
NEWS RELEASE

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COMMUNITY LEADERS UNVEIL VISION FOR LINCOLN'S FUTURE

2015 VISION MEMBERS IDENTIFY 10 PRIORITY PROJECTS TO SUPPORT RESEARCH AND EDUCATION, CREATE JOBS AND PROVIDE ENTERTAINMENT OPPORTUNITIES

November 9, 2006 – Lincoln, Neb. – A coalition of Lincoln business and civic leaders, called 2015 Vision, pledged its support of plans that will strengthen research and education, create jobs and provide new entertainment and cultural opportunities for Lincoln and Nebraska. The group's vision centers around 10 interrelated projects that include building a new arena and convention center, new Nebraska Sports Triangle, redeveloping "P" and "Q" Streets into a new retail and mixed-use corridor, expanding University of Nebraska and private sector research opportunities, and co-locating the Nebraska State Fair and Lancaster County Events Center at one location.

2015 Vision spokesman Kent Seacrest said Lincoln is at a crossroads and has a tremendous opportunity to create a bright future for the community and state – if the public and private sectors are willing to work together on one coordinated vision for the community, not a handful of disjointed plans.

"There are many exciting projects under discussion in the city and we believe that a public-private partnership is the best way to make them come to life," Seacrest said. "It's also important from the public's point of view to look at the projects as a whole – not independently – to determine if they make sense for our city and state. Other cities have demonstrated that it takes a strong public-private partnership to enable change to take place, and we can do that in Lincoln."

Seacrest said 2015 Vision believes private developers will be extremely interested in participating in certain projects, while other projects could be supported through philanthropic gifts. Combined, this support could total in the tens of millions of dollars of new private sector funds.

Seacrest said 2015 Vision has looked at various city, county, University and Nebraska State Fair studies and strategic plans, and has identified 10 projects that work together and make sense for Lincoln and Nebraska.

- **West Haymarket Arena:** As recommended by the mayor's Arena Task Force, acquire most of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad yard and construct a new 15,000-seat arena in the west Haymarket area behind Lincoln Station to replace the aging Pershing Auditorium.
- **New Convention Center and Headquarter Hotel:** Encourage a developer to construct a new convention, conference and exhibition center with a new headquarter hotel next to the new West Haymarket Arena, utilizing Lincoln Station as a major entry point.

- **Expansion of Haymarket Park:** Expand Haymarket Park to the south with new baseball, softball, soccer and football fields for city youth, adult, Lincoln Public Schools and University sporting and recreation events.
- **Nebraska Sports Triangle:** Create and market a new Nebraska Sports Triangle between Memorial Stadium, expanded Haymarket Park and the new West Haymarket Arena. This recreational and economic area would provide a special place for state and regional sports tournaments, while sharing parking and providing food, beverage and shopping opportunities before and after the games.
- **Humanities and Art Center:** Develop a University Humanities and Art Center Block in the Haymarket to celebrate Nebraska's rich heritage in the pedestrian-friendly Haymarket area. The Humanities and Art Center Block also would include first floor retail and upper floor residential living opportunities.
- **Downtown Plaza and Tower/Garage Project:** Implement Lincoln's "Town Square" at 13th and "P" Streets, and develop the Tower project on top of the new city parking garage along "Q" Street for downtown residential living, hotel and/or office use.
- **Retail along "P" and "Q" Streets:** Expand community and University-related retail and entertainment along "P" and "Q" Streets between the University and downtown. Run a trolley along this corridor from the Haymarket to East Downtown Park and back. Other major university cities such as Lawrence, Kan.; Bloomington, Ind.; Madison, Wis.; and Iowa City, Iowa; have successfully developed dynamic retail areas that cater to a multitude of generations.
- **Antelope Valley Projects:** Complete the Antelope Valley Waterway, Parkway, and community projects including constructing the high amenity East Downtown Community Park from "O" to "R" Streets and updating Trago Park from "R" to "U" Streets. These improvements will revitalize the eastern edge of downtown and UNL campus, remove the designated 100-year flood plain from 800 dwellings, 200 businesses and over 50 acres of the UNL campus, as well as help reduce traffic congestion and remove arterial traffic on 16th and 17th Streets through the University campus.
- **UNL Research and Development Corridor:** Develop a public and private sector research and development corridor along Antelope Valley improvements from "O" Street to State Fair Park. The R & D Corridor would include:
 1. Redevelopment of historic Whittier Junior High School into a premier University dry lab research facility.
 2. Implementation of the University of Nebraska Board of Regents UNL Master Plan, which shows up to six new research and classroom facilities around the present Beadle Center and College of Engineering.
 3. Creation of private research companies in the east downtown area and other areas to be in close proximity to the University's research facilities.

- **Develop High Amenity Agricultural Exposition Center:** Create an attractive, vibrant, year-round regional exhibition and events center at 84th & Havelock, one focused on agriculture, livestock and other compatible exhibitions. Co-locating the two fairs would be the first step and has the potential to improve the viability of both fairs, reduce taxpayer assistance, and provide a state and local exhibition center for year-round activities. The state fair campus could then be used by the University and city of Lincoln to provide additional lands in the Research and Development Corridor, as well as for recreation, parking and other community purposes.

“Many existing facilities, such as Pershing Auditorium and several buildings at State Fair Park, require major renovations and significant tax support from local or state taxpayers,” Seacrest said. “Before we build duplicate buildings or renovate old infrastructure, we need to look at all the projects as a whole and make sure we are doing things as efficiently as possible for the taxpayer’s sake. That’s good business sense and just good common sense. It’s also the best way to leverage private money.”

Seacrest said the various developments would benefit taxpayers, support research, create jobs and provide new entertainment opportunities, which are especially important if Lincoln is to retain the thousands of college students who attend area schools.

Marc LeBaron, a member of 2015 Vision, said the group’s next goal is to start dialogue among the various governing bodies, including the Lincoln City Council and Lancaster County Board, University of Nebraska Board of Regents, State Fair Board, Governor and Nebraska Legislature. He said Lincoln’s future will be enhanced if everyone works together in a partnership.

“2015 Vision started with a small group of business and civic leaders committed to our city, but as word spread of our interests, people throughout the community already asked to be a part of our efforts,” LeBaron said. “We believe there will be plenty of opportunity for everyone with an interest to contribute with their time, talent and financial gifts, because all will be required for Lincoln to take this important next step in our future.”