 rental housing units. The south/southwest housing project will provide the opportunity for approximately 120 units over a 5-10 year period. Significant demand will continue for additional housing units, and thus the planning for future housing development should commence.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Develop planned use housing development.	M&A, City, CRA, non-profit groups, private developers	Jan-Dec	\$5,000
Identify recreational land use potential, including trails.	PIC, Optimists, City	Jan-Dec	\$1,000
Identify cost estimates for facility and infrastructure development.	M&A, City Manager, NPPD	Jul -Dec	\$5,000

- Flood Plain Mitigation—the current 100 year flood plain boundary for Spring Creek on the north and northeast portion of the community limits the housing development potential in that area, as well as the resale value of existing homes within that boundary. A remapping project is currently underway by the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources in conjunction with FEMA. It is believed that the dam and drainage structures that have been built on the Spring Creek watershed over the last 25 years have substantially eliminated flood dangers from Spring Creek in the Lexington area. As part of the remapping process, the City will continue to push for relaxation of the 100 year flood plain boundary. Relaxation of this boundary will benefit current homeowners in this area, as well as open up land for residential housing development on the northwest and northeast portions of the community.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Participate in the remapping process	City, M&A	Jan-Dec	\$1,000-\$10,000

## **2. Promote redevelopment activities in all areas of the community through 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 numbers of vehicles which enter and leave the City of Lexington on a daily basis. These points of entry and routes of travel are envisioned as prime opportunities for the City to give individuals a positive first impression as they enter our City and to provide a pleasant reminder of the community as they depart. This area also provides the greatest opportunity for retail and small business development.

The 2008 Action Plan is not intended to provide a definitive plan regarding future beautification efforts or business development activities. However, the action plan will

provide steps to assist in the removal of obstacles that have prevented these types of activities to naturally develop in the past.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Evaluate the acquisition of property in RDA #1 along the Hwy 283 corridor	CRA, City Manager	Jan-Dec	\$5,000
Negotiate for land acquisition, or negotiate other agreements as needed	City Attorney, CRA, City Council, City Manager	Jan-Dec	\$5,000
Market CRA property for development	CRA, City, DAD	Jan-Ongoing	\$8,000
Plan area aesthetic improvements	CRA, City	Ongoing	\$2,000
Design and bid infrastructure in Kirkpatrick's 3 <sup>rd</sup> Addition—Phase I	CRA, City, M&A	Jan-Apr	\$10,000
Construct Phase I improvements	City	May-Oct	\$300,000

- Adams Street Corridor Improvements—RDA #2 includes the Adams Street corridor (Highway 21) from Highway 30 to 20<sup>th</sup> Street. The generalized future land use plan indicates commercial use along the east side of Adams Street from Highway 30 to 17<sup>th</sup> Street. Currently, there is a mixture of commercial and residential uses in this area. Steps should be taken to ensure that future redevelopment of property along this corridor is consistent with long range community planning efforts, as contained in the redevelopment plan for the area.

This area provides opportunity for the replacement of residential uses with small business development. The 2008 Action Plan is not intended to provide a definitive plan regarding future business development activities; rather, the action plan will provide steps to assist in the removal of obstacles that have prevented these types of activities to naturally develop in the past.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Evaluate the acquisition of property in RDA #2 along the Adams Street corridor	CRA, City Manager	Jan-Dec	\$5,000
Negotiate for land acquisition, or negotiate other agreements as needed	City Attorney, CRA, City Council, City Manager	Jan-Dec	\$5,000
Market CRA property for development	CRA, City, DAD	Jan-Ongoing	\$8,000
Plan area infrastructure and aesthetic improvements	CRA, City	Ongoing	\$2,000

- UPRR Corridor Redevelopment—over the years many commercial/industrial uses were conducted on the UPRR corridor through the community. Many of these uses have since ceased, leaving dilapidated structures and nuisance properties. The City is developing a relationship with UPRR to collaborate on the removal of the structures and debris from the properties; as well as the development of green space and pedestrian trails abutting the Hwy 30 corridor. The commitment to complete demolition activities and reach green space use agreements with UPRR should continue in 2008.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Reach agreement with UPRR on demolition activities	City, UPRR, lease holders	Complete	\$2,000
Request proposals for demolition	City	Complete	N/A
Perform demolition activities	City, contractor	Jan-Mar	\$75,000
Reach agreement with UPRR on green space use, and construct improvements	City, UPRR	Mar-Dec	Currently unknown

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

- One-year Street Improvement Items—these projects are general improvements that are not considered major capital nor tied to a specific economic/community development project, which include: gap pave of 17<sup>th</sup> Street from Jefferson to Monroe Streets; gap pave of Ontario Street from 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> Streets; 6<sup>th</sup> Street Asphalt Overlay Improvements from Lincoln Street to Madison Street.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Develop plans and specifications	City, M&A	Apr-Jul	\$15,000
Bid and construct projects	City, M&A	Jul-Dec	\$175,000

- 13<sup>th</sup> Street Reconstruction—design is complete to reconstruct and widen the portion of W. 13<sup>th</sup> Street from Park Drive to Airport Road. This is a federal aid project, 80/20, and will take two phases to complete. The project includes a water main upgrade on 13<sup>th</sup> Street from Park Street to Erie Street; eliminating undersized line and providing a 12” feeder through the north portion of the community. The project will upgrade the sanitary sewer capacity on 13<sup>th</sup> Street from Hampton Street to Erie Street, which will eliminate the operation and maintenance of the lift station on the southwest corner of the 13<sup>th</sup> and Erie Street intersection; as well as provide for the future inclusion of waste water flow from residential areas north of the 13<sup>th</sup> and Erie Street intersection to eliminate overloading of existing lines along 15<sup>th</sup> Street. The project will widen 13<sup>th</sup> Street from Freedom Drive to Airport Road, improving drainage, access to the Optimist Rec Complex, access to the Tri-County Fitness Center, and provide a pedestrian trail from the 13<sup>th</sup> and Erie Street intersection to the Optimist Rec Complex.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Present plans and specifications for bid	M&A, City	Jan-May	\$5,000
Award project contract	M&A, City	Mar-Aug	\$1,000
Construct Project—Phase I	M&A, City, contractor	Aug-Dec	\$700,000

- Rural Viaduct—East of Lexington—with completion of the Long-Range Transportation Plan in 2005, it was indicated that future industrial growth in southeast Lexington will drive the need for a grade separation in the vicinity of Road 435, Hwy 30, and UPRR. This intersection is dangerous, as there is a lack of truck stacking for the at-grade crossing. A cooperative effort by Dawson County, City, and area businesses was initiated in 2007 to address the long term issue. Upon the completion and acceptance of

the location study, a cooperative effort between the City and County should be initiated to develop an improvement project for future consideration.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Complete viaduct location study	County, City	Jan-Mar	\$30,000
Develop improvement project	County, City	Mar-Dec	\$45,000

- Reclassify Street System—to adequately plan for orderly street systems within the community and maximize federal allocation funding under the surface transportation program, it is necessary to review and reclassify the existing street classifications. This will allow the City to provide a sound transportation network in the community and aid in future residential, commercial, and industrial development.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Evaluate reclassification plan	City, M&A	Jan-Aug	\$5,000
Request reclassification	City Council	Sep	\$1,000

#### 4. 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 implementation of projects and programs; not only for efficiency, but effectiveness and responsiveness. The following list identifies specific groups within the area that have current ties with the City of Lexington.
  - DAD—the Dawson Area Development office was restructured in 2005 with the addition of a Community Development Coordinator and ABLE Coordinator. City representation on the Board of Directors is important to make sure the direction and cooperative attitude of the group continues in a positive direction. DAD is a valuable tool for area communities, including Lexington.
  - CED—the Council for Economic Development has made commitments in the previous years that will benefit the community in the long term. Some of these activities include infill housing development, new housing development, and the development of the Lexington Business Center. The CED will require continued support of the City into the future for the success of all concerned.
  - GLC—the Greater Lexington Corporation has made commitments in the previous years that will benefit the community in the long term. Their first project was the redevelopment of the defunct Paulsen’s First Addition. Working in conjunction with the CRA and the City, Greater Lex developed 30 housing lots for sale to individuals or contractors for a maximum price of \$10,000. There are 8 lots remaining in this project, the total private investment in housing to date is estimated to be approximately \$3.3 Million. In early 2008, Greater Lex purchased an additional 14 acres contiguous to Paulsen’s First Addition to continue housing development efforts. Assistance from the City will be vital in their success.

- County— the City and Dawson County have a history of cooperation on area projects and programs. It is in the best interest of County residents to foster cooperative ventures to maximize the use of available public resources. Projects include: roads, storm water drainage, emergency management, law enforcement, and communications to name a few.
- School District—the City and the School District have a history of cooperation on community projects and programs. It is in the best interest of the community to have the two entities conduct joint meetings to discuss additional cooperative ventures that can improve local efficiencies and improve the local quality of life.
- Tri-County Hospital—the City and Tri-County Hospital have a history of cooperation on community projects and programs. Cooperative ventures should be investigated to determine projects or programs that could be implemented to benefit area residents and maximize available resources.
- LCF—the City and the Lexington Community Foundation have a history of cooperation on community projects and programs. It is in the best interest of the community to have the two entities continue to develop joint programs and projects to improve the local quality of life.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Participate in DAD direction, operation and planning.	City representatives	Ongoing	\$25,000 annually
Support CED activities	City, CRA	Ongoing	Variable
Support GLC activities	City, CRA	Ongoing	Variable
Organize joint meetings	City, School District	Ongoing	Variable
Develop cooperative projects	City, County	Ongoing	Variable
Develop cooperative projects	City, Tri-County, School District, CED, GLC, DAD, ABLE, LCF	Ongoing	Variable

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

- Newsletter—in 2007, the City enhanced its email newsletter, “City Happenings.” The newsletter is seen as successful, but efforts should be taken to continually improve the content and interaction of the document.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Evaluate and improve newsletter	City	Ongoing	N/A

- Press Releases—although City Staff is limited in size and projects and programs keep the Staff increasingly busy, efforts should be made to provide press releases on programs and projects to keep the public educated on the direction of City policy. A well educated public can help identify need and develop highly responsive public policy.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Continue project and program news release program	City	Ongoing	N/A

- Planning Sessions—steps have been taken to increase the planning efforts of the City Council for City projects and programs. The Council has initiated regular planning sessions to work with Staff and local development groups on projects and policy that will strengthen collaborative efforts.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Continue planning sessions	City Council, Staff, DAD, GLC, CED, County, Tri-County, LCF, School	Ongoing	N/A

## 6. Expand post high school education presence in the community that would lend to increased employer assistance programs and individual opportunity.

- Education/Training Center—an opportunity for economic development could be the creation of a *Post High-School Education/Training Center*. Distance learning centers are fast becoming an accepted and indispensable part of the industrial worker training programs and a source for educational systems to reach new groups of “non-traditional” students. Two main factors have led to the increase in distance 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 location, size, and existing industry in Dawson County present several opportunities. A combination of skills based training and small business training in one center would improve the entrepreneurial climate in Lexington as well as help with employee and business development efforts.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Identify potential site for Education Facility, conduct a feasibility study	City, ABLE, DAD,	Jan-Dec	\$30,000
Research funding sources for development of campus	City, DAD, ABLE	Jan-Dec	\$1,000
Develop budget, marketing plan, and site plan	City, DAD, ABLE	Jan-Dec	\$10,000
Secure project funding	City, DAD, ABLE	Jan-Dec	Variable
Contact Universities, Community Colleges, NCTA, private schools, and training facilities about possibility of expanding to Lexington	City, DAD, ABLE	Jan-Dec	\$2,000
Secure signed letters of Intent from higher education institutions	City, DAD, ABLE	Jan-Dec	N/A



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

- Ethanol Plant Expansion—the City of Lexington will work with CEL to invest funds in infrastructure-related services leading to industry expansion or location; including sewer, streets, water, electricity, and site preparation. Financing may come from a variety of sources, including the Lexington Utility System, the Lexington Economic Development Program, Tax Increment Financing, the City of Lexington, local CDBG revolving loan funds, as well as available state and local grant funds.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Identify infrastructure/utility expansion needs: streets, water, electricity, and wastewater.	CEL, City Manager, M&A, NPPD	Jan-Apr	\$10,000
Determine need for aid to construction.	CEL & City Manager	Apr	N/A
Secure agreement with company for the improvements.	City Council, City Manager	May	\$1,000
Begin work on the improvements, to meet the plant expansion timeline.	City, NPPD	May	Undetermined

- Project Opportunities—over the course of a year, there are numerous prospective projects that look at site or building locations. These include new or expanding business, as well as businesses that need retention assistance. The City is committed to provide technical assistance 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, CRA	Ongoing	Undetermined

## 8. Nurture the growth of leadership in the local Hispanic and non-Anglo population.

- Multicultural Commission—the City Council formulated this commission to identify multicultural issues in the community and report to the Council on needs assessments. It is a priority of the Council to establish the commission in 2008.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Develop list of commission candidates	City, community partners	Jan-Feb	N/A
Appoint commission members	City	Feb-Mar	N/A
Initiate commission activities	City, commission	Mar-Dec	Undetermined

## 9. Develop speculative/available buildings and sites in the community.

- Speculative Building (s)—Redevelopment Area #1—or other areas.

The City of Lexington has researched the feasibility of an industrial spec building in the past. The goal is to attract a new company(s) that ties into the agribusiness economy, or taps into complimentary and new industries, including electronics, telecommunication equipment manufacturers and distributors, research and development firms, food processing and biotechnology.

As is typical of most business decisions today, site and building searches happen quickly. In most cases, building availability becomes a key factor in the location decision. For a community to be considered for most business expansion/location decisions, it must have a suitable, available building.

Buildings are typically pre-manufactured metal buildings, tilt-up concrete, or a combination of the two. Factors to consider when sizing and configuring speculative buildings targeted are: (1) typical buildings are 20,000-to-50,000 SF; (2) sidewalls are a minimum of 22 feet high, preferably 24 feet; (3) support column spacing is important, with manufacturers preferring as few columns as possible so as not to interfere with equipment layout and production flow, a clear span in the manufacturing area is ideal; (4) the building should be designed for structure integrity so that at least one sidewall can be removed to accommodate future expansion; (5) the building should be situated on the site so as to allow for future expansion; (6) office space is typically 10% of the overall square footage; (7) one incoming and one outgoing dock are recommended for the first 20,000 SF, additional dock space should be considered; and (8) at least one drive-in door is recommended.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Identify site for building	City, DAD, CRA	Jan-Mar	\$1,000
Develop budget, specs for building	M&A, City, DAD	Jan-Mar	N/A
Secure Financing, Submit Grant Application	City, DAD, CRA	Jan-Jun	N/A
Construct building	City, DAD, CRA, Contractor	Aug-Dec	\$500,000
Market building	DAD, City, NPPD, DED	Aug-Ongoing	variable

## 10. Upgrade dated public facilities in the community.

- Park Shelter Construction—Plum Creek Park—the PIC has been meeting to develop plans for park revitalization, master trail planning, and new park construction. A project identified is the need for a new park shelter and comfort house station in Plum Creek Park, to replace the existing dilapidated structure. The City has obligated \$75,000 in FY 2008 for this project. This project will continue park revitalization efforts.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Plan project scope and specifications	City, PIC	Jan-March	N/A
Bid and construct project	City	March-Jul	\$75,000
Project Dedication	City	Jul-Aug	N/A

- Park Rehabilitation—the landscape, equipment, shelters/restrooms, sidewalks, lighting, water systems, and other facilities in the City 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. The PIC has developed a capital improvement work plan for park renovation projects. The City has budgeted a modest level of funds for FY 2008, and the LCF has taken the position to help renovation efforts by raising funds through its community activities; it is anticipated there will be funds available to implement a reasonable annual renovation work plan.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Prioritize FY 2008 work plan	PIC, City	Jan-Feb	N/A
Plan FY 2008 projects	PIC, City	Feb-Mar	N/A
Bid and construct projects	City	Mar-Oct	Undetermined
Develop FY 2009 work plan	PIC, City	Jul-Dec	N/A

- New Park Development—as the community continues to develop onto new lands, it is important that the City plan for the development of new neighborhood parks, recreational fields, and trail systems. The City will work with the PIC and local groups such as the Optimist Club and the LCF on the planning and implementation of future projects. In FY 2008, planning will be a high priority.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Develop new park development plan	PIC, City, Optimists, LCF	Jan-Dec	\$10,000

- City Hall Improvements—over the last several years, evaluations have been done on the potential renovation of City Hall. The needs that have been identified include: additional space for administrative and business office staff, additional space for record storage, renovation and additional space for the Police Department, renovation of spaces accessible to the general public, exterior renovation, restroom renovation, and a mechanical system upgrade. An overall renovation plan and cost should be developed for Council consideration. It is anticipated that a building renovation would be divided into several phases to spread the costs over two or more fiscal years, as well as to limit the disruption of City services.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Develop a renovation plan	City	Jan-Aug	\$10,000

- Northwest Drainage—storm water management in the northwest portion of the community has been an issue for over the last 25+ years. In 2006, The City acquired a 120 acre tract of vacant land that has been a direct source of storm water sheeting into the developed neighborhoods in the area. An evaluation of the issue was completed in 2006, and a design for storm water remediation was developed. The evaluation indicated that

the development of a detention cell north of the Optimist Rec Complex would be the most cost effective way to manage the storm water.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Bid and construct improvement project	City	Jan-May	\$200,000

- Southwest Drainage—storm water drainage in the southwest portion of the community has been an issue for over the last 25+ years. An evaluation was done in 2006 that indicated storm water sheeting from vacant land to the west of the Community Service Building, 801 W. Vine Street, causes concerns to properties south of the UPRR, west of S. Adams Street and north of W. Elm Street. The evaluation indicated that the construction of a detention cell would be the most cost effective alternative to manage the storm water from the west. The paving of Vine-Elm-Ontario Streets in 2007, as well as subsequent storm sewer facility cleaning, has reduced the storm water inundation in the area to date. Continued evaluation of storm water drainage in the area should be employed to determine future project needs.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Evaluate storm water issues	City	Jan-Aug	N/A
Develop remedial plan as needed	City	Sep-Dec	\$5,000

- Electric System Improvements—as the community continues to develop, the demand for residential, commercial, and industrial electric capacity increases. Several improvement projects were identified as part of a system distribution study completed by NPPD in 2007. Efforts should be directed to prioritize and implement needed improvements in 2008 and beyond; accompanied by continued system study and evaluation by NPPD.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Commission improvement and planning activities.	City, NPPD	Jan-Dec	variable