

North Omaha

Development Project

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Karla Ewert – Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, VP-communications
Office: (402) 978-7942, Cell: (402) 320-4559
Shannon Sherman, Bailey Lauerman,
Office: (402) 514-9423, Cell: (402) 934-9020

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY ANNOUNCED FOR NORTH OMAHA DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Community Feedback Leads to Addition of Fourth Opportunity Area

Omaha, Neb., Oct. 3, 2007 – The North Omaha Development Project steering committee and consultants announced a development strategy for community and business investment at a public meeting Oct. 3. The strategy outlines next steps for infrastructure improvements, public transportation, community development opportunities, entertainment options and housing initiatives—all of which are geared toward creating job opportunities. This plan builds upon the economic rebirth already taking place throughout North Omaha.

The consultants announced four specific areas for development. —16th and Cuming streets, the 24th Street and Lake Street Corridors; the neighborhoods surrounding 30th Street and Ames Avenue; and the Adams Park area at 30th and Bedford streets. Feedback from North Omaha residents who attended a North Omaha Development Project community meeting July 19 prompted the steering committee to add the 16th and Cuming streets area.

“The framework and opportunities identified for growth in North Omaha are the result of careful market analysis, input from the steering committee and key insights from North Omaha residents and business owners,” said David G. Brown, president and CEO of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce. “This development study has created a solid foundation for community and business investment in North Omaha, and a potential template for future development projects in other areas of the city.”

The North Omaha Development Project steering committee and the newly-created position of executive director, along with the support of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this plan. Seven task forces, chaired by members of the steering committee and community leaders, have been established to address transportation, business development, workforce development, capacity building, housing, finance and communications. In addition, the Chamber has designated additional staff to focus on workforce development and capacity building for minority-owned businesses.

“Our current funding allows for a three-year implementation period, but everyone involved with this project, from our steering committee to North Omaha business leaders, is committed to promoting business development and community growth in North Omaha for years to come,” said Dennis O’Neal, co-chair of the North Omaha Development Project steering committee and executive vice president of First National of Nebraska.

North Omaha

Development Project

Consultants at the Oct. 3 meeting presented a three-step framework for North Omaha development, emphasizing the need to build inward from strategic assets that border the area—including Qwest Center Omaha, North Downtown, Creighton University, Metropolitan Community College and Destination Midtown—to achieve short-term success. Step two is to complete a feature at the core of the neighborhood that has the power to generate surrounding investment. Step three is to expand this development momentum throughout the neighborhoods.

By applying this framework to the four opportunity areas in North Omaha, consultants identified five building blocks for business and community development:

- **Employment Creating Development** - creating more jobs and opportunities for the community.
- **Medical and Health Care** - building on the fastest growing sector of Omaha's economy and a critical future demand.
- **Retail** - providing goods and services that people now leave the neighborhood to obtain.
- **Mixed Income Residential** - increasing both the population and economic diversity of North Omaha, building markets and restoring vacant land to productive use.
- **Culture, Entertainment and Image** - building on North Omaha's rich heritage to improve the neighborhood's quality of life and fundamentally change community perceptions.

The four North Omaha areas identified for future community and business investment include:

24th Street Corridor

The vision for the corridor is a diverse mixed-use urban district, anchored by new, locally-based retailing on the south and a cultural and entertainment district on the north. The cultural and entertainment district could include two distinct but connected institutions, a renewed African-American museum and a theater center building on the success of Love's Jazz & Arts Center at 24th and Lake streets. This area is from 24th Street to 30th Street, from Cuming Street to north of Lake Street and incorporates both sides of the North Freeway.

To view the brochure, visit www.ProjectNorthOmaha.org.

30th Street and Ames Avenue/Metro South

The 30th and Ames/Metro South opportunity area, with its focus on business development, major retailing, and innovative health services, has a relatively straightforward implementation process. The process involves land acquisition, site preparation and infrastructure. The plan for the 30th and Ames/Metro South opportunity area includes three project components: high amenity business park sites related to Metropolitan Community College, a community commercial center and health retail village, and supporting transportation improvements.

To view the brochure, visit www.ProjectNorthOmaha.org.

Adams Park

Adams Park should be developed as the highly visible, "Central Park" for North Omaha. Adams Park should be a destination that draws people from around the Greater Omaha community and creates a catalyst for residential growth in adjacent neighborhoods.

North Omaha

Development Project

To view the brochure, visit www.ProjectNorthOmaha.org.

16th Street and Cuming Street West

The 16th & Cuming Development opportunity area touches the 24th Street Corridor, Creighton University and North Downtown (NoDo), and is a crossroads district affected by a variety of contradictory forces. The 16th & Cuming streets concept seeks to resolve these conflicts and involves five sub-areas: the Cuming Street corridor, the Human Services Campus, an industrial buffer, a residential district and expansion of the Kellom/Educare campus. The concept also proposes changes in the street system to support the overall concept. Improvements to the rest of the 16th Street corridor are important to enhance the entrance to the neighborhood.

To view the brochure, visit www.ProjectNorthOmaha.org.

Future Project Directions

The four development opportunity areas, if fully developed, would effectively launch North Omaha on the path to a self-sustaining economy. The NODP consultants and steering committee also announced “Stage 2” sites for development, or other sites that will present major opportunities if the market grows. Some of these sites include:

- Pleasantview Homes/Highlander Neighborhood - Easy access, proximity to downtown Omaha, Creighton University and Midtown will support development of this area.
- The City of Omaha’s Public Works Facility - The site will be an opportunity for a mixed density residential development with commercial uses along Lake Street.
- The 24th Street and Ames Avenue area - Continued light industrial use in an upgraded setting that complements residential areas.
- Spencer Homes - In the future, the Omaha Housing Authority is likely to replace this more than 50 year-old development. New mixed income housing organized around a greenway would complement the surrounding neighborhood and connect the area to Adams Park.
- Orchard Center – Mixed-use development on industrial sites in the 40th and Lake streets area. A Lake/Grant connector and belt line parkway provides the needed infrastructure for future development.
- The Belt Line Triangle - Housing development is a logical reuse of the site, building from the foundation of a renewed Adams Park and the adjacent Malcolm X Birthsite.
- Nebraska School for the Deaf Campus - Potential programs for the site could include residential development or civic or educational uses.
- 51st and Ames/Baker Place - The site presents good potential for a mixed-density residential or senior living with some commercial or office component.
- Fontenelle Park West - The site, located between Fontenelle Park and the Omaha Home for Boys, is extremely attractive and is adjacent to a solid single-family neighborhood.

To view the brochure, visit www.ProjectNorthOmaha.org.

Summary

North Omaha Development Project

Mike Green, co-chairman of the North Omaha Development Project, said, “The North Omaha Development Project holds tremendous promise for this vitally important part of Omaha. This study is different from those we’ve seen before because of the commitment for the implementation phase, the community engagement throughout the process and the importance of the community in bringing this to reality. It won’t all happen over night. This is a long-term initiative.”

The initial projects proposed in the four development opportunity areas will generate:

- over \$200 million in **private development**
- \$3 to \$3.5 million in **annual sales tax revenue**
- more than **2,500 jobs**
- nearly **1,000 housing units** with a spin-off affect for more.

Combined, these projects will enliven 24th Street as a mixed-use urban neighborhood; provide new retail services; develop major employment centers; open opportunities for new businesses; celebrate the rich culture and history of the North Omaha community; and transform a neglected open space into a great city park. By so doing, the image of the neighborhood will be transformed.

The North Omaha Development Project, which was first announced in October 2006, is a commitment of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, African-American business leaders, corporate leaders, elected officials and the North Omaha community to make important investments in North Omaha. Residents, business owners and the community at large were invited to complete surveys and participate in neighborhood workshops and community forums to provide input into this effort to reinvigorate the North Omaha economy.

The initial study—conducted by RDG Planning and Design, Economics Research Associates and Alex Garvin & Associates—focuses on the area bordered by Sorensen Parkway on the north, Cuming Street on the south, 16th Street on the east and 52nd Street on the west.

For more information about the North Omaha Development Project or to get involved, e-mail info@projectnorthomaha.org, visit www.ProjectNorthOmaha.org or call (402) 346-5000.

###