



2014 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 2014 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:

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
LCF	Lexington Community Foundation
NPPD	Nebraska Public Power District
LRHC	Lexington Regional Health Center
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.

Recent housing studies indicate that Lexington is currently 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 3% housing vacancy rate, as compared to a healthy 6% rate.

In 2013, a comprehensive development plan update was adopted that provides conservative population projections of Lexington to be 10,950 by 2020 and 11,715 by 2030, based upon historic and desired growth rates.

To adequately accommodate current demand for housing and the forecast population growth, the community will need to provide for the development of approximately 460 additional housing units by 2020, and 490 more units by 2030, or a total of 950 units over the next 16 years (446 owner-occupied/504 rental units). This represents a construction pace of 59 new housing units annually. Based upon historic building data, this annual number of units can be seen as challenge; however, this community is up to that challenge and will take steps in 2014 to continue to move housing development in a positive direction.

- South/Southwest Housing Development—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 in this area 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 housing demand is strong, a decrease in overall available units is viewed as counterproductive.

The CED, through a redevelopment contract with the CDA/City, has developed a new mixed income subdivision with a conceptual 70 lot layout. 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.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
CED Second Addition planning	City, CED, DAD, Private Developers and Builders	Mar-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**—the City, CDA, and GLC control approximately 100 acres of land suitable for housing in the northwest portion of the community; being the Northwest Second, Third, and Fourth Additions and vacant lots remaining in Paulsen’s First Addition and Parkview Addition.

Currently, there are 14 build-ready single family residential lots in the area, and a 34 unit condominium development (The Concord, a 55+ owner occupied project) under construction with four units currently occupied, four units unoccupied and for sale, and four additional units pending construction.

Of the 100 acres discussed above, approximately 60 acres are not adequately subdivided into residential tracts. Steps will be taken in 2014 to plan land use strategies, subdivision requirements, and infrastructure needs for the area. Plans will include low/mid-density housing, transitional housing, park/green spaces, and pedestrian trails.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Support current speculative housing construction activities	Private Developers and Builders, GLC, City, DAD	Jan-Dec	Undetermined
Land use, subdivision, and infrastructure development planning	City	Mar-Dec	\$20,000

- **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

- **Flex Housing**—is a concept that was re-introduced during the current comprehensive development plan update process. It involves planned unit developments of mid-density housing that is cost effective for individuals to access and improve over time. The concept provides for single-family housing units with a minimum finished living space, 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.

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 a minimum specification and design standard. The units could be built directly by individuals or on a speculative basis.



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In 2014, the City will take steps to develop a pilot project, determine the estimated costs/benefits to the community, and determine the market viability.

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

- “Age in Place” Community—is a concept that was introduced during the comprehensive development plan update process. It involves the development of two-family and multi-family housing units within a senior community setting, where general maintenance and area amenities are financially supported by the owner and tenant population. The targeted development area is approximately 30 acres of vacant property abutting the Lexington Regional Health Center to the west.

LRHC has partnered with the City on concept development, which is currently in a preliminary phase. It is anticipated that the collaboration of many more individuals and groups will be needed to make any potential project a reality. In 2014, the City will take steps to further develop and market a project concept with LRHC, area partners, and private developers.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Age in Place conceptual project planning, evaluation, and marketing	City, CDA, LRHC, 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 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 2014 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 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 develop area aesthetic improvements	CDA, City	Ongoing	\$25,000



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- 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 2014 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 and negotiate for the acquisition of property along the Adams Street corridor	CDA, City Manager	Jan-Dec	\$10,000
Market CDA property for development	CDA, City, DAD	Ongoing	Undetermined
Plan area infrastructure and aesthetic improvements	CDA, City	Ongoing	\$15,000

- 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 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 will continue in 2014.

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	Undetermined

- 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



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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. In 2012, \$256,000 in public infrastructure improvements was completed.

The City intends to develop a master plan for downtown projects in 2014 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 a long-term, and 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.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Plan and implement 2014-beyond improvements	City, Consultant, Local Partners, Community	Feb-Dec	Undetermined
Seek improvement funding	City, DAD	Feb-Dec	Variable

3. Improve the public transportation network in the community.

- 6th Street/Jackson Street/13th Street Reconstruction**—planning, design, and environmental review on this federal aid project began in 2012 and was completed in late 2013. 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 Jefferson Street; concrete panel replacement on 6th Street from Jefferson 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.

The project is on schedule for bidding and letting in early 2014, with a construction time frame between July and October 2014.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Project construction	City, Consultant, Contractor	July-Oct	\$300,000



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- 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, with the City of Lexington as the contracting entity. A partnership of engineering firms, Miller & Associates/Parsons Brinkerhoff, was selected for the project preliminary design and environmental review, which is anticipated to conclude in the first half of 2014.

There are several items remaining to complete the preliminary design and environmental review, including the final selection of project alignment. Steps will be taken in 2014 to diligently move the project forward through the federal process, and into final design.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Preliminary and final design activities	City, County, consultants	Jan-beyond	\$700,000

- 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 will continue to sustain and improve the public transportation services into the future.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Support the provision of public transportation services	City, Dawson County, RYDE	Jan-Dec	\$12,500

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)
- Lexington Council for Economic Development (CED)
- Greater Lexington Corporation (GLC)
- Dawson County
- Lexington Public Schools
- Lexington Regional Health Center (LRHC)
- Lexington Rural Fire District
- Lexington Community Foundation (LCF)
- Lexington Chamber of Commerce

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Participate in DAD direction, operation and planning	City representatives	Ongoing	\$30,000 annually
Support Local Partner's activities	City, CDA	Ongoing	Variable
Organize joint meetings	City, Local Partners	Ongoing	Variable
Develop coop 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 2014, 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—steps have been taken to maintain the planning efforts of the City Council for projects and programs. The Council has initiated regular sessions to work with Staff and local partners on projects and policy; it is hoped that the sessions strengthen collaborative efforts in the 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 presence in the facility include: Central Community College, Nebraska Workforce Development, Dawson Area Development/ABLE, City of Lexington, Lexington Chamber of Commerce, and Lexington Public Schools.

In 2014, the City will continue to support and encourage the expansion of existing education, worker training, and business support programs. Additionally, the City will encourage the development and implementation of further collaborative initiatives working with ABLE, Lexington Public Schools, the Dawson County Manufacturers Coalition, Central Community College, and other local partners. A specific concept involves the renovation of the remaining 8,000 SF of vacant space in the Opportunity Center to accommodate activities in the areas of entrepreneurial development, business incubation, and industrial worker training.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Support current programs and encourage new and expanded programs	City, DAD, CCC, Local Partners	Jan-Dec	Undetermined
Plan and implement space renovation	City, DAD, CCC, Local Partners	Jan-Dec	\$200,000

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 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



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- **Expansion Project**—in late 2011, Orthman Manufacturing, Inc. (OMI) announced plans to expand its operation in Lexington. OMI is in the process of constructing an approximately 115,000 SF manufacturing facility on a 28 acre lot in the Southeast Second Addition. The project will result in the addition of 100+ jobs to the local economy.

Local, state, and federal funding is being leveraged to assist in the development of the project, site, and supporting infrastructure. As an ancillary benefit, an additional 34 acres of CDA land adjacent to the project was enhanced to accommodate commercial and light manufacturing development.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Complete redevelopment contract and other project assistance components	City, CDA	Jan-Dec	\$10,000

- **Speculative Building(s)**—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, which building was occupied in 2011 by Rayeman Elements, Inc. and is currently being expanded. The community once again finds itself without available building space. In 2014, the City will encourage the development of additional speculative buildings for commercial and industrial development initiatives.

As part of a development agreement with Orthman Manufacturing, its existing south manufacturing plant at 1502 East Walnut Street will be acquired by DAD/City in 2014 to be used as a speculative building for the community to market to potential manufacturing/industrial clients. The building contains approximately 60,000 SF of floor space and nine acres of exterior property.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Encourage additional spec building projects	City, DAD, Developers, CDA	Jan-Dec	Undetermined
Market available industrial building	City, DAD	Aug-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 2014, 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	Undetermined

9. Upgrade public facilities in the community.

- Park Rehabilitation, Expansion, and New Development—the landscape, equipment, shelters/restrooms, sidewalks, lighting, water systems, and other facilities in the City’s existing 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.

In 2012, the PIC worked through a master planning process for the redevelopment of Plum Creek and Kirkpatrick Memorial Parks and the development of a new park space in the Sandoz School area. Additionally, the 2013 Comprehensive Development Plan built upon these efforts and contains park and trails plans that will serve as a tool to develop future improvement priorities.



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Improvements to the park system will require a substantial investment over a long-term period of time. In 2014, the City will evaluate and prioritize improvements into a formal capital improvement plan. Moving forward, projects will be implemented as resources allow; funding will be aggressively solicited from a wide range of public and private sources.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Develop a park and trail CIP	PIC, City, Local Partners	Feb-Mar	Undetermined
Prioritize 2014 work plan	PIC, City	Mar-May	Undetermined
Design and implement viable projects	City, Local Partners	Jun-Dec	Undetermined
Solicit funding and cooperative agreements for priority projects	City, DAD, Consultant. Local Partners	Ongoing	Undetermined
Prioritize 2015 work plan	PIC, City	Sep-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 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 2014 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	\$800,000
System study and evaluation	NPPD	ongoing	Variable

- Lexington Fieldhouse—plans are underway to construct an indoor soccer/activity facility adjacent to the competition soccer fields at the Optimist Rec Complex; a collaboration between the Lexington Soccer League, City, and LCF. The current project estimate is \$1.1 Million, with a private fundraising goal of \$700,000.

Facility attributes include: approximately 26,000 SF of space, artificial turf surfacing, in-floor heat, a single 220' x 90' or two 90' x 75' playing fields, and will attach to and utilize an existing building at the complex for concession and locker/restroom space.

In 2014, the City will take steps to complete preliminary building design and continue to work with the Lexington Soccer League, LCF, and other local partners to solicit and secure project funding.

Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost
Finalize preliminary building plan	City, Local Partners	Feb-May	Undetermined
Obtain project funding	City, Local Partners	Feb-Dec	Undetermined