



2012 Development Action Plan

City of Lexington

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 citizens. 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, local development groups, local government subdivisions, City Council, City Staff, and local 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 2012 based on the recommendations of the City Council, local government partners, and area development groups. 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:

ABLE	Advocating for Business Labor Education
CED	Lexington Council for Economic Development
NDED	Nebraska Department of Economic Development
CDA	Lexington Community Development Agency
GLC	Greater Lexington Corporation
NDEQ	Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality
DAD	Dawson Area Development
PIC	Park Improvement Committee
RDA	Redevelopment Area
EDA	Economic Development Administration
LCF	Lexington Community Foundation
NPPD	Nebraska Public Power District
LHA	Lexington Housing Authority



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

- South/Southwest Housing Development—recent housing studies indicate that Lexington is in need of new and rehabilitated housing opportunities across the majority of 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 3.3% housing vacancy rate, as compared to a healthy 5-6% rate. In 2008, a development goal of 243 new housing units by 2013 was established; 64% owner occupied and 36% rental units. **New units constructed to 2012?**

In 2007, RDA #5 was established in south Lexington, the plan for the area included subdivision/infrastructure development for new housing, as well as infill housing through demolition and removal activities in existing neighborhoods. The City has identified a minimum of 50 units of existing housing that is in a substandard/dilapidated state and in need of condemnation and/or demolition; however, 85% of these units are currently occupied pending inspection and corrective action. The addition of new housing units is necessary prior to, or in concert with, the removal or rehabilitation of substandard/dilapidated units; as there is a strong demand for housing, a decrease in overall available units is viewed as counter productive.

The CED, through a redevelopment contract with the CDA/City, has developed a new mixed income subdivision with a conceptual 70 lot layout 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 developed 22 build ready lots in 2008, the CED Addition; of which, 21 residential units are complete. The City will continue to support the goals of the RDA #5 plan, including the continued assistance on the CED housing project.

In 2010, the City initiated a housing program, New Neighborhoods II (NNII) Initiative, with NDED. The program is intended to foster the provision of sustainable and affordable workforce housing, and to serve as an established development model for other communities. The first phase of NNII included the construction of 12 single family rental units within the CED Addition, completed in mid-2011. Planning for the second phase of NNII is needed in 2012.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Phase II NNII project planning	City, CED, DAD, Private Developers and Builders	Aug-Dec	\$5,000
Removal of substandard/dilapidated units in RDA #5	City, CDA	Jan-Dec	\$40,000
Promote infill housing development	City, CDA, CED	Ongoing	Variable



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- Northwest Housing Development—as stated above, the development goal for housing units in Lexington was set at 243 units by 2013. The 243 new unit demand is divided into 155 owner occupied units and 88 rental housing units. The south/southwest housing plan provides the opportunity for approximately 120 units over a 5-10 year period. Significant demand will continue for additional housing units, therefore, planning for development in other areas of the community is needed. **New units constructed to 2012?**

Currently, the City, CDA, and GLC control approximately 100 acres of land suitable for housing in the northwest portion of the community; being the Northwest Third/Fourth Additions and the remaining lots in Paulsen’s First Addition. As previously mentioned, the City initiated the NNII housing program in 2010. The first phase of NNII includes the construction of 20 units in the northwest area; 10 speculative single family units; and 10 single family 55+ owner occupied units with mixed income levels. The infrastructure is in place for the first phase, and construction has initiated; five units were under construction in 2011. NNII Phase 2 planning should also be initiated in 2012.

In 2010, LHA and partner developers, finished the construction of a 21-unit (townhome) tax credit project, Legend Oaks, located within RDA #2; which provides housing to individuals 55+ years of age in low to moderate income ranges. Additional land contiguous to the Legend Oaks development is available for project expansion, and a tax credit application has been submitted. Support from the City and CDA will be needed when the second phase is initiated by LHA.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Phase 1 NNII housing construction—continuation	Private Developers and Builders, GLC, City	Jan-Dec	\$2,500,000
Phase 2 NNII project planning	City, DAD, GLC, Private Developers	Aug-Dec	\$5,000
LHA Phase 2 project support	City, CDA	Jan-Dec	Variable

- Housing Rehabilitation—since 2002, the City has administered several owner occupied housing rehabilitation programs. These efforts have improved 40 single family homes over that period. Continued support for rehabilitation programs in both the owner and renter occupied categories is needed; as these efforts improve existing housing stock and make strides toward improved energy efficiency in the community.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Support current and future rehabilitation programs	City, DAD, Local Partners	Ongoing	Variable



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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 vehicles which enter and exit Lexington on a daily basis. 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 an opportunity for retail and small business development.

The 2012 Action Plan is not intended to provide a definitive plan regarding future beautification or business 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 the acquisition of property in RDA #1 along the Hwy 283 corridor	CDA, City Manager	Jan-Dec	\$5,000
Negotiate for land acquisition, or negotiate other agreements as needed	City Attorney, CDA, City Council, City Manager	Jan-Dec	Undetermined
Market CDA property for development	CDA, City, DAD	Ongoing	\$10,000
Plan area aesthetic improvements	CDA, City	Ongoing	\$10,000

- Adams Street Corridor Improvements—RDA #2 includes the Adams Street corridor (Highway 21) from Highway 30 to 20th Street. The generalized future land use plan indicates commercial use along the east side of Adams Street from Highway 30 to 17th 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 2012 Action Plan is not intended to provide a definitive plan regarding future business development activities; rather, 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 the acquisition of property in RDA #2 along the Adams Street corridor	CDA, City Manager	Jan-Dec	\$5,000
Negotiate for land acquisition, or negotiate other agreements as needed	City Attorney, CDA, City Council, City Manager	Jan-Dec	\$5,000
Market CDA property for development	CDA, City, DAD	Ongoing	Undetermined
Plan area infrastructure and aesthetic improvements	CDA, City	Ongoing	\$2,000



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- 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 substandard/dilapidated structures and nuisance conditions.

The City has established a relationship with UPRR to collaborate on the removal of the structures and debris from the properties; as well as the potential development of green space and pedestrian trails abutting the Hwy 30 corridor. A substantial amount of demolition activities were performed on dilapidated structures over the past several years; however minor clean up work remains to be completed. The commitment to complete demolition activities and reach green space use agreements with UPRR should continue in 2012.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Perform clean-up demolition activities	City, lease holder, contractor	Jan-Dec	Variable
Reach agreement with UPRR on green space use, and plan improvements	City, UPRR	Jan-Dec	Currently unknown

- DTR—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 slum 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. Upon City Council acceptance of the study, Lexington entered the second phase of the DTR process and was awarded \$350,000 for downtown improvements related to commercial building rehabilitation, removal of architectural barriers, streets and public facilities.

In 2011, approximately \$138,000 in grant funding and \$328,000 in matching private funds (\$466,000 total) were invested into 17 commercial building rehabilitation projects. Projects included façade improvements, window and door replacement, energy efficiency upgrades (lighting/HVAC), roofing, and second level apartment renovation.

By August 2012, \$256,000 in public improvement projects needs to be completed. The City is developing a project concept to improve the streetscape in the downtown area, establish a gateway to the district, and improve substandard property. It is recommended that a downtown improvement master plan be developed for projects in 2013 and beyond, utilizing community involvement as a foundation for the planning.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Plan and implement 2012 improvements	City, Consultant, Local Partners	Feb-Aug	\$256,000
Plan 2013-beyond improvements	City, Consultant, Local Partners, Community	Aug-Dec	Variable



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3. Improve the public transportation network in the community.

- 6th Street/Jackson Street/13th Street Reconstruction—a project design and environmental review on this federal aid project will begin in early 2012. The project scope includes: concrete removal and replacement on the north ½ of 13th Street from Adams Street to Park Street; full width concrete removal and replacement on 6th Street from Grant Street to Monroe Street; concrete panel replacement on 6th Street from Monroe Street to Taft Street; full width concrete removal and replacement on Jackson Street from 5th Street to 8th Street; installation of handicap accessible ramps, storm sewer inlet replacement, and street lighting enhancements throughout the project; and potential automated traffic signal installation at the intersection of 6th and Jackson Streets.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Project design and environmental review	City, Consultant	Mar-Dec	\$150,000

- 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 the improvement project into the future. The project was programmed through NDOR to receive state and federal funding. A partnership of engineering firms, Miller & Associates/Parsons Brinkerhoff, was selected for the project design and environmental review, which is anticipated to begin in early 2012.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Project design and environmental review	City, County, RTSD	Feb-beyond	\$600,000

- Jackson Street Reconstruction—this is a proposed federal aid project to reconstruct and widen North Jackson Street from 8th Street to 13th Street. The Schemmer Associates were selected to provide the design and environmental review of the project.

The project scope includes: full width concrete removal and replacement from 8th Street to 13th Street with widening to a consistent width of 40'; water line replacement on Jackson Street from 8th Street to 13th Street; storm sewer extension on Jackson Street from 10th Street to 11th Street; and installation of handicap accessible ramps, pedestrian crossings, storm sewer inlet replacement, and street lighting enhancements throughout the project. Design approval, bidding, and letting will be completed in 2012, with an anticipated construction start date of mid-2013.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Project approval, bidding and award	City, Consultant, NDOR	Jan-Oct	\$40,000



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- 17th and Walnut Streets Maintenance/Reconstruction—this federal aid project is scheduled for construction in 2012. The project scope includes: concrete panel and intersection replacement on 17th Street from Polk Street to Adams Street; full width concrete removal and replacement on Walnut Street from Van Buren Street to Madison Street; and installation of handicap accessible ramps, storm sewer inlet replacement, and street lighting enhancements throughout the project. Construction is anticipated to be complete by the end of 2012.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Project construction	City, Consultant, Contractor	Jun-Dec	\$1,000,000

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 implementing projects and programs; not only for efficiency, but effectiveness and responsiveness. The following is a list of local entities that have a collaborative relationship with the City:
 - Dawson Area Development (DAD)—is a regional economic development support entity created and sustained through cooperation of local governments. City representation on the Executive Board is important to make sure the direction and cooperative attitude of the group continues in a positive direction.
 - Lexington Housing Authority (LHA)—the LHA currently owns and manages in excess of 200 units of local housing for the benefit of elderly, physically impaired, and low to moderate income individuals. LHA is planning additional housing projects to meet the needs of individuals in various age and income classifications.
 - Lexington Council for Economic Development (CED)—the CED is a non-profit group organized to help support local economic development activities. The CED has been active in new and infill housing development, promotional ventures, and the development of the Lexington Business Center.
 - Greater Lexington Corporation (GLC)—the GLC is a corporation that was established in the 1950s to support local economic development activities. The GLC has been active in supporting new housing development as well as industrial land development.



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- Dawson County, Lexington Public Schools, Tri-County Hospital, Lexington Rural Fire District—are local government subdivisions that have overlapping service areas with the City. The groups work together to foster cooperative ventures to maximize the use of available public resources. Project/program examples include: roads, storm water drainage, emergency management, law enforcement, communications, parks, sports fields, building facilities, facility maintenance, purchasing, vehicles, equipment, and telecommunications.
- Lexington Community Foundation (LCF)—a charitable foundation, LCF supports the development of many community projects and programs through their fundraising and investing activities, which improve the local quality of life.
- Chamber of Commerce—has the mission to create and maintain a favorable business climate in the area by representing the collective interest of business members. The Chamber is active in promoting and supporting area businesses.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Participate in DAD direction, operation and planning	City representatives	Ongoing	\$30,000 annually
Support CED activities	City, CDA	Ongoing	Variable
Support GLC activities	City, CDA	Ongoing	Variable
Support LHA activities	City, CDA, GLC	Ongoing	Variable
Organize joint meetings	City, School District	Ongoing	Variable
Develop coop projects/programs	All area 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 2010, the website was redeveloped to improve customer interaction. In 2012, 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	N/A



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

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Continue planning sessions	City Council, Staff, all area partners	Ongoing	N/A

6. Expand the educational presence in the community to support increased employer assistance programs and individual opportunity.

- Education/Training Center—the ability to provide a capable and educated workforce is seen as a pressing issue across the state, as well as the nation. Learning centers are becoming 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 have led to the increase in 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.

In 2008, the City acquired the former Wal-Mart retail facility (65,000 SF). In early 2009, a feasibility study was completed to determine various opportunities to renovate the facility to benefit area businesses and individuals. Regional discussion and evaluation concluded that a combination of skills based and small business training, as well as support services, in one center could improve employee and business development efforts in Dawson County, as well as stimulate the local entrepreneurial spirit.

Subsequently, the facility was named the Dawson County Opportunity Center, and three separate renovation projects, covering 57,000 SF of the facility, have been completed as of the end of 2011. The renovated space is home to the following partners, which provide various educational, training, and support services: Lexington Public Schools, Central Community College, Nebraska Workforce Development, Dawson Area Development, Lexington Chamber of Commerce, and Nebraska Health and Human Services.

Approximately 8,000 SF of space remains unfinished in the building. In 2012, a Phase IV development plan will be initiated focusing on programming needs in the areas of entrepreneurial development, business incubation, and industrial training.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Develop Phase IV project	City, CCC, DAD, Local Partners	Jan-Dec	\$10,000



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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. 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, CDA, local partners	Ongoing	Undetermined

- Expansion Project—in late 2011, Orthman Manufacturing, Inc. (OMI) announced plans to expand their operation in Lexington. OMI plans to construct an approximately 150,000 SF manufacturing facility on a 28 acre lot in the Southeast Second Addition, currently owned by the CDA. The project will add 100+ jobs to the local economy.

Local, state, and federal funding will be leveraged to assist in the development of the project and site. As an ancillary benefit, an additional 34 acres of CDA land adjacent to the project will be enhanced to accommodate commercial and light manufacturing uses.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Technical/grant/funding assistance	City, DAD, NDED, NIFA	Jan-Dec	\$5,000
Redevelopment contract	City, CDA	Jan-Apr	\$10,000
Infrastructure development	City, Consultant, EDA	Jan-Dec	\$1,500,000

- Speculative Building(s)—Redevelopment Area #1—or other areas—the availability of industrial and commercial building space in the community is needed into the future. The goal of developing speculative buildings is to encourage business development 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 suitable, available space.

In 2010, the City provided funding assistance to a private developer for the construction of a 20,000 SF metal spec building in the Greater Lexington Addition. This building is currently occupied by a business with 20+ employees and plans for expansion; again leaving the community without available building space. In 2012, the City will encourage the development of additional speculative buildings for commercial and industrial development initiatives.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Encourage building projects	City, DAD, Developers, CDA	Jan-Dec	Undetermined



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- Creation of a Local Investment Club—as the provision of speculative building space for commercial and industrial uses is seen as a priority for the community, as well as various other economic development initiatives, the expansion of supporting funding mechanisms is increasingly important. Local investment clubs have been successful in many communities across the state; which in theory operate to provide equity and forge public/private partnerships for development projects.

In 2012, the City will encourage the formation of a local investment club. The intent is to leverage private investment to augment available public resources to expand the local economic base, and develop an enhanced culture of collaborative community/economic development activities.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Encourage establishment of local investment club	City, local investors	Jan-Dec	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	N/A

9. Upgrade public facilities in the community.

- 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 plan for park renovation. The City allocated a modest level of funding for FY 2012, and the LCF has taken the position to help renovation efforts by raising funds through its community activities; it is anticipated there will be sufficient funds available to implement a reasonable annual renovation work plan.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Prioritize 2012 work plan	PIC, City	Jan-Apr	N/A
Plan and implement 2012 projects	PIC, City	Apr-Dec	Undetermined
Develop 2013 work plan	PIC, City	Aug-Dec	N/A



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- Park Development/Expansion—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, green spaces, and pedestrian trails. The City will work with the PIC and local partners on the planning and implementation of future projects.

The following projects are proposed in the short term: a joint City/School park—playground in the Sandoz School location to accommodate area needs and meet the goals of NNII; the addition of two baseball/softball fields on the south portion of the Optimist Recreation Complex; expansion of Kirkpatrick Memorial Park to the southwest; development of a neighborhood park in the CED Addition to meet the goals of NNII.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Project planning and design	PIC, City, Local Partners, Consultant	Jan-Dec	\$20,000
Solicit funding and cooperative agreements for priority projects	City, DAD, Local Partners	Jan-Dec	N/A

- 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 by NPPD. Following review of the study in early 2008, the City Council adopted a 10 year 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 2012 and beyond as resources allow; accompanied by continued system evaluation by NPPD and City Staff.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Complete system improvements	City, NPPD	Jan-Dec	\$1,500,000
System study and evaluation	NPPD	ongoing	Variable

- Wastewater Treatment Plant—as the community continues to grow and final effluent discharge standards become more stringent, the pressure to complete facility improvements to meet discharge standards increases. Recent concerns by NDEQ and EPA on final effluent discharges and industrial influent waste flows will require the City to accelerate plans to upgrade the facility in 2012 and subsequent years. The City will collaborate with local industry to design and fund the necessary improvements.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Design improvements	City, Consultant	Jan-Jun	\$250,000
Secure project funding	City, Darling Int.	Jan-Jun	Undetermined
Bid and award project	City, Consultant	Jun-Jul	\$10,000
Construct improvements	City, Consultant , Contractor	Jul-beyond	\$4,740,000