

# North Omaha Development Project

*The North Omaha Development Project is a focused commitment of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, corporate leaders, elected officials, African American business leaders and the North Omaha community to make strategic investments in North Omaha. The study area is Sorensen Parkway on the north, Cuming Street on the south, 16<sup>th</sup> Street on the east and 52<sup>nd</sup> Street on the west. For more information, e-mail [info@projectnorthomaha.org](mailto:info@projectnorthomaha.org), visit [www.ProjectNorthOmaha.org](http://www.ProjectNorthOmaha.org) or call (402) 346-5000.*

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Q: What are the study boundaries?**

**A:** The area is defined by Sorensen Parkway on the north, Cuming Street on the south, 16<sup>th</sup> Street on the east and 52<sup>nd</sup> Street on the west.

### **Q: Who are the consultants?**

**A:** RDG Planning and Design, Economics Research Associates and Alex Garvin & Associates have been selected to conduct the community study.

### **Q: How was the consulting team selected?**

**A:** In the fall of 2006, the executive committee sent out a request for proposals to various regional and national planning and architectural engineering consulting firms. The top two responding companies were asked to present to the steering committee. In January, the consulting team of RDG Planning and Design, with Economics Research Associates (ERA), Alex Garvin Associates, and Robert Peters Company was selected based on their expertise in urban planning.

The RDG team brings an understanding of the long-term, historical awareness of the neighborhood and continued engagement in North Omaha and similar settings in other cities. Alex Garvin & Associates has the reputation of being one of the best firms in the nation at understanding the relationship between community investments and self-sustaining markets. Economics Research Associates is an internationally-recognized consulting firm specializing in all aspects of real estate and land use economics, urban planning and development, commercial recreation feasibility, strategic planning for communities and corporations, and management and marketing services. Robert Peters Company is a recognized leader in planning, urban development and project management and financial packaging.

### **Q: Why is this study different from the others?**

**A:** This process is unique because money was raised up front for both a study and its three-year implementation. Financial commitment and leadership comes from the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, corporate leaders, elected officials, African American business leaders and the North Omaha community.

### **Q: How much money was raised?**

**A:** Over \$750,000 has been raised through a variety of donors including small and large businesses along with government, non-profit organizations and individuals who believe in the economic development opportunities of the area. Approximately \$350,000 is going directly to the development of the study.

### **Q: How will the study's findings be implemented?**

**A:** Of the money raised, \$400,000 will be used to hire a project director to implement the strategies defined in the study over the next three years.

# North Omaha Development Project

**Q: Who is represented on the steering committee and how were they selected?**

A: The steering committee was selected by an executive committee based on the diversity of the community including large and small business owners, churches, social service organizations, health organizations, elected officials, educational institutions and residents.

**Q: How is the neighborhood being represented?**

A: Along with the selection of a diverse steering committee, community feedback is being solicited through a series of public informational meetings, the first of which was held on April 23. The purpose is to provide study information and gain feedback from those in attendance. Six neighborhood workshops were held throughout the community in April and May allowing participants to identify the critical needs of the community. A phone, Internet and written survey are currently underway to gain additional community input.

**Q: How can I participate in the survey or provide input to the process?**

A: If you would like to participate, visit (here) or call the Chamber at (402) 346-5000. We ensure that every comment is passed on to the consulting team.

**Q: How is community input being used?**

A: Community input is critical to ensure that the study process represents the actual community views and needs. All forms of community input (meetings, calls, surveys and interviews) are being reviewed by the consultants prior to making recommendations about the area. Additional input is encouraged. Along with attending public meetings, you may complete the survey found at [www.ProjectNorthOmaha.org](http://www.ProjectNorthOmaha.org) or call (402) 346-5000.

**Q: How is the information about the study being distributed?**

A: We have developed a multi-faceted communications strategy that includes an Internet site, [www.ProjectNorthOmaha.org](http://www.ProjectNorthOmaha.org), articles in the Omaha Star, an electronic newsletters and communication through existing community Web sites and newsletters. We are also soliciting volunteers to act as the “feet on the street” to provide information about the project and community meetings.

**Q: How was the study funded?**

A: The study was funded through a variety of donors including small and large businesses along with government, non-profit organizations and individuals who believe in the economic development opportunities of the area.

**Q: Why is the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce interested in North Omaha?**

A: The mission of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce is to increase business investment and employment in the Greater Omaha area. We are committed to economic development in all parts of our city. We have invested in downtown Omaha, Destination Midtown and north Downtown. The logical next area for the economic development is north Omaha. The Chamber has been very involved in bringing businesses to the area. We partnered with the City of Omaha to create the North Omaha Business Park. Now that the business park is nearly full, we have been working with officials at the City Planning Department for over a year to identify other parcels in North Omaha that may be assembled for a new business park.

It is our intention to do a similar program in south Omaha beginning in the next year or so. A city thrives when all parts of the city are economically viable. When we raised the money for the study, we also raised money to implement the plan. We are committed to identifying key locations of the north Omaha study area to bring investment and employment opportunities.

# North Omaha Development Project

**Q: What are the components and timeline of the study?**

A: Part One: Assessment of demographic, economic, physical and organizational systems. February – April

Part Two: Public input process and economic/market analysis. April - June

Part Three: Developing the recommendations and concepts June - September

Part Four: Implementation strategies. September – October

The strategies will be implemented beginning October 2007.

**Q: How does this study fit with the other North Omaha initiatives?**

A: This study is an economic development study and is independent of other initiatives. Where overlaps exist with other community initiatives, we will work cooperatively. In the implementation phase, the project director will work closely with other community representatives to ensure study goals are achieved.

**Q: What resources are available to encourage entrepreneurship and small business in North Omaha?**

A: The Chamber has small business and economic development staff to provide assistance. The Nebraska Business Development Center offers training and assistance to those who are interested in starting their own business. Resources are also available through the Small Business Administration. The Chamber partnered with the Nebraska Business Development Center to create “Keys for a Successful Business Start-up.” Copies can be obtained through the Chamber, call 346-5000.

**Q: What is being done to address the arts?**

A: Based on public input, the arts are a critical part of the culture of North Omaha. Any component of the arts that will encourage economic development will be incorporated.

**Q: Why is the study being done?**

A city thrives when all parts of the city are economically viable. When we raised the money for the study, we also raised money to implement the plan. We are committed to identifying key locations of the north Omaha study area to bring investment and employment opportunities.

**Q: What is being done to address crime?**

A: Omaha Police Chief Warren is a member of the steering committee and actively involved in the study process. He is listening to community input and evaluating the current crime prevention strategy in North Omaha. We will continue to work with the Omaha Police Department.

**Q: What is the opportunity for business growth in North Omaha?**

A: The North Omaha business park is full and is an example of thriving businesses and the opportunities for additional business development in north Omaha. This includes Jobbash, Cintas, Wes and Willy’s, New Community Development Corporation, First National Bank and Armored Knights. The Chamber gets numerous requests from companies outside of the area looking to expand, relocate or open an office in our city. This plan includes the identification of locations for business growth. Combined with examples of strong businesses in the area, the Chamber and other economic development organizations will be able to drive appropriate business investment to North Omaha.

# North Omaha Development Project

**Q: How does this relate to the CSO study?**

A: The North Omaha Development study is an economic development study. The CSO Study (Clean Solutions for Omaha) is a separate study looking at ways to address wastewater being directly deposited into the Missouri River. Evaluation of combined storm and sanitary sewer lines is also part of the CSO study. The results of the CSO study could have a significant impact on the community and will be taken into consideration when making physical recommendations with the North Omaha study area.

**Q: Will the study result in relocation of current residents and businesses?**

A: There are many development sites in North Omaha. As the strategy develops, we will find the best locations for new development to occur. In most cases, these development projects will not require relocation of existing residents and every effort will be made to minimize this.