

City Happenings

August 2012

An eNewsletter from the City of Lexington, Nebraska

Downtown project starts in August



August 13 is the proposed start date for more downtown revitalization (DTR) construction. The project includes improvements that will be paid for with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds offered through the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

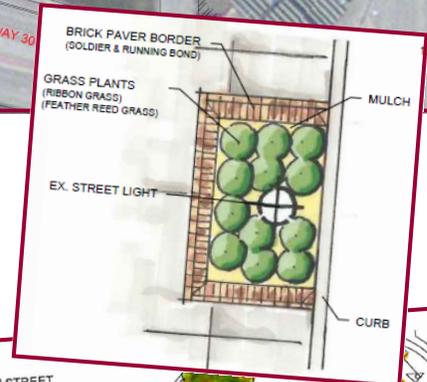
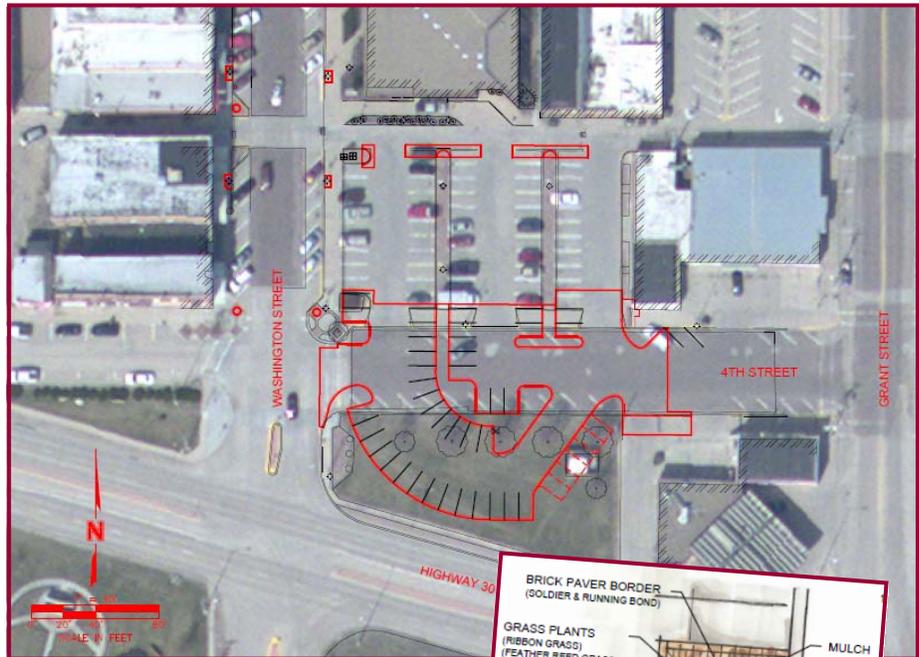
Lexington's DTR was kick-started with a comprehensive downtown study completed in 2010 by RDG Planning & Design of Omaha. The study won an Excellence in Planning award in March 2011 from the Nebraska Chapter of the American Planning Association.

In Phase two of the project, \$139,000 was set aside to help downtown businesses make building rehabilitation improvements. The federal funding spurred more than \$260,000 of **additional** private sector building improvement investment.

This final phase will take the remaining \$193,000 of CDBG funds to make improvements in streets and public facilities.

Improvements will include an expanded parking lot south of Pinnacle Bank around 4th and Washington (top picture). When this is done, about a half block of 4th Street will become part of the parking lot. The City will also make sidewalk improvements around the historic street lights (center picture), and clean up and paint the vacant lot at 5th and Washington (bottom picture).

A capital plan for future downtown improvements will be developed and implemented in 2013 and beyond.



City Embarks on Comprehensive Plan Update

After several months of reading proposals, interviewing and selecting consultants, negotiating agreements and getting State approval, the City of Lexington is moving forward with creating a new Comprehensive Development Plan. The Comp Plan was last updated in 2005. Comp Plans are required by state statute, and are usually updated every 5-10 years.

A Comp Plan is a great tool used to shape community growth with forethought and intentionality. It guides the Planning Commission and City Council in matters of zoning, land use, and other matters.

For this update, the City applied for and received \$75,000 in Federal Highway Administration funding through the Nebraska Department of Roads. Due to their funding, NDOR is requiring the Plan to have an expanded transportation planning component.

Lexington's Planning Commission researched and interviewed consultants, finally recommending the team of JEO Consulting Group, based in Wahoo; and HDR Inc., of Omaha. The City Council approved the Consultant recommendation on March 27, 2012.

We're looking for public involvement!

The consultants have already met twice with the Planning Commission, developing the process for the project. As public input is vitally important, there will be several opportunities for organizations and individuals to share thoughts at public meetings and focus groups. A schedule appears below.

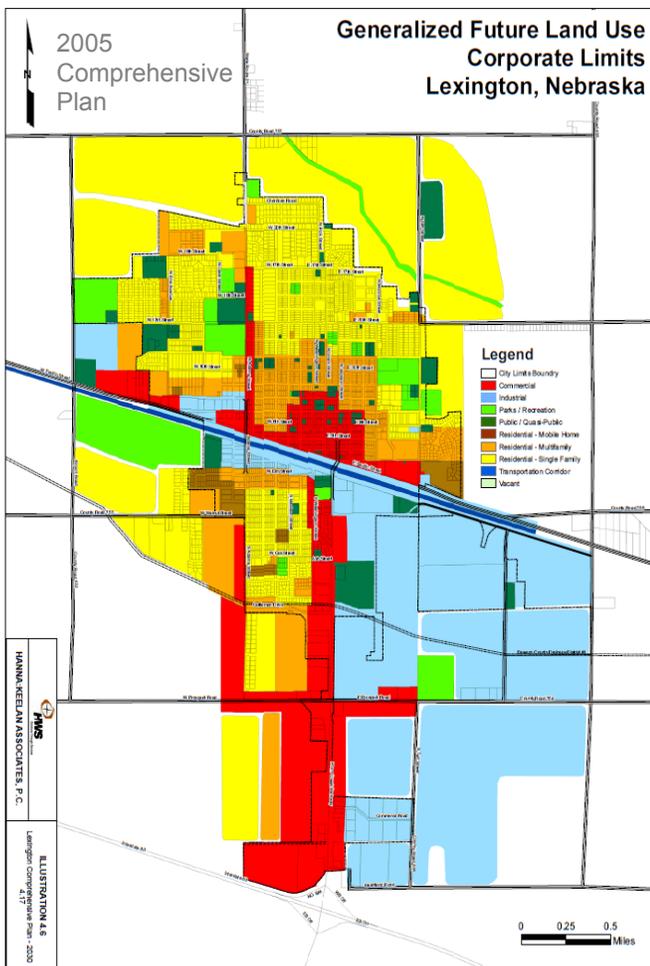
New Technology Online

If you can't make it to one of the public meetings, "MindMixer," a "virtual Town Hall," will enable citizens to participate online 24/7. Watch for Links and instructions on the City's website once MindMixer is up and running.

The final Comp Plan will be developed as a multi-layered online interactive document, enabling easy, fast search and review capabilities.

A Few Key Dates

- Sept. 20** - "Envision" Meeting 1 - all day small focus groups and an evening Town Hall meeting
- Oct. 24-25** - "Envision Meeting 2" - interviews with key individuals, viewing of draft sketches, and another Town Hall meeting
- Dec. 6** - "Achieve" Committee Meeting
- Jan. 17** - Implementation Committee Meeting
- Feb. 15** - Final Draft submitted



EnergyWise Tip: **Ceiling Fans**

How much electricity can you save by using ceiling fans to keep cool this year? That depends on how you use them. In fact, if you do not use them wisely, you may end up using more energy overall!

Ceiling fans can “help” save money on air conditioning bills. They do this in two ways: First, during the spring and fall when it is not too hot outside, you can sometimes use the fans to keep comfortable instead of turning on the air conditioning system. Since fans use on average 60 to 100 watts of energy and the average air conditioning system uses 3,500 watts, you can save a few dollars.

The second way to save is to use the fans during very hot weather. Since a fan blowing air on you can help you feel comfortable even at higher ambient air temperatures that would normally have you scurrying to find relief from the heat, you can set your home’s air conditioner’s thermostat to a higher temperature and feel comfortable.

Unfortunately, most people do not use their ceiling fans in a way that actually saves them money. A recent study in Florida found that there was no difference in thermostat settings for people using fans versus those not using fans. If you do not turn up the thermostat, then the air conditioning will run just as much, and you will not save a dime. In fact, your bill will rise, since the fan uses energy too!

If you want to save money by using fans, the key thing to remember is that fans cool people. They do not cool air. They do not cool rooms. They do cool people. So run the fans only when there are people in the room.

To be economical, you have to think of the fans like you think of lights. You go into a room, you turn on the light (fan). You leave the room, you turn it off. Blowing air onto your living room carpet or onto your bed, when no people are there, will cool nothing except dust mites.

In summer months, your ceiling fan offers the greatest energy saving benefit when run in a counter-clockwise direction. If the outside temperature is not too high, you might be able to achieve a comfortable environment by turning off the HVAC altogether, by opening a few windows and allowing the ceiling fan to circulate warm air outdoors. Effective circulation can make you feel up to 8 degrees F. cooler and reduce air conditioning bills by up to 40 percent, though most people see an average decrease of 15 percent energy use when effectively managing their cooling.



For maximum energy saving benefits, you might consider an ENERGY STAR® ceiling fan. These fans circulate an average of 15 percent more air than other ceiling fans, without sacrificing style or attractiveness. To reap the optimal energy saving benefits from your ceiling fans, it is important to install several fans throughout your home

and office, placed in key locations. All of the most frequently used rooms should have a ceiling fans. For optimal performance, the blades of your ceiling fan should be between 7-9 feet above the floor, and 10-12 inches below the ceiling. If the blades of your fan are too close to the ceiling, your fan may be up to 40 percent less efficient. Finally, the blades should be at least 18 inches from the nearest wall.

The fan hanging from the ceiling in your living room may seem like it was put there for decoration, but this simple device can help control your home cooling costs. Using a multi-speed reversible ceiling fan could save you significant money, but only if and when it is used correctly.

For other ideas on how you can become more EnergyWiseSM, visit with Lexington Utilities Service or learn more at www.nppd.com/save-energy.





Library News

Lexington Public Library
907 North Washington St.
by Kathy Thomsen
Library Director

The library will be hosting *Navigating the Waters of Legal Information and Self-Help for Library Patrons* on Monday, August 13 at 3:30 p.m. The session will demonstrate how to use the Supreme Court's Self-Help Web Page, which has resources to assist people representing themselves.



Storytime at the library will begin on Tuesday, August 21 at 10:30 a.m. All children

between the ages of three to six are invited to join us for stories, activities, music, and crafts. Lap Sit for children age birth to three will begin on Wednesday, August 22. Babies and toddlers will enjoy stories, songs, action verses, and playing with interactive materials. If you have any questions, call **Brenda Schwarz** at 324-2151.

The adult component of the summer reading



program, *Dream Big...Read!* concluded on August 1, 2012. Sixty-eight readers participated in the program; reading a total of 333 books. The most reviewed authors were **Al Lacy** and **Lisa Genova**. The library held a weekly drawing for a lighted bookmark.

The grand prize winners of chamber bucks were: 1st prize - **Crystal Oberg**; 2nd prize - **Ramona Neben**; and 3rd prize - **Marge Coufal**. Thanks to all who participated in a fun summer of reading! Be sure to stop by the library later this month to see what everyone was reading over the summer and read their reviews.



The **Friends of the Library** are currently busy with two exciting projects:

- The Friends are developing a **Books for Babies** program that will offer a tote bag to the family of each baby born at the **Lexington Regional Health Center**. Each bag will include baby's first board book, information about the library and how to get baby's first library card, information from other agencies in Lexington that provide services to children, a developmental chart and information from **Child Find**, a hand knitted/crocheted hat, and a receiving blanket.
- The second program the Friends of the Library is sponsoring is **Books on Wheels**, which delivers books or other library materials to shut-ins. If you know of anyone who would like to use this service, please call the library at 324-2151.



The next Friends of the Library meeting will be at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, August 27.



The fall programming sponsored by the Lexington Library Memorial Fund and the Lexington Community Foundation will begin on Sunday,

September 23 at 2:00 p.m., when the Lexington Public Library hosts **Jerry Barlow**. Jerry, a Celtic-style guitarist from Colorado, is always a favorite. So mark the date for an enjoyable afternoon and a great way to kick-off the 2012-2013 entertainment season.

1-2-1

1-2-1 is a new program offered by the library. If you would like help on the computer come by the library between 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. from Monday through Thursday and a staff member will help you individually. Prior registration is encouraged.



The library will soon be offering classes in Beginning Computer, Kindle Fire, and using your e-reader. Watch the Library Happenings in the Lexington Clipper Herald or look on the library's website for further details.



Remember, you're not just getting rid of weeds and pests



Choose Earth-friendly landscaping

Did you know that herbicides and pesticides are harmful to our kids, pets, and the environment?

The chemicals in these materials pollute our waterways if washed from our lawns and gardens into storm drains or roadside ditches that lead directly to our lakes and rivers. Practicing Earth-friendly landscaping in your yard and garden can help protect kids, pets, and our waterways.

So what can you do? Simple:

- Select plants native to Nebraska. These plants require less fertilizer and water, and are more disease resistant.
- Avoid over-watering your lawn — it needs about one inch of rain/water per week.
- Use mulch around trees and plants to help retain water, reduce weeds, and minimize the need for pesticides.
- Mow your lawn high — 3 inches is the rule. Follow your community's leaf pick-up guidelines. Try mowing grass clippings and leaves into your lawn — they make good fertilizers.
- Use herbicides and pesticides sparingly and limit application to problem areas only.

Choose Earth-friendly landscaping and help keep our water clean!



Support provided by NDEQ



801 West Vine Street
308-324-5995

Summer Hours

Mon. - Fri.
7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

- dispose of furniture, appliances, and other large items
- pick up free wood chips, dirt or compost
- dispose of tree limbs.

WE ASK OUR CUSTOMERS

DO NOT DEPOSIT IN TRASH DUMPSTERS:

- yard waste • tree branches • wood • cement • iron
- batteries and tires . . . as the landfill will not accept these items.

YOUR DUMPSTER IS FOR YOUR HOUSEHOLD TRASH ONLY

If you have a curbside trash container, DO NOT place trash in large alley dumpsters. These are for alley customers only.

If your curbside trash container fills before the weekly pickup, please call for additional containers.

DO NOT under any circumstances put hot BBQ coals or fireplace ashes in your dumpster. If you are caught doing this you will have to pay to replace the dumpster if fire occurs.

If you see someone using alley containers for construction materials, yard waste, or other unaccepted items please call us right away and we will take care of it.



Dan's Sanitation
324-6693 • Lexington