

The Rose Center
FOR PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

NATIONAL
LEAGUE
of CITIES



Urban Land
Institute

Encouraging the Development of North Downtown as a Thriving Urban Community

Omaha, Nebraska

November 2014 – November 2015

A Rose Center for Public Leadership
in Land Use Report

ROSE CENTER FOR PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

1301 Pennsylvania Ave NW • Suite 550 • Washington, DC 20004

ABOUT THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

The National League of Cities (NLC) is the nation's leading advocacy organization devoted to strengthening and promoting cities as centers of opportunity, leadership and governance. Through its membership and partnerships with state municipal leagues, NLC serves as a resource and advocate for more than 19,000 cities and towns and more than 218 million Americans. NLC's Center for City Solutions and Applied Research provides research and analysis on key topics and trends important to cities, creative solutions to improve the quality of life in communities, inspiration and ideas for local officials to use in tackling tough issues and opportunities for city leaders to connect with peers, share experiences and learn about innovative approaches in cities.

ABOUT THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

The mission of the Urban Land Institute is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. Established in 1936, the Institute today has more than 38,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. ULI relies heavily on the experience of its members. It is through member involvement and information resources that ULI has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. The Institute has long been recognized as one of the world's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.



About the Rose Center for Public Leadership

The mission of the Rose Center for Public Leadership in Land Use is to encourage and support excellence in land use decision making by providing public officials with access to information, best practices, peer networks, and other resources to foster creative, efficient, practical, and sustainable land use policies.

In 2008, Daniel Rose established the Rose Center to empower leaders in the public sector to envision, build, and sustain successful 21st-century communities. With a \$5 million gift, Rose founded the center at the Urban Land Institute (ULI), a nonprofit education and research organization dedicated to the responsible use of land and creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. Established in 1936, ULI has nearly 38,000 members worldwide representing all aspects of the land use and real estate development disciplines.

In 2014, the Rose family and ULI formed a strategic partnership with the National League of Cities (NLC) to bring that organization's robust expertise in local government and leadership to bear on the Rose Center's programs. Established in 1924, NLC is dedicated to helping city leaders build better communities by serving as a resource and advocate for elected and appointed officials from the more than 19,000 U.S. cities, villages and towns it represents. Collectively, ULI and NLC represent the world's foremost real estate professionals and the nation's most distinguished municipal leaders. Today, NLC operates the Rose Center with the ongoing programmatic, financial, and strategic support of both ULI and the Rose family.

The Rose Center aspires to facilitate effective working relationships between the public and private sectors through its education and training programs. The flagship program of the Rose Center—the yearlong Daniel Rose Fellowship—provides a year of technical assistance to cities on an urban development challenge of their choosing, and offers fellows from those cities leadership training and professional development opportunities from NLC and ULI. The fellowship focuses on leadership, integrated problem solving, public/private collaboration, and peer-to-peer learning.

The mayors of four large American cities are invited to serve as Rose Fellows each fall. Each participating mayor, in turn, selects three fellows (city department or public agency directors or other administration officials with land use decision-making authority) and a project manager. Each city's team chooses a local land use challenge for which they receive technical assistance from faculty experts assembled by the Rose Center, their peers from the other three fellowship cities, Rose Center Advisory Board members (who include former mayors and planning directors as well as real estate industry leaders) and guest subject-matter experts. The program of work includes the NLC City Summit, ULI Spring Meeting, a study tour of another U.S. or foreign city, working retreats, and study visits to each of the four fellowship cities. The fellowship has served the following cities: Austin, Boston, Charlotte, Detroit, Hartford, Honolulu, Houston, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Louisville, Minneapolis, Memphis, Nashville, Oakland, Omaha, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, Portland, Providence, Sacramento, Seattle, Tacoma, and Tampa.

In addition to the Rose Fellowship, the Rose Center hosts convenings of thought leaders and organizes educational workshops, webinars, and conference sessions focused on the intersection of public-sector strategy and private-sector expertise in real estate, land use, development, design, and planning. Recent subjects include how rapid advances in technology are impacting land use and transportation in cities, equitable economic development, and finding creative solutions to local fiscal challenges. The Rose Center also administers scholarships for public officials to attend the annual ULI Fall Meeting.

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Omaha Rose Fellows and Study Visit Panel

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Cassie Paben, Mayor's Deputy Chief of Staff for Economic Development

Bob Stubbe, Director, Public Works Department

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Omaha Rose Fellowship Project Manager

Steve Jensen, Principal, Jensen Consulting

Omaha Rose Fellowship Study Visit Panel

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Jim Cloar, downtown advisory services, Tampa, FL

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Kathy Nyland, director, Department of Neighborhoods, City of Seattle, WA

Note: All titles and affiliations are as of Omaha's study visit panel, Jan. 29-Feb. 1, 2015

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Rose Center would like to thank Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert, her deputy chief of staff for economic development Cassie Paben, Public Works Director Bob Stubbe and Planning Director James Thele for agreeing to be Daniel Rose Fellows. The Rose Center also thanks Steve Jensen for serving as the fellowship team project manager, and all the preceding for hosting this Rose Center city study visit panel. Special thanks go to Ryan McClure at the Planning Department for his time and assistance in preparing for the panel's visit.

Interviews were conducted with numerous public officials and stakeholders, including local businesses, employers and institutions such as Creighton University, the North Downtown Alliance and Downtown Omaha Improvement District; representatives of various city departments, METRO, the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency and Nebraska Department of Roads; the Omaha Economic Development Corporation and Greater Omaha Chamber; the Metropolitan Entertainment & Convention Authority (MECA) and Visit Omaha; local property owners such as Future Forward and representatives of the Omaha development community; and advocacy organizations such as Live Well Omaha and Omaha by Design. These stakeholders provided invaluable information and diverse perspectives that greatly aided the panel's understanding of the city's land use challenge. The panel thanks all those who gave their time to be part of this process.



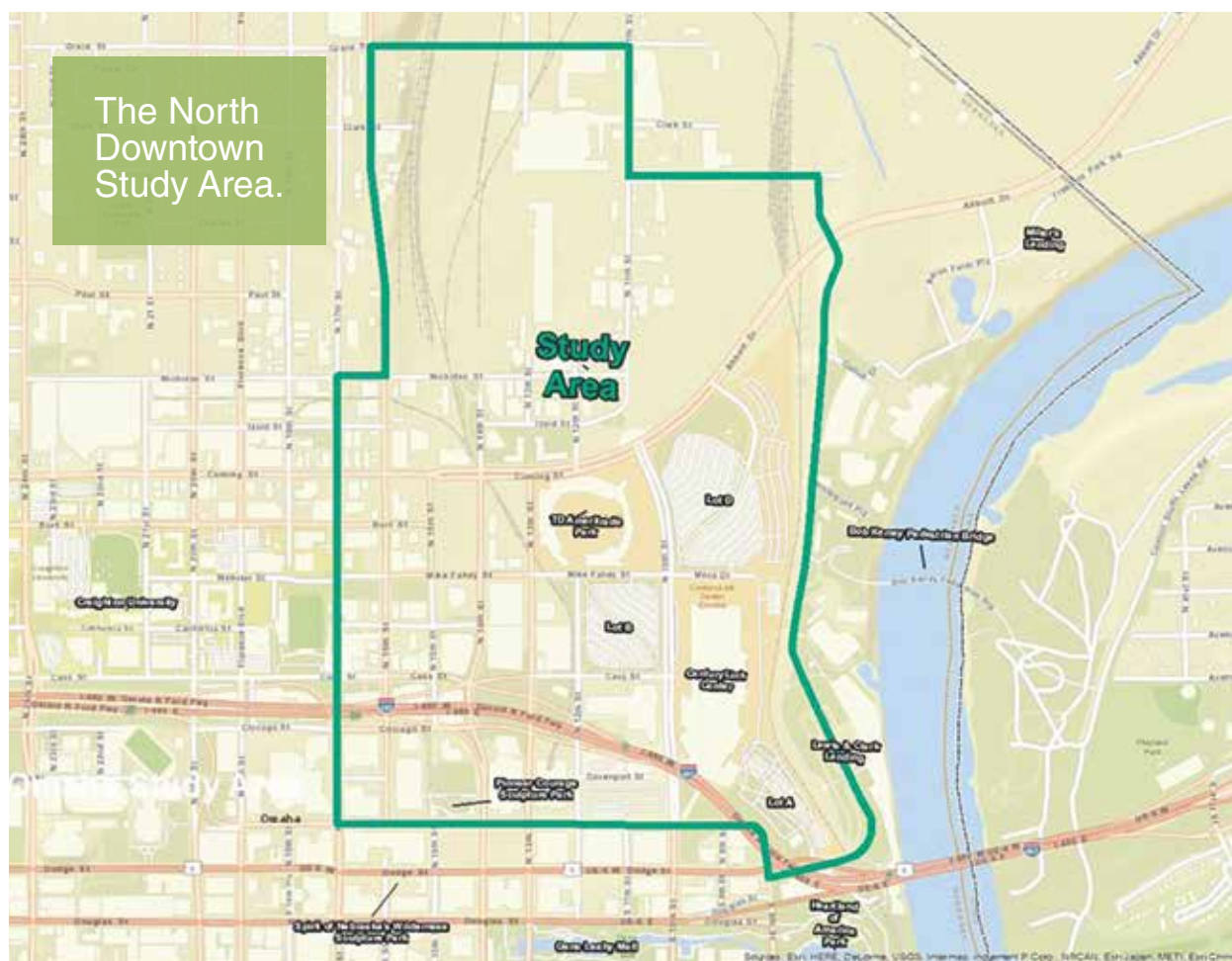
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Executive Summary

O maha's North Downtown area has remarkable potential as a major visitor and entertainment destination, as a new urban neighborhood and as a unique job center encompassing the office, industrial and creative sectors, according to the Rose Center for Public Leadership in Land Use, a joint program of the National League of Cities (NLC) and Urban Land Institute (ULI) that provides technical assistance to cities on urban redevelopment challenges.

Experts assembled by the Rose Center to advise the City say a combination of previous planning, current market conditions and an alignment of shared interests among stakeholders can position North Downtown Omaha to become a major economic driver and superb example of urban placemaking unique to the Midwestern United States. But for this vision to be achievable in the near future, the experts say the City of Omaha, local development and philanthropic interests, North Downtown institutions and destinations, emerging neighborhood stakeholders and area



businesses must successfully collaborate on implementation actions that represent a shared vision that addresses desired future land uses and their related transportation, parking and access needs.

Mayor Jean Stothert accepted an invitation by the Rose Center to be part of the 2014-2015 class of the Daniel Rose Fellowship program. She and her team—deputy chief of staff for economic development Cassie Paben, Public Works Director Bob Stubbe, Planning Director James Thele and planning consultant Steve Jensen—asked the Rose Center to help identify the obstacles, opportunities and steps needed to encourage the emergence of North Downtown as a unique urban destination encompassing a variety of uses such as sports, entertainment, convention and visitor, education, residential, arts and trade and industrial. This 450-acre study area—bound approximately by Capitol Avenue to the south, North 17th Street to the west, Grace Street to the north, North 6th Street/Riverfront Drive to the east—contains three distinct districts identified in the 2009 Downtown Master Plan: an “Events” district anchored by the arena/convention center, hotel and ballpark; a “North Downtown” mixed-use district with a music venue, art film theater, residential units, hotels, shops, restaurants, creative small businesses and numerous potential development sites; and an “Arts and Trades” district that includes an artist cooperative and a variety of creative businesses along with industrial and warehousing.

Omaha’s Rose Fellowship study visit panel, which visited February 9-12, 2015, was impressed by the city’s competitive advantages, including its economy and quality of life, as well the assets of the North Downtown study area. While the panelists see tremendous opportunity for economic development with the implementation of a well-thought-out second phase of development in North Downtown, they said the current appearance of a dead zone of surface parking lots in an area that has some of the city’s highest-value assets projects the wrong image and sends the opposite message to potential investors.

The panel recommended that the vision for North Downtown connect six great places—TD Ameritrade Park, CenturyLink Center, the Old Market, Creighton University, the Arts & Trades District, and the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge—by providing a distinctively designed gateway that enlivens underutilized areas. The panel identified infrastructure as both a critical need as well as an opportunity to brand North Downtown, suggesting that the area could become a model for transportation choices in Omaha by including bus rapid transit, an urban circulator, bicycle, pedestrian, and private vehicular access. The panelists also said North Downtown could enhance Omahans’ quality of life by providing new housing options to meet increasing demand for new urban real estate products and riverfront access.

The panel organized its recommendations into three sets of principles:

- A **participatory** approach to identify, engage and empower the diverse group of stakeholders
- **Prioritizing connectivity** to link plans and projects in the adjacent neighborhoods
- **Leveraging opportunities** to maximize human and economic resources and investments

Omaha’s current community leadership model, as the panel understood it, is more transactional—not always assessing the development context and how it can be leveraged for even greater impact—than comprehensive, resulting in the development of silos among partners and without necessarily resulting in ongoing partnerships. Omaha’s current model also offers limited opportunities for larger-scale community participation. Much like connecting the various downtown districts, downtown leaders from the public, private and civic sectors must be personally connected to create a truly great downtown, as were leaders in cities like Denver in the 1990s and Minneapolis in the 2000s to implement their respective visions.

Making connections is key to achieving the city's goals for North Downtown. East to west, the panel saw opportunities to connect to the riverfront via the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge and link to Creighton via the Mike Fahey Street corridor. South to north, they saw opportunities to connect the Old Market to TD Ameritrade Park and beyond (north of Cuming Street/Abbott Drive). A regional BRT network is being planned in conjunction with a downtown circulator (in the form of a modern streetcar). The panel said that this circulator will need to serve existing as well as and emerging destinations (and new origins as residential development continues) in North Downtown. A conflict that will need to be mitigated is freight and delivery truck access to the heavier industrial uses north of the study area as they travel to interstate connections through downtown.

The City and stakeholders have already invested countless hours of work and hundreds of millions of dollars in developing North Downtown prior to the Great Recession. The panel said it was critical to leverage the opportunities created by these investments in the area. They identified three key strategies to do so via:

- Connectivity—especially the future role of transit—to provide access to the area as it is built out and continues to have peak access demands generated by its special-event venues
- High-quality design and placemaking principles to ensure a world-class built environment that supports a place-based approach to economic development
- Nurturing the emerging “makerhood” in the Arts & Trades District, a smaller but key component of North Downtown’s potential value proposition as a unique urban attractor
- Optimizing the development opportunity presented by Lot B, the most important piece of real estate in all of North Downtown, for creating an 18-hour urban neighborhood that generates value for all of its stakeholders

The panel recommended that Mayor Stothert work with a philanthropic co-chair to establish a North Downtown Task Force to drive formal discussions with community leadership on implementation and desired outcomes: This task force’s scope of work should include:

- Establishing a five-year implementation work program with an emphasis on short-term results (the next 18 months) and assigning who will be accountable for what
- Harnessing and maximizing the potential of North Downtown’s existing assets (e.g., CenturyLink Center, TD Ameritrade Park, Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge, Hot Shops Arts Center, Mastercraft, Film Streams, etc.)
- Institutionalizing high-quality design and connectivity as essential elements for all future North Downtown investment
- Creating a “front door” for North Downtown investors to learn about and initiate processes for taking advantage of development opportunities
- Linking job training and employment opportunities with North Downtown redevelopment, especially in the Near North Omaha neighborhood
- Establishing a community financing toolbox to be utilized by public and private investors to advance North Downtown priorities and development opportunities

Getting right to work after the study visit, Omaha's Rose Fellowship team assembled a North Downtown stakeholder group. To maximize use of CenturyLink Center and TD Ameritrade Park, the Metropolitan Entertainment & Convention Authority (MECA) organized committees to address this in collaboration with City departmental and Convention & Visitors Bureau staffs. For the Arts & Trades District, a truck study was completed and stakeholders are now considering options for new infrastructure to create new truck routes.

The North Downtown Alliance has taken on the task of establishing a “pop-up” event and will coordinate with the stakeholder group on planning and promotion. Preliminary design for the North Downtown/Riverfront Connector (aka, the “Baby Bob” bike/pedestrian bridge) has been completed, along with environmental clearance. Finally, as several new development projects get under way in North Downtown, these pose interesting questions about market absorption, transportation access and circulation, and potential complimentary uses for Lot B.

On Sept. 23, 2015, Rose Center staff reconvened Omaha’s faculty advisers to facilitate a workshop of more than 50 stakeholders to formalize their collaboration on implementing the vision for North Downtown. The workshop addressed shared goals and encouraged thinking about key implementation steps based on each party’s roles in supporting a shared vision along with their own objectives. The Rose Center also provided some comparative data for Denver, Kansas City, Minneapolis and Omaha related to downtown jobs, parking, commute mode share, and convention center capacity, parking spaces, access mode share and occupancy rates.

Based on its initial evaluation, the Rose Center believes that Omaha’s convention and visitor facilities are somewhat underperforming today— attracting mostly smaller bookings mainly from the regional market that don’t fully utilize the facilities and perhaps over-rely on sporting events—and will face challenges in the future compared to the placemaking investments made in the past two decades in Denver and Minneapolis and those that are currently being made in Kansas City. The Rose Center believes there is a competitive advantage for downtown areas that offer visitors an urban experience—not just nice, new meeting and entertainment facilities—and for those that provide multimodal travel choices as part of that experience. Based on market trends, the Rose Center believes there is clearly demand for more office space and residential development in Downtown Omaha, which should

help implementation in North Downtown if the new development is designed to enhance the pedestrian experience.

Denver’s three decades of transit investment (bus stations/mall shuttle in 1982, rail starting in 1994) has moved it from a similar access travel mode split as Omaha and Kansas City to parity between transit and driving. One decade of rail transit investment is moving the needle in that direction in Minneapolis. Kansas City is struggling to compete in the convention and hotel business but is building a downtown streetcar today. A lower parking-supply ratio in these cities means more capital is spent on revenue-generating land uses.

This last point is very important for Omaha to consider in its downtown corporate headquarters parking study: at what point does the development cost and amount of land needed to continue current parking ratios become an artificial constraint on new development that also impacts the city’s fiscal health? Like these three competitor metro areas in the middle United States, Omaha will need to consider how transit can change this equation and allow more development to generate more public and private value along with the placemaking advantages of pedestrian-oriented design.

Omaha's Land Use Challenge

On behalf of the City of Omaha, Mayor Jean Stothert accepted in the fall of 2014 an invitation by the Rose Center to be part of the 2014-2015 class of the Daniel Rose Fellowship. Now entering its seventh year, the Rose Fellowship provides technical assistance to an annual class of four U.S. central cities on a local urban development challenge of their choosing. Combining the resources and networks of NLC (which represents elected and appointed officials from more than 19,000 U.S. cities, villages and towns) and ULI (whose 36,000 members worldwide represent the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines with a mission to provide leadership in the responsible use of land to create and sustain thriving communities), the program also provides professional development opportunities to its fellows, who are appointed by each city's mayor. The fellowship focuses on leadership, integrated problem-solving, public/private collaboration, and peer-to-peer learning. The other cities in the 2014-

2015 class with Omaha were Boston, Pittsburgh and Seattle.

As Omaha's Rose Fellows, Mayor Stothert selected her deputy chief of staff for economic development, Cassie Paben, Public Works Director Bob Stubbe and Planning Director James Thele. They chose North Downtown—whose redevelopment had stalled during the Great Recession—as their land use challenge and asked the Rose Center to help identify the obstacles, opportunities and steps needed to encourage the area's emergence as a unique urban destination encompassing a variety of uses such as sports, entertainment, convention and visitor, education, residential, arts and trade, and industrial. Based on his extensive knowledge of the area, local development issues and relationships with stakeholders, Stothert asked Steve Jensen—the retired, longtime Omaha planning director now in private practice as a consultant—to serve as project manager of the yearlong effort and her team.



Omaha's Missouri Riverfront circa 2000, before the entertainment district investments.

Downtown Omaha 2030 Plan districts map.



Omaha's Land Use Challenge

In the early 1990s, city leaders came together to clean up and transform the former Union Pacific rail yard, ASARCO lead smelter and other industrial tracts north of the downtown core. The resulting accomplishments would be the envy of larger American cities with similar dreams for their industrial-legacy downtown riverfronts—the creation of a burgeoning mixed-use area with a gleaming riverfront, a new arena/convention center, a downtown ballpark and the construction of more than \$850 million in new public and private facilities.

Even with these investments, the 450-acre study area—bound approximately by Capitol Avenue to the south, North 17th Street to the west, Grace Street to the north, North 6th Street/Riverfront Drive to the east—contains room for more development. A 2009 Downtown Master Plan identified three development “districts” within the area. These include: an “Events” district anchored by the arena/convention center, hotel and ballpark; a “North Downtown” mixed-use district with a music venue, art film theater, residential units, hotels, shops, restaurants, creative small businesses and numerous potential development sites; and an “Arts and Trades” district that includes an artist cooperative and a variety of creative businesses along with industrial and warehousing uses.

The area has a number of positive attributes, including its proximity to Eppley Airfield, easy interstate access, major public event venues, nearby Creighton University, a growing collection of creative businesses, a proposed urban circulator or streetcar line and numerous potential redevelopment sites. In addition, the right mix of new businesses also could provide jobs close to nearby areas with high unemployment. Even so, growth has not been as rapid as hoped. Limited riverfront connections, conflicts with remaining industrial businesses and truck traffic, environmental constraints, large surface parking lots and a lack of focus pose development challenges. The City's Rose Fellowship team asked the Rose Center specifically to help them:

- Identify the steps, tools, investments and leadership needed to encourage development
- Enhance connections to the riverfront
- Address the use of North Downtown as a parking lot
- Mitigate industrial and truck traffic conflicts with other uses
- Improve business and university ties to encourage job growth
- Provide jobs with a diversity of skill sets for nearby residents and improve the economic and physical connections to adjacent residential areas

Just prior to receiving this invitation, Omaha and Council Bluffs, Iowa, had collaborated on a ULI Advisory Services Program panel about how the two cities could work together across state lines to make the Missouri Riverfront an attraction for people and businesses without competing with each other or compromising the natural beauty of the landscape. The Rose Fellowship focus on North Downtown builds on this larger riverfront question, enabling Omaha to drill down to specific recommendations for this critical area adjacent the riverfront.

The Rose Center assigned two faculty advisers to work with Omaha's team over the course of the fellowship year: Laura Aldrete, then the senior supervising planner at PB PlaceMaking and now principal associate planner at Matrix Design Group in Denver; and M.D. "Mike" Higbee, managing director of the DC Development Group in Indianapolis—a developer, consultant and former director of economic development and planning for Indianapolis.

Study Visit Process

Aldrete and Higbee co-chaired Omaha's study visit panel, which took place Feb. 9-12, 2015. The panel also included: downtown management district expert Jim Cloar of Tampa (who served as chair of the previous ULI riverfront panel); planning/development consultant Kate Collignon, managing partner of HR&A Advisors in New York; Ray Gastil, planning director of Pittsburgh; John Hodgson, a Sacramento-based urban infill developer and 2011 Rose Fellow; housing expert Michael P. Kelly, then of Georgetown University and now general manager of the New York City Housing Authority; former Pittsburgh Mayor Tom Murphy, a senior fellow at ULI; and Kathy Nyland, director of the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods.

Over the course of the four-day study visit, the panel was briefed by Omaha's Rose Fellowship team, toured North Downtown and visited several of its businesses, and interviewed stakeholders, including: local businesses, employers and institutions such as Creighton University, the North Downtown Alliance and Downtown Omaha Improvement District; representatives of various city departments, METRO, the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency and Nebraska Department of Roads; the Omaha Economic Development Corporation and Greater Omaha Chamber; the Metropolitan Entertainment & Convention Authority (MECA) and Visit Omaha; local property owners such as Future Forward and representatives of the



Study visit panel.

Omaha development community; and advocacy organizations such as Live Well Omaha and Omaha by Design.

The panel shared its findings and initial recommendations at the end of the study visit at a presentation to which all the participants and the public and media were invited. The panel assigned homework to the City's Rose Fellowship team to report on their progress at a retreat at the ULI Spring Meeting in Houston on May 12, 2015. The Rose Center also planned a follow-up stakeholder workshop on North Downtown on Sept. 23, 2015, facilitated by Aldrete, Higbee and Rose Center staff with assistance from local staff at HDR, the City, and urban-design professionals from the study area who served as volunteers. This report represents a summary of the yearlong collaboration between the City and the Rose Center under the fellowship program.



Stakeholder interviews.



Mayor Stothert looks on as Mike Higbee answers a question during the presentation Q&A.

Study Visit Findings

The study visit panel was impressed with Omaha's competitive advantages. The metropolitan area has a very stable economy. Its four Fortune 500 companies (Berkshire Hathaway, Union Pacific, Peter Kiewit Sons' and Mutual of Omaha) are more per capita than New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Dallas. Since 1990, the region has had 75 percent job growth in the business-services sector and 88 percent growth in education and health services—the latter driven by its 11 colleges and universities and 14 medical institutions. During the same period, manufacturing jobs only have declined by 1 percent compared to 31 percent nationwide. In part because of its successful corporate legacy, Omaha also benefits from a strong philanthropic community that often partners with the City on important development projects such as the CenturyLink convention center and TD Ameritrade ballpark located in North Downtown.

Omaha residents also enjoy a high quality of life. Forbes magazine ranks it the seventh best city in which to raise a family and lists it the eighth most affordable in terms of cost of living. The metro area is forecast to have 1 percent annual population growth through 2030, to 1.038 million, a rate that would encourage economic growth without stressing resources. From a real estate perspective, however, that growth would increase demand for downtown living, with a projected need for 150 apartments annually through 2020 and 370 annually through 2030—driven by empty-nesters through 2020, then 22- to 27-year-olds through 2030.

The panel also found that the study area itself has considerable assets that give it potential competitive advantages to attract the private investment the City desires. These include:

CenturyLink convention center and TD Ameritrade ballpark; its location as the gateway to downtown from Eppley Airfield; its proximity to the Missouri River to its east; the breathtaking Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge connecting over the river to Iowa; its proximity to the Old Market, a major shopping and dining destination, to its south; the growing Creighton University campus to its west; and a growing collection of creative uses in the underutilized formerly heavy industrial Arts & Trades District in the study area's northern section.

Competitive Advantages: The Site



- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Major Destinations | 5. Old Market |
| 2. Gateway from the airport | 6. Creighton University |
| 3. Missouri River | 7. Creative uses |
| 4. Bob Kerrey pedestrian bridge | |

North Downtown Vision

For North Downtown to achieve its potential, the panel stressed the importance of the area's brand and building its visibility with the public to attract new tenants and development interest that leverage existing assets and investments by activating land parcels and underutilized real estate with a series of mixed-use developments to serve a range of customers from residents to consumers to tourists. While there is tremendous economic development opportunity with the implementation of a well-thought-out second phase of development in North Downtown, the current appearance of a dead zone of surface parking lots in an area that has some of the city's highest-value assets creates the wrong image and sends the opposite message to potential investors. Brand or identity is created at the intersection of a shared vision for the area and programming within it.

The panel recommended that the vision for North Downtown connect six great places—TD Ameritrade Park, CenturyLink Center, the Old Market, Creighton University, the Arts & Trades District, and Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge—by providing a distinctively designed gateway that enlivens underutilized areas. This would create entertainment and creative cultural offerings unique to the Omaha region such as the sports, visitor, cultural and arts venues with year-round programming and big annual events. At the same time, the creative production businesses emerging in the Arts & Trades District offer a new growth sector and entrepreneurial opportunities.

In addition to land use, jobs and economic activity, the panel identified infrastructure as both a critical need as well as an opportunity to brand North Downtown, suggesting that the area could become a model for transportation choices in Omaha by including bus rapid transit, an urban circulator,

bicycle, pedestrian, and private vehicular access. Finally, North Downtown could enhance Omahans' quality of life by providing new housing options to meet increasing demand for new urban real estate products and riverfront access.

The panelists saw the City and North Downtown's stakeholders at a critical moment in the area's development, faced with big choices about what course they will set for it:

- Will they continue to implement transactional, one-off projects that may or may not add up to a coherent whole that achieves their goals for the area, or will they set a strategic vision?
- Will they risk missed opportunities by allowing whatever the market sees as near-term opportunities, or will they leverage past public, private and philanthropic investments in the area by getting the next steps right to creating long-term value?
- Will they continue to operate in a disconnected fashion, or will they be intentional about leadership so that the City, MECA, philanthropic community, local institutions, businesses and residents understand their respective roles and trust one another?
- Will they accept an "it'll-do" attitude that allows anything to be built here regardless of whether it aligns with the vision, versus a "world-class" standard that demands a quality of place intended to leverage past investments and generate long-term value?

Initial Recommendations

The panel organized its recommendations into three sets of principles:

- A **participatory approach** to identify, engage and empower the diverse group of stakeholders
- **Prioritizing connectivity** to link plans and projects in the adjacent neighborhoods
- **Leveraging opportunities** to maximize human and economic resources and investments

Participatory Approach

It was clear to the panel that Omaha is full of big ideas and bigger intentions. These ranged in the recent past from the partnerships that created national and regional multi-purpose sports venues and visitor destinations to several large-scale, public-private urban redevelopment partnership projects, and today they are focusing on 21st-century transit, an active riverfront and the future of North Downtown.

Omaha's current community leadership model, as the panelists understood it from their interviews with stakeholders and discussions with the City's Rose Fellowship team, offers a deep bench of corporate leadership and has active leaders in private institutions and the public sector. The leadership model also has the ability to move quickly and organize decision-makers around common causes. But that model is more transactional—not always assessing the development context and how it can be leveraged for even greater impact—than comprehensive, resulting in silos developing among partners and reducing the chance of creating ongoing partnerships. Omaha's current

model also offers limited opportunities for larger-scale community participation.

The panel's impression was that neither the public nor private sectors have an established forum to finalize objectives and goals for community-scale investment. Much like connecting the various downtown districts, downtown leaders must be personally connected to create a truly great downtown, as were leaders in cities like Denver in the 1990s and Minneapolis in the 2000s. The power of that kind of partnership combines the public roles in regulation, permitting, access to grants, infrastructure, gap financing, and the ability to convene stakeholders with the private-sector strengths of streamlined decision-making, flexible funding and a longer-term view. Public and private leadership working together will ensure more optimal outcomes because of their ability to create a collective implementation agenda.

The City has done a good job of organizing key stakeholders in North Downtown (like those mentioned earlier whom the panel interviewed) for this process, which will hopefully be a building block for future collaboration on key implementation steps based on each party's roles in supporting a shared vision along with their own objectives. But the panel also saw opportunities to engage with two adjacent communities just west of the study area.

As Creighton University implements its new campus master plan, moving existing sports facilities from the center of the campus east to the edge of the North Downtown and reinforcing it as a sports, recreation and health center, hopefully the doors of those facilities will be open to the rest of the neighborhood. At the same time, marketing and targeting housing for students and faculty into North Downtown offers a means to foster daytime

street activity and support the development of shops and restaurants.

Further to the north, Near North Omaha is the neighborhood with the highest needs in the city. While a lot of public investment in community development has occurred there, the panel saw the potential for additional economic and social engagement with North Downtown through:

- Job training and workforce development in connection with the Arts & Trades District, which would require the city fostering relationships with its small-scale repair production, distribution and repair businesses
- Locating neighborhood amenities and services in new North Downtown developments adjacent to the neighborhood
- Supporting social services for the homeless, especially daytime activities in support of downtown hospitality objectives

Prioritizing Connectivity

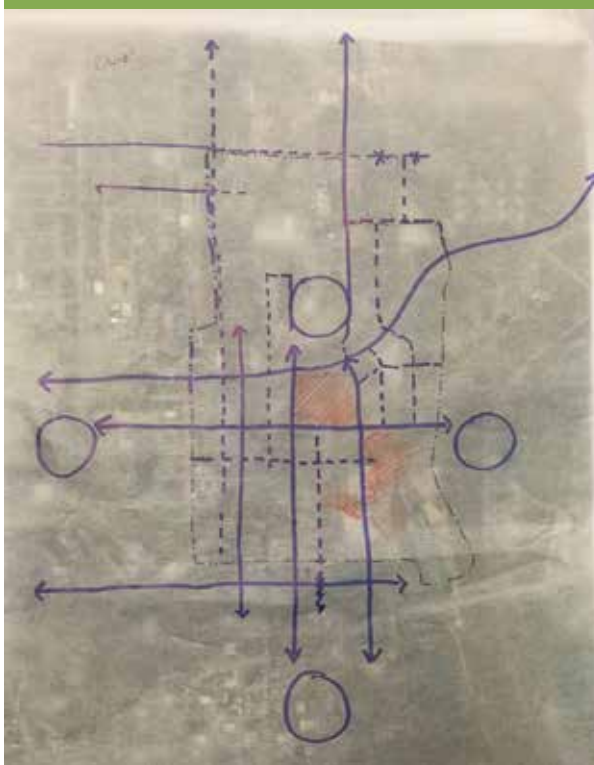
The panel saw the area north of downtown as a district made up of potentially thriving city neighborhoods. Making connections is a key step to achieving this goal. East to west, they saw opportunities to connect to the riverfront via the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge and link to Creighton via the Mike Fahey Street Corridor. They also saw an opportunity for the Clean Solutions for Omaha (combined sewer overflow) project north of Nicholas Street to be developed into an east-west greenway connector since it creates a linear easement that cannot be built on.

South to north, the panelists saw opportunities to connect the Old Market to TD Ameritrade Park and beyond (north of Cuming Street/ Abbott Drive). This connection would capture the theme of heritage at the southern edge of North Downtown (Old Market) as well as at the industrial area to the north in the makers neighborhood that includes The Bench, Hot Shops Art Center, Mastercraft and other small-scale, light-industrial uses.

At a finer grain, 13th Street becomes the key north-south street. The panel urged the City to sustain the cross streets of Burt and California as development occurs, to return the connectivity of the street grid and enhance the streets that go under the Interstate 480 viaduct. Farther to the north, connections across the rail yards might be made in the future with a viaduct at Grace Street or where possible between the tracks just east of 16th and just west of Abbott.

As these neighborhoods develop and are better connected with a more robust transportation network, the role of transit will become critical for this area. A regional BRT network is being planned in conjunction with a downtown circulator (in the form of a modern streetcar). This circulator will need to serve the existing and emerging destinations (and new origins as residential development continues) in North Downtown as well.

A sketch of how network connectivity and access could work in North Downtown.





Truck traffic through North Downtown.



An example of modal conflict points in North Downtown.

A conflict that will need to be mitigated is freight and delivery truck access to the heavier industrial uses north of the study area as they travel to interstate connections through downtown. There are about 1,000 truck trips a day in the area, which have started to cause conflicts with hospitality establishments such as hotels and restaurants as well as new businesses and residential development being built north of Cuming Street. Trucks traveling to and from Iowa also are a problem for existing and proposed developments between Cuming Street and the I-480 ramps to the south.

The North Downtown street network will need to be layered to prioritize pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, private vehicles and freight trucking on various streets and also be designed to accommodate peak demand at the event centers. On a related note, parking access for the North Downtown

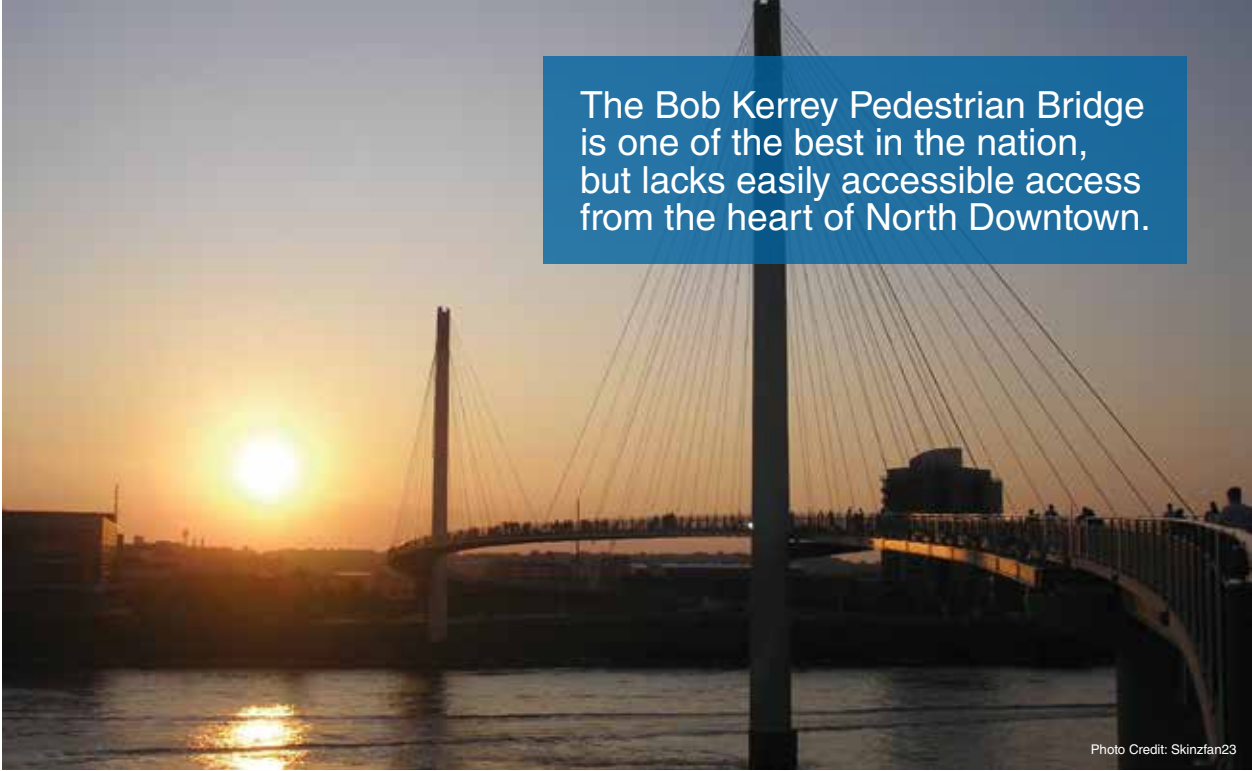
area will need to be rethought. Mobility choices like transit, walking and biking will reduce parking demand. A parking management district could help promote shared parking between complementary employment and entertainment uses as well as generate local revenue streams for needed infrastructure.

Leveraging Opportunities

The City and stakeholders have already invested countless hours of work and hundreds of millions of dollars in developing North Downtown prior to the Great Recession. The panel said it was critical to leverage the opportunities created by these investments to maximize human and economic resources in the area. They identified three key strategies to do so via:

- Connectivity—especially the future role of transit—to provide access to the area as it is built out and continues to have peak access demands generated by its special event venues (addressed above)
- High-quality design and placemaking principles to ensure a world-class built environment that supports a place-based approach to economic development
- Nurturing the emerging “makerhood” in the Arts & Trades District, a smaller but key component of North Downtown’s potential value proposition as a unique urban attractor
- Optimizing the development opportunity presented by Lot B, the most important piece of real estate in all of North Downtown for creating an 18-hour urban neighborhood that generates value for all its stakeholders

The panel urged the City to use design as a tool and consider land use, open space and connectivity (i.e., the public right of way represented by streets can consist of as much as 40 percent of land area). The right land use regulations (including zoning, design guidelines, street standards, etc.) can play a role in place-



The Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge is one of the best in the nation, but lacks easily accessible access from the heart of North Downtown.

Photo Credit: Skinzfan23

based economic development by attracting businesses and jobs that fit the vision for the area and are consistent with its identity. The private investment that will be attracted here needs to create a long-term fiscally sustainable critical mass that complements the entertainment and visitor investments made by the City and philanthropic supporters.

When the City thinks about the public realm, it needs to include streets and consider how to prioritize and accommodate multiple modes through approaches like complete streets or pedestrian prioritization. Thinking about streets as places—not just utilities to move vehicles—requires streetscape elements that cater to pedestrians—trees, street furniture, landscaping, and the like—that create memorable, intriguing and safe places.

In addition to streets, it's critical to create value with amenities, whether these are public spaces like parks or privately owned spaces that are publicly accessible. Since parks are a critical public asset, the Mike Fahey Street connection to the riverfront will become a key implementation component. Today, the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge can only be accessed from North Downtown via its northern and southern extremities: trail access either from Abbott Drive

behind the massive Lot D parking facility—a particularly grim environment for pedestrians—or from behind CenturyLink Center, an unintuitive connection that is particularly challenging to find given the sight lines. The barrier of the railroad tracks requires bridges from either approach, and even after landing on the other side, access to the bridge itself is not obvious.

The previous ULI Advisory Service Panel recommended a “Baby Bob” bridge to provide a direct connection from the bridge to North Downtown via the Mike Fahey Street alignment, in the heart of the Events district. This panel strongly endorsed that idea, recommending a thoughtful design for the landing as the eastern terminal vista for Mike Fahey Street and an elevated gathering space on the bridge that would create visual connections to both Creighton University to west and Iowa and its regional riparian trail network to the east across the Missouri River. This new urban gathering space would become a great place for Omahans and visitors to enjoy, linger and play and it would include views of the ballpark, downtown and the river.

When creating new public spaces, it's critical to program them so they are well-utilized, maintained and safe. Local organizations will have to partner with the City and property owners on this.

In the shorter term, opportunities exist for tactical urbanism experiments in underutilized areas such as streets and parking lots. When there are not heavy transportation demands being generated by large events, streets can be reclaimed as public spaces and used for smaller-scale, temporary events.

In its tour of the study area, the panel visited three facilities in the Arts & Trades District: The Bench, Mastercraft and Hot Shops. The panel didn't think the City and other stakeholders fully appreciated the significance of—and the potential represented by—this local emerging of the “maker movement” trend. In its work with other cities, the Rose Center has encountered many examples of the reuse of underutilized industrial sites by new, small-scale, light-industrial users ranging from production, distribution and repair businesses

to facilities for entrepreneurs to share expensive tools and prototype ideas, to hobbyists renting space and the use of expensive machinery. These “makerspaces” take a few different forms in terms of ownership and business models, but their significance includes bringing new businesses and users to inexpensive and underutilized or abandoned industrial buildings, new businesses—including some that have the potential to grow into larger operations—and the chance to create showrooms and galleries that attract new visitors.

Cities with weaker economies and real estate markets have actually subsidized the creation of makerspaces, so the panel was particularly impressed to see several examples of organic, market-based ones in North Downtown Omaha (acknowledging that there are some “enlightened” landlords there who are getting less than full

Mastercraft is an outstanding example of adaptive reuse of an industrial space to accommodate makers and designers in an incubator-type setting.



market value for rents to support the concept's initial growth here). The panel's initial impression is that their presence here is helping to create a burgeoning, new mixed-use district centered around North 13th and Nicholas streets. The collaboration among property owners, philanthropic supporters and artisans and entrepreneurs to create this movement in North Downtown Omaha is a major achievement.

The panel was also impressed with the great “bones” of the Arts & Trades District: older buildings with character, attractive to the young creative class, and the redevelopment of some buildings. The panelists noticed some new residential buildings being geared toward students, which they thought was a good fit considering the neighborhood's proximity to Creighton. The panel sees more opportunities for adaptive rehabilitations such as the Rochester Building.

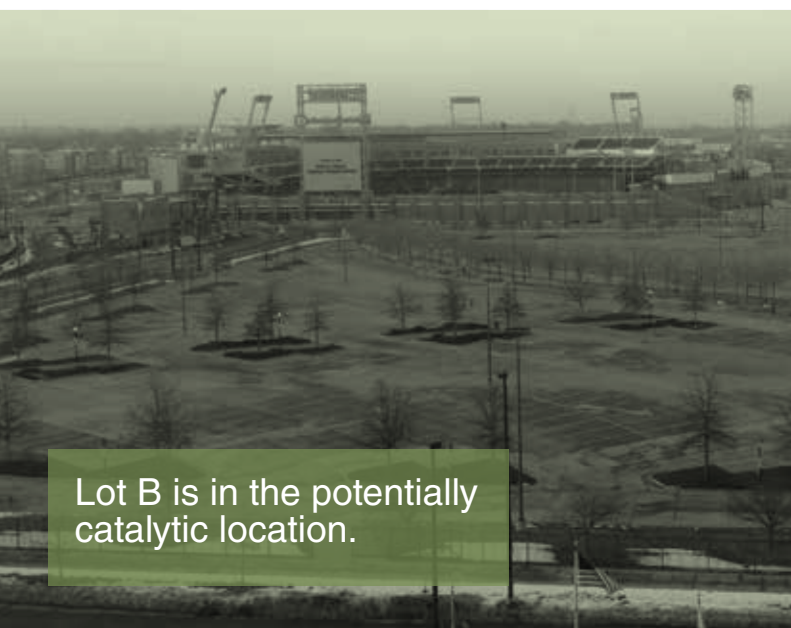
The panelists thought it will be important for the city to nurture this “makerhood.” In addition to attracting young creatives, a makerhood also could appeal to empty-nesters and become a very significant fun and interesting area. To grow, the neighborhood needs input from all the stakeholders, including businesses, residents, landowners, the university and surrounding neighborhoods. The stakeholders will need to think through and discuss the uses that are compatible to the area.

Addressing truck traffic will be a key to the area's ability to flourish. This is an impediment to more

development because of the noise, vibration and concerns about the safety of so many heavy-duty vehicles moving through the area. In addition, district and shared parking strategies may be needed as more users come into the neighborhood with more development.

The panel believed that the key to activating North Downtown as an 18-hour urban neighborhood is the development of Lot B, the four-block surface parking lot bound by North 10th, Cass, North 12th and Mike Fahey streets used by MECA for both the CenturyLink Center and TD Ameritrade Park. This is because Lot B is located at the intersection of the most significant north-south and east-west connections in North Downtown—along Mike Fahey between North 10th and North 13th streets, which connect Creighton, the riverfront, downtown, the Old Market, and the future makerhood through the heart of the Events district. To make those connections and create a stimulating, urban context for the CenturyLink Center, TD Ameritrade Park and beyond, Lot B needs daytime activity.

The panel offered some guidance as to what Lot B's development should not be: not another large-scale, single-use project like the convention center or ballpark and not something that results in a blocks-long wall that constrains connectivity through the neighborhood as those facilities inevitably have to. Whatever emerges on Lot B should be an 18-hour, mixed-use development that could include office, live/work, food and entertainment and public space and become the new core of the neighborhood.



Lot B is in the potentially catalytic location.



Older industrial building stock in the Arts & Trades District is being adapted to new uses.

Conclusions and Homework

The City of Omaha, downtown interests and stakeholders in North Downtown have accomplished much to date. Leadership and its aspirations have established an agenda designed to create a truly great 21st-century city. As Omaha already knows, there is little margin for error for the next set of implementation steps. They must be executed efficiently and well.

Both public and private-sector leadership must be clear on the big-picture goals. For example, defining and establishing a clear, shared vision for creation of a thriving, multiuse urban North Downtown community that includes:

- An active and growing hospitality industry
- A year-round Events district
- An accessible and multipurpose riverfront
- A multiuse North Downtown with new residents and jobs
- Efficient, affordable transportation logistics, including multimodal options and well-managed district parking

The panel recommended that Mayor Stothert work with a philanthropic co-chair to establish a North Downtown Task Force to drive formal discussions with community leadership on implementation and desired outcomes: This task force's scope of work should include:

- Establishing a five-year implementation work program with an emphasis on short-term results (the next 18 months) and assigning who would be accountable for what
- Harnessing and maximizing the potential of North Downtown's existing assets (CenturyLink Center, TD Ameritrade Park, Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge, Hot Shops, Mastercraft, Film Streams, etc.)

- Institutionalizing high-quality design and connectivity as essential elements for all future North Downtown investment
- Creating a "front door" for North Downtown investors to learn about and initiate the process for taking advantage of development opportunities
- Linking job training and employment opportunities with North Downtown redevelopment, especially in Near North Omaha
- Establishing a community financing tool box to be utilized by public and private investors to advance North Downtown priorities and development opportunities

Between their Feb. 12 presentation and May 12 fellowship retreat, the panel assigned the Omaha's Rose Fellowship team to:

1. Convene the co-chaired task force
2. Develop a strategy to fully program CenturyLink and TD Ameritrade Park
3. Organize around the Arts & Trades District to resolve the truck traffic conflicts and address streetscape standards and design guidelines
4. Position Lot B to be the core of this district before soliciting development interest
5. Establish a pop-up event (such as at Burt and North 14th streets) connecting adjacent commercial uses to Creighton University and the greater North Downtown community
6. Commit to a high-quality connection of Mike Fahey Street and the waterfront via Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge (i.e., the "Baby Bob" bridge project).

City Progress

Getting right to work, Omaha's Rose Fellowship team assembled a North Downtown stakeholder group, including: large and small business, hotels and restaurants, real estate developers, creatives/makers, industrial users and trucking companies, elected officials, foundations, artists, MECA, neighborhood organizations, social service providers, residents, Creighton University, the NCAA/College World Series Inc., and utilities.

In the effort to maximize use of CenturyLink Center and TD Ameritrade Park, MECA organized committees to address this in collaboration with City departmental and Convention & Visitors Bureau staffs. Some challenges they face include:

- Filling the former dates of the University of Nebraska Omaha hockey team, which moved to a new arena on campus
- Booking more conferences
- Waiting for the new Marriott Hotel being built as part of the Capitol District development between North 10th, Capitol, North 12th and Davenport streets to come online
- Determining the goals, plans and process for development of Lot B, which all parties see as a key to future success
- Addressing the amount and location of replacement parking for new developments

For the Arts & Trades District, a truck study was completed and stakeholders are considering options for new infrastructure to create new routes. Key property owners are willing to discuss alternatives. They are ready to develop a master plan for the area, create a street network, nurture the “makerhood” and leverage innovation and

creative energy to create jobs such as in the Wareham Building, Co-Lab, Mastercraft, Hot Shops, Bench, Reclaimed Enterprises, and other facilities.

Three options were identified by the largest land owner, Future Forward, and the City that hold promise, depending on their respective costs and design feasibility. The one most favored by Future Forward is a variation of the Grace Street bridge identified in the study. This would require Union Pacific to consolidate its tracks to the set just east of 16th Street, which would shorten the bridge considerably and significantly reduce its cost. Other options could be a new 14th Street or a new north/south street located to the west of 14th Street connected to a new east-west street located between Mastercraft and Drake/Williams Steel—or perhaps some combination of the two alignments, whichever one results in the best long-term development pattern for Future Forward's property and whether there is a better connection option at Nicholas.

This is another longer term—but important—issue related to truck routes south of Cuming Street. Currently, 13th, 14th, 16th and Chicago streets are all used by about 200 trucks per day to access the Interstate 480 entrance and exit ramps. These three routes are used by trucks traveling in and out of the area north of Cuming as well those traveling to the north on Abbott Drive. To facilitate long-term development along these streets, truck access to I-480 will eventually need to be rerouted. If the ramps just west of 27th Street could be an alternative this would add 200 trucks to the roughly 800 already using Cuming but would virtually eliminate trucks south of Cuming. These ideas will need to be discussed in more detail with all the stakeholders.

To position Lot B for development, the stakeholders agree that timing is critical, especially with 10 blocks of new development currently under way in the vicinity, including:

- The \$205 million Capitol District project being developed by Shamrock Development, which will include a 333-room, full-service Marriott Hotel, 90,000 square feet of retail, 226 residential units, 125,000 square feet of office space, and a six-level, 505-space parking garage
- Former Civic Auditorium site located at 17th and Capitol being built by Tetrad Development, including the four-story, 149,500-square-foot Civic Building, a 359,900-square-foot, 16-story office tower, 170,400 square feet of street-level retail, 200 residences and a 1,130-space parking garage
- A new international, 18- to 20-story headquarters for HDR located at North 11th and Dodge streets, consisting of 290,000 square feet for 1,400 employees and 1,150 parking stalls onsite with access to an additional 520 to be completed in January 2019
- The Yard Development, a \$50 million project on a 4-acre site at North 14th and Cuming streets being developed by NewStreet Properties and Noddle Companies. That will include the 63,000-square-foot Kiewit Education, Innovation, and Leadership facility, a 125-room national brand hotel, and the Yard Apartments—a 5-story project with 110 units and 6,000 square feet of retail/ services space on its ground floor to be completed in 2017

These concurrent developments, being driven by the current market, pose interesting questions about market absorption, transportation access and circulation and potential complimentary uses for Lot B. In light of these recent developments,

stakeholders feel a new market study for Lot B is needed, and they continue to grapple with the issue of how much and where replacement parking should be located.

The North Downtown Alliance has taken on the task of establish a “pop-up” event and will coordinate with the stakeholder group on planning and promotion.

Preliminary design for the North Downtown/ Riverfront Connector (a.k.a., the “Baby Bob” bridge) has been completed, along with environmental clearance. The schedule is for final design to be complete in 2016 and construction to take place from 2018 through 2019. The estimated \$4 million to \$5 million project will include \$2 million in federal funding, \$500,000 from the City and \$2 million from other sources.

Since the Rose Center panel visited in February, the market has finally regained momentum in North Downtown. In addition to the Capitol District and Civic Auditorium projects described above, other projects under way include the creation of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line that would provide connections between North Downtown, downtown, midtown, the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC), University of Nebraska-Omaha (UNO) and Crossroads and Westroads malls; a preliminary design and financing plan for an urban circulator (modern streetcar) connecting North Downtown, downtown, midtown and UNMC; the creation of an expanded Human Services Campus, including a large day shelter, open space and expanded services for the homeless; development plans for the Omaha/Council Bluffs Riverfront to improve connectivity and add more residential, commercial, entertainment and recreational uses; and a downtown parking study aimed at minimizing parking through a unified, managed and shared parking system.

Follow-Up Workshop

On Sept. 23, Rose Center staff reconvened Omaha's faculty advisers, Aldrete and Higbee, to facilitate a workshop of more than 50 stakeholders to formalize their collaboration on implementing the vision for North Downtown by addressing shared goals and thinking about key implementation steps based on each party's roles in supporting a shared vision along with their own objectives. Assistance was provided from local staff at HDR, the City, and urban design professionals from the study area who served as volunteers.

Mayor Stothert kicked off the event by emphasizing her desire to help facilitate, collaborate with and find resources to support those implementing North Downtown's potential. Aldrete and Higbee summarized the recommendations from the Rose Center's study panel visit in February. Jensen summarized current planning efforts in the area, including the North Omaha Downtown Truck Route Study to support efficient truck movements without impacting existing operations and evaluate alternatives that might lessen impacts on new businesses with

retail or entertainment activities compared to the existing route along North 11th/Nicholas/North 16th, and the status of transit planning for the downtown area.

Paben provided an update of implementation actions around the ULI Advisory Services Panel for the riverfront and a report on recent development activity in North Downtown, including the \$9.2 million Nichols Flats, located at 16th and Nicholas, a five-story apartment building with 67 eco-friendly units featuring a mix of one- and two-bedroom units between 850 and 1,100 square feet with parking on the ground floor, and the \$10.1 million Rochester rehabilitation project, the renovated Rochester Midland building by NuStyle Development that includes 75 units and opened June 1.

Creighton University representatives then offered an update on their development plans, as did Future Forward, a group that has consolidated land ownership in the Arts & Trades District. Creighton's representatives gave a brief recap of recent changes to the campus and outlined



Laura Aldrete presenting at the follow-up workshop.

the goals and themes they will use to guide future expansion. The presentation divided the campus into four districts and outlined the issues, opportunities and projects associated with each area. The Future Forward presentation included a general overview of that group's plans to consolidate the ownership of property in the Arts & Trades District and encourage the emergence of unique small-scale creative businesses.

Rose Center staff also provided some comparative data for Denver, Kansas City, Minneapolis and Omaha related to downtown jobs, parking, commute mode share and convention center capacity, parking spaces, access mode share and occupancy rates. This was a back-of-envelope analysis from various sources from the most recently available data intended to provide stakeholders with comparative food for thought about the relationship between asset performance and mode of travel access in Omaha and some of its competitor cities.

To baseline residential population within a mile of downtown, Minneapolis boasts 132,000 while Denver has 80,000, Omaha has 34,000 and Kansas City has 22,000, according to a study by the Philadelphia Center City District for International Downtown Association.

Looking at the relationships between downtown jobs, office space, parking and commuter mode split, the Rose Center found:

- Denver has 123,000 jobs and 31.5 million square feet of office space at 88 percent occupancy with 44,000 off-street parking spaces. Its commuter mode split is: 44% drive, 43% transit, 7% bike, 5% walk.
- Kansas City has 77,000 jobs and 14 million square feet of office space at 82 percent occupancy with 29,000 off-street parking spaces. Its commuter mode split is: 92% drive, 5% transit, 1% bike, 1% walk.
- Minneapolis has 160,000 jobs and 33.4 million square feet of office space at 89

percent occupancy with 65,000 off-street parking spaces. No commuter mode-split data was available.

- Omaha has 27,000 jobs and 4.7 million square feet of office space at 90 percent occupancy with 41,000 off-street parking spaces. Its commuter mode split is: 94% drive, 2% transit, 0% bike, 2% walk.

This data came from each city's downtown organization, Newmark Grubb Knight Frank and the American Community Survey.

In terms of convention hotel rooms and occupancy rates, Denver has 9,332 rooms at 71 percent occupancy, Kansas City has 3,776 at 64 percent, Minneapolis has 7,357 at 73 percent, and Omaha has 2,656 at 73 percent. The source was each city's convention/visitor and downtown organizations.

On the relationship between convention center occupancy and parking, the Rose Center found:

- Denver has 774,000 square feet, is experiencing record occupancy and has 2,000 dedicated parking spaces
- Kansas City has 388,800 square feet, is at 34 percent occupancy and has 1,000 dedicated parking spaces
- Minneapolis has 475,000 square feet, is at 64 percent occupancy and has 1,000 dedicated parking spaces
- Omaha has 250,000 square feet, is at 67 percent occupancy and has 5,000 dedicated parking spaces

Note that public, off-street parking is available in addition to facilities controlled by the convention centers. The source was each city's convention/visitor organizations.

Comparing some the parking ratios for downtown office space, the Rose Center found Denver had 716 square feet per space, Minneapolis

had 514, Kansas City had 483, and Omaha just 115. Comparing the dedicated parking ratios for convention space, Minneapolis had 475 square feet per space, Kansas City had 389, Denver had 387 and Omaha just 50.

Since the CenturyLink Center also contains an arena, the Rose Center also compared the relationship between seating (for concerts as a baseline event) and parking at the four cities' downtown arenas:

- Sprint Center (Kansas City): 19,252 seats, 3,005 parking spaces, 6.4 seats per space
- Pepsi Center (Denver): 20,000 seats, 4,930 parking spaces, 4.1 seats per space
- CenturyLink Center (Omaha): 18,975 seats, 5,000 parking spaces, 3.8 seats per space
- Target Center (Minneapolis): 20,500 seats, 12,000 parking spaces, 0.6 seats per space

It should be noted that the context for access to each of these downtown facilities is different. Target Center shares parking facilities with the 39,000-seat Target Field baseball stadium in the central business district. CenturyLink Center shares them with its attached convention center and TD Ameritrade Park. Sprint Center shares its parking with a downtown entertainment and commercial development hub, the Power & Light District. Denver and Minneapolis are well-served by rail transit. Kansas City will be served by its new streetcar line, which is under construction.

The panel had the sense that Omaha's facilities are somewhat underperforming today—attracting mostly smaller bookings mainly from the regional market that don't fully utilize the facilities and perhaps over-rely on sporting events—and face an uncertain future compared to the placemaking investments made in the past two decades in Denver and Minneapolis and currently being made in Kansas City. There is clearly demand for more downtown office space and residential development. Based on this initial scan, the Rose



CenturyLink Center



Small group discussions at the follow-up workshop.



Center believes there is a competitive advantage for downtowns offering their visitors an actual urban experience—not just nice, new meeting and entertainment facilities—and for those that offer multimodal travel choices as part of that experience—especially as auto-reliance becomes a barrier to creating more urban amenities and accessing them and actually diminishes that experience.

Denver's three decades of transit investment (bus stations/mall shuttle in 1982, rail starting in 1994) has moved it from similar mode split as Omaha and Kansas City to parity for transit and driving. One decade of rail transit investment is moving the needle in Minneapolis. Kansas City is struggling to compete in conventions and hotels but is building a downtown streetcar today. A lower parking-supply ratio in these cities means more capital spent on revenue-generating land uses. Indeed, this last point is a huge one for Omaha to consider in its downtown corporate headquarters parking study: at what point does the development cost and amount of land needed to continue current

parking ratios become an artificial constraint on new development that also impacts the city's fiscal health? Like these three competing metro areas, Omaha will need to consider how transit can change this equation and allow more development to generate more public and private value along with the placemaking advantages of transit access over private auto prioritization.

Assigning participants into smaller groups at the workshop, they were asked:

- What additional development opportunities do you see based on current project and plans and where do they make the most sense?
- What new infrastructure is needed to support what's in the pipeline, on the boards and the potential you see here? How can access be improved without increasing the land use footprint of parking?
- How can additional recommendations from the ULI Riverfront advisory panel and the Rose Center study visit panel be implemented?
- What principles or goals should be considered for the development of Lot B in Omaha to support the overall vision and needs of North Downtown?
- What are the three most important next steps for implementing this vision?

A summary of the participants' responses follows in an appendix.

Summary of Recommendations

Combining the ideas presented by the Rose Fellowship February study visit panel and those from the participants at the September stakeholder workshop facilitated by the city's faculty advisers, the following summary of recommendations is organized by common theme.

Placemaking and Urban Design

- Connect six great places: TD Ameritrade, CenturyLink Center, Old Market, Creighton University, Arts & Trades District, Bob Kerrey Bridge
- Provide the “wow” factor with a distinctively designed gateway that enlivens underutilized areas
- Keep providing entertainment and creative cultural offerings that are unique to Omaha
- Create value with amenities such as new urban parks, gathering space, programming, and reclaim streets as public space (even temporarily)
- Create a design overlay district that ensures appropriate design that supports density, mobility and livability
- Support walkability within the district, including higher-density development, buildings addressing the street, vibrant storefronts, complete streets, on-street parking and other parking located at the interior of lots
- Maintain the historic character of the district
- Install works of art throughout the district

Economic Development

- Make better use of TD Ameritrade Park and CenturyLink Center
- Nurture the “makerhood”: encourage ways to attract small, light-industrial production, repair and distribution businesses as well as artisan and arts users, keep rents affordable, promote the area to visitors and the region, address the inevitable access and use conflicts these industrial mixed-use areas present
- Foster economic linkages between the Near North Omaha neighborhood and the Arts & Trades District such as apprenticeships and locating neighborhood and social services in new North Downtown developments

Real Estate Development

- Plan mixed-use buildings with main-floor commercial (or other active uses)
- Specifically for Lot B:
 - Create an 18-hour mixed-use district (residential, retail, entertainment, limited office, etc.)
 - Central plaza space
 - Integrated parking
 - Incorporate different commercial uses than the Old Market or Capitol District
- Develop the Union Pacific property along Abbott Drive
- Build more housing along the riverfront
- Add live/work housing in the Arts & Trades District
- Encourage Creighton University to partner with private developers to build student and faculty housing and services in North Downtown and open their facilities to the neighborhood

Green, Open and Public Space

- Incorporate green spaces and plazas throughout the area
 - Green corridor connecting Creighton-Bob Kerrey Bridge
 - Arts & Trades district linear park
 - Plaza space at 10th and Mike Fahey streets at the west end of the “Baby Bob” bridge
- Use the Combined Sewer Overflow project to create an east-west greenway
- Add street trees and create a streetscape unique to North Downtown

Connectivity

- Build the “Baby Bob” bridge
- Extend Capitol Avenue to Riverfront Drive
- Improve North/South connections under I-480
- 13th Street is the key north-south street; make it a great pedestrian experience
- Sustain the cross streets of Burt and California as development occurs, to return the connectivity of the street grid
- Connect 10th Street to 11th Street north of Cuming (once truck traffic is rerouted)
- Connect 12th Street from the stadium to Capitol and then 11th Street from Capitol across Leahy Mall to the Old Market
- Improve bike connections/routes. For example, utilize 15th Street, including a connection through the First National sculpture park to downtown

Circulation

- Move the trucks off of 11th Street north of Cuming and away from areas south of Cuming
- Improve transit, including urban circulator (modern streetcar) and encourage transit-oriented development
- Slow speeds on Cuming Street by narrowing widths and adding traffic signals and on-street parking
- Narrow Capitol Avenue and add diagonal parking
- Provide east/west vehicular and pedestrian connections in the Arts & Trades District

Parking

- Don't allow North Downtown to become the parking reservoir for all of downtown
- Parking lots should be redeveloped
- Reduce parking ratios for new development

Programming

- Work with stakeholders and like-minded organizations to program underutilized spaces in North Downtown—in the shorter term, there are opportunities for tactical urbanism experiments in areas like streets and parking lots
- When there are not heavy transportation demands being generated by large events, reclaim streets as public spaces and use them for smaller-scale, temporary events.

While the City of Omaha, downtown interests and stakeholders in North Downtown have accomplished much to date, their ability to maximize the potential of North Downtown by building off its well-placed assets is as much an organizational development and communications issue as it is a development planning issue. Key public and private stakeholders must establish a deliberation framework that guides future city investment. This needs to define and establish a clear, shared vision for creation of thriving, multiuse urban North Downtown community that includes:

- An active and growing hospitality industry
- A year-round events district
- An accessible and multipurpose riverfront
- A multiuse North Downtown with new residents and jobs
- Efficient, affordable transportation logistics, including multimodal options and well-managed district parking

The Rose Center believes there is a competitive advantage for downtowns offering their visitors an urban experience—not just nice, new meeting and entertainment facilities—and for those that provide multimodal travel choices as part of that experience. Based on market trends, the Rose Center believes there is clearly demand for more downtown office space and residential development in downtown Omaha, which should help implementation in North Downtown if the area is designed to enhance the pedestrian experience.

At what point does the development cost and amount of land needed to continue current parking ratios become an artificial constraint on new development that also impacts the city's fiscal health? Like its competitors in Denver, Kansas City and Minneapolis, Omaha will need to consider how transit can change this equation and allow more development to generate more public and private value along with the placemaking advantages of pedestrian-oriented design.



The study visit panel touring The Bench carpentry co-work space.

About the Fellows and the Panel

Omaha Rose Fellows

■ Jean Stothert

Jean Stothert is the 51st mayor of Omaha, the first woman elected to this office. She brings a conservative approach to the mayor's office and it is her goal to make Omaha a more vibrant community.

She prioritizes spending tax dollars wisely and carefully, helping families by reducing taxes and providing the services they expect from government: good streets, well-maintained parks, libraries, infrastructure and excellent police and fire departments. Her No. 1 job as mayor is to keep Omaha's citizens safe.

Stothert sees Omaha as a city with a lower tax burden that will allow businesses to thrive and its economy to grow. She wants prospective companies to know Omaha is a city that supports its business community and is on the verge of being one of the best cities in the country for new business and job creation.

She grew up in the St. Louis area and worked as a critical care nurse and later as head nurse and Department Head of Cardiovascular Surgery at St. Louis University. Working in the inner city hospital taught her to stay focused on the job and organize her time. Stothert brings those experiences and skills to the mayor's office.

Her family moved to Omaha in 1993 from Galveston, Texas, when her husband accepted a new position at Creighton University. The first time Stothert visited Omaha she fell in love with the city and knew it was where she wanted to live and raise her family.

When her two children were old enough to go to school, Stothert became involved in their schools as a volunteer. Eventually, she was appointed and then elected to the Millard Board of Education and served 11 years, including three as board president. In 2009, she was elected to the Omaha City Council, representing District 5 in southwest Omaha.

■ Cassie Paben

Cassie Paben is the mayor's deputy chief of staff for economic development. She works with the business and development communities and the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce to promote Omaha as a business-friendly city. She is the mayor's liaison to the Planning and Public Works departments and the City Council (on development related issues), making sure current development projects proceed and new, innovative ideas are successful.

A native Nebraskan, Paben attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and earned a bachelor's degree in communication studies and sociology. She has a master's degree in management with an emphasis in leadership from Doane College. Paben is also a graduate of the University of Oklahoma's Economic Development Institute.

Before joining Mayor Stothert's staff, Paben was the economic development manager for the City of Omaha's Planning Department and was executive director of the York County Development Corporation in York, Nebraska. She also worked for the Nebraska Department of Economic Development in the Business Development Division as a business recruiter for the state and the Community and Rural Development Division as a housing specialist.

Paben is a member of the International Economic Development Council, the Nebraska Economic Developers Association, serving on its board of directors and Lions Club International. She also serves on the board of directors for the Nebraska Enterprise Fund and Omaha's Downtown Improvement District.

Bob Stubbe

Bob Stubbe is public works director for the City of Omaha and has been in that capacity since October 2005. His responsibility consists of providing transportation and environmental services for the Omaha metro area. In addition to those responsibilities, the department has undertaken numerous capital improvement projects related to the combined sewer overflow program and roadway improvement projects.

Prior to becoming public works director, Stubbe had more than 29 years of service with the Metropolitan Utilities District providing gas and water service to the Omaha metro area. During his career with the district he held numerous engineering and management positions. During his last six years of service he was a vice president with responsibility for the district's engineering and construction divisions.

A native of South Dakota, he graduated from South Dakota State University with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering followed by a master's in structural engineering from the University of Nebraska. He is a registered professional engineer in Nebraska.

Stubbe also serves on the Papillion (Nebraska) City Council and is in his second term. Prior to the City Council, he served for four years on the Papillion Planning Commission.

James Thele

James R. Thele is director of the Planning Department for the City of Omaha. He is responsible for the overall management of the 116-position staff in the urban planning, building and development and the housing and community development divisions, including: long-range master planning, capital improvement programming, annexation studies, transportation planning, current project zoning and subdivision reviews and approvals, urban design project reviews, community and neighborhood design plans, building permit issuance and construction inspection, building contractor licensing, rehabilitation and redevelopment project planning and implementation, property maintenance code enforcement and administration of the planning board, construction trade boards, historic preservation commission and zoning and regulatory appeal boards.

Thele began his professional career at the Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments in 1974, rising to the position of senior planner. In 1979, he accepted a position with the City of Omaha, becoming the director of the Mayor's Office of Economic Development. In 1984, he became the inaugural director of the Omaha Small Business Network, initiating the operation of a small business incubator program. He returned to the City of Omaha in 1990 and subsequently became the assistant planning director for housing and community development prior to accepting this current position in 2013.

Thele has served the public for 40 years in every aspect of urban planning and in operating and administering economic development and community development programs. He has a bachelor's degree in geography and history with graduate work in real estate, economics and urban geography.

Omaha Rose Fellowship Project Manager

■ Steve Jensen

During his 37 years with the Omaha City Planning Department, Jensen held positions ranging from summer intern to planning director until his retirement in August 2009. His accomplishments include directing the most comprehensive update of the City's master plan in Omaha's history, the development of the City's widely recognized and award-winning Urban Design Master Plan and Urban Design Code and the award-winning 2009 Downtown Omaha Master Plan.

Jensen served as chairman of the College World Series Stadium Design Advisory Committee and on the board of directors for the Omaha Hilton Hotel until his retirement. He continues to serve as co-chairman of the Environment Omaha planning initiative and also as a member of the Omaha By Design Advisory Board and various civic committees. Now in private practice, Jensen provides a range of planning and urban design consulting services to a variety of private, nonprofit and public clients.

Rose Fellowship Omaha Faculty and Study Visit Panel Co-Chairs

■ Laura Aldrete

Laura Aldrete leads the PlaceMaking Group of Parsons Brinckerhoff in the Denver office. She has participated in development and transportation projects in the private and public sector throughout her career. As a nationally recognized urban planner with redevelopment expertise, she applies her comprehensive understanding of land use and transportation to redevelopment projects. In a world that no longer operates in isolation, the application of Aldrete's knowledge on many development projects renders a more robust and successful project for the agency, developer and the community.

Before Parsons Brinckerhoff, she served as the assistant director of the Denver Urban Renewal Authority, as special projects director in Denver's Office of Economic Development and the Stapleton project manager in the Denver mayor's office. Aldrete is bilingual and can conduct charrettes and public meetings in Spanish.

A native of Denver, Aldrete received a bachelor's degree in anthropology from the University of Colorado-Boulder before receiving a master's in urban and regional planning and Latin American studies from the University of Colorado-Los Angeles.

■ M.D. "Mike" Higbee

Mike Higbee is the managing director of Indianapolis-based DC Development Group, the development wing of Development Concepts Inc., a planning and development consulting services organization founded in 1991. Higbee has worn many hats, including those of project leader, consultant and instructor. However, he has always remained true to the cornerstone of his expertise, which is conceptualizing development and seeing it through to construction completion.

Higbee has designed and developed numerous successful projects focused in urban environments, such as Avondale Meadows and Martindale on the Monon. A current development project he is now involved with in Indianapolis is the 150-acre site of the former Central State Mental Hospital. The Central State project will incorporate mixed-use development with strong cultural and ethnic themes.

In his work as a consultant, Higbee has used his experience to help create plans and developments that have benefited cities across the country, including the Waukegan Lakefront/Downtown Master Plan, Rockville Town Center Master Plan, Downtown Durham Master Plan, and the West Lafayette, Indiana, Wabash Landing Development Project. He has also done consulting work in the United Arab Emirates, assisting development

companies in structuring development programs for large undeveloped land parcels.

Prior to forming Development Concepts, Higbee served as the director of metropolitan development, one of six departments within the Indianapolis-Marion County consolidated government. During his time with the City of Indianapolis, his department was responsible for the City's economic development and affordable housing initiatives. Some of the premiere projects he facilitated for the City were the Circle Centre Mall development, the Lower Canal Improvement Project and the negotiations for the United Airlines Maintenance Facility at Indianapolis International Airport.

Rose Fellowship Omaha Study Visit Panelists

Jim Cloar

Jim Cloar has spent more than 40 years as a professional urban planner and not-for-profit manager. He led private not-for-profit organizations focused on revitalization in Dallas, Tampa, Florida, and St. Louis for a total of 26 years. In Dallas, his activities included catalytic initiatives that led to creation of the Dallas Arts District. In Tampa, his organization assembled land and funded pre-development studies facilitating the development of a new sports and entertainment arena. Among his roles in St. Louis was funding, development and management of a new public plaza.

Cloar has also been a partner/principal with a Maryland-based urban design firm and, prior to that, headed the Washington staff of the Urban Land Institute (ULI). In 2010-2011, he served as the interim president of the International Downtown Association and is a former IDA chairman. He was been honored by the mayor of St. Louis with the 2006 "Quality of Life" Award and by IDA with the 2013 Dan E. Sweat Award for Lifetime Achievement in Downtown Leadership.

Cloar has been a consultant, adviser and/or speaker to more than 50 U.S. cities and abroad.

Recent clients include Wichita, Kansas, Burlington, Vermont, Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Baltimore. He has served on ULI advisory panels for Raleigh, North Carolina, Orlando, Florida, New Orleans, Charlotte, North Carolina, Denver, Oklahoma City and Colorado Springs, Colorado, and recently chaired a ULI Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) in Bradenton, Florida. He is a past chairman of ULI's Public-Private Partnership Council and a former chairman of ULI Tampa Bay.

Cloar is a Penn Institute for Urban Research "Scholar." He is on the board of directors of the National Civic League, a commissioner of the Tampa Housing Authority and a trustee of the Henry B. Plant Museum. He is writing on civic leadership for the 21st century and is principal author of the ULI-IDA-published book, "Centralized Retail Management: New Strategies for Downtown."

Cloar has both a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and a master's in regional and city planning from the University of Oklahoma. He lives in Tampa.

Kate Collignon

Kate Collignon brings 15 years of private and public sector experience in economic development, real estate and urban planning, with an emphasis on downtown and waterfront revitalization. Collignon works with public, institutional and private-sector clients nationwide to advise on master plan creation, craft public-private partnerships and manage complex projects. In addition to her contributions on projects, she also oversees the growth and operations of HR&A's New York City headquarters.

Collignon provides economic strategies to underpin master plans and negotiates the partnerships necessary for implementation. She served as project manager for several of HR&A's master planning efforts, including a strategic growth and modernization plan for the Research Triangle Park in North Carolina; an award-winning master plan for a seven-mile stretch of waterfront on the

Delaware River in Philadelphia; a sustainable plan for Union Pier in Charleston, South Carolina; and an industrial revitalization strategy for the district surrounding Philadelphia's Lower Schuylkill River.

Collignon also supports HR&A's public-policy and open-space planning practices. She examined the vast number of publicly owned, underutilized parcels on behalf of Detroit Works and assessed current and best practices for regulating and promoting construction site safety on behalf of the Building Trades Employers Association of New York City. She supports governance and operations planning for new open space proposed for the Seattle Central Waterfront and is formulating a funding and governance strategy for Gateway Park in Oakland, California.

Prior to joining HR&A, Collignon served as a development director with Brookfield Properties, where she managed pre-development for commercial and mixed-use projects across the United States. Previously, she worked with the New York City Economic Development Corp., where she served as senior vice president for development and was in charge of large-scale planning and development initiatives for Manhattan's 125th Street, Downtown Brooklyn, Coney Island, the Brooklyn waterfront and Brooklyn Bridge Park.

Collignon is a graduate of Columbia University and holds a master's degree in public policy and urban planning from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

■ Ray Gastil

Pittsburgh Rose Fellow

Ray Gastil is a city planner and urban designer who became city planning director for Pittsburgh in spring 2014. Major initiatives for his department include neighborhood planning, strategic improvement and investments, resilient waterfront communities and complete streets.

He is a former planning director of both Seattle and the borough of Manhattan, New York, and

founding director of Van Alen Institute: Projects in Public Architecture, where he led a program of exhibitions, publications and design competitions, including *Open: New Designs for Public Space* and *Beyond the Edge: New York's New Waterfront*. Earlier, he served as transit and regional design director for Regional Plan Association, where he contributed to the Third Regional Plan.

His most recent publication is *Success Looks Different Now: Design and Cultural Vitality in Lower Manhattan* (Architectural League, 2013). He was the 2011-2013 Chair in Design Innovation and Visiting Professor at the Stuckeman School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at Penn State University, where his work included seminars and studios on the relationship between university campuses and urban vitality, and Friedman Visiting Professor in Architecture at the University of California-Berkeley in fall 2013, where his teaching focused on waterfront urbanism in the Bay Area of San Francisco.

■ John Hodgson

John Hodgson has spearheaded numerous mixed-use master-planned projects throughout the greater Sacramento Valley area of California. He has served as team leader, advocate and project manager for numerous large property owner groups that developed more than 10,000 acres of new master-planned communities throughout the greater Sacramento region. He also has a strong interest in urban revitalization and mixed-use development in the urban centers of the region.

Hodgson has experience both as a principal and consultant to major property and land development projects in the greater Sacramento and Northern California region, including serving as team leader and land use attorney for numerous large projects such as the Laguna Ridge Specific Plan (1750 acres of mixed use in the City of Elk Grove), the Elverta Specific Plan in northern Sacramento County (project of nearly 1900 acres of mixed use), and the Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan (3,500 acres, City of Folsom).

Hodgson is active in both civic and volunteer organizations. He is a member of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and recently served as chairman of the ULI Sacramento District Council. He was appointed by Gov. Pete Wilson and served six years as chairman of the Capitol Area Development Authority (CADA), which is responsible for development of the 42 square blocks surrounding the State Capitol in downtown Sacramento. In his capacity as CADA chairman, he is credited with contributing to the revitalization of midtown Sacramento. He was an appointee of Mayor Joe Serna to the Capitol Area Committee. He was selected by Mayor Kevin Johnson to be one of Sacramento's 2010-2011 ULI Daniel Rose Fellows.

Hodgson serves as chairman of the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan (SSHCP), a proposed 374,000-acre comprehensive plan addressing urban development and habitat preservation. He has chaired both the Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce Land Use & Natural Resources Committee and the Metro Chamber's Cap to Cap Land Use team. He has served several terms as chairman of the Sacramento Council of the North State Building Industry Association. He is a member of the State Bar of California and numerous civic organizations. He also is a graduate of University of California-Davis Law School (King Hall).

Michael P. Kelly

Michael P. Kelly was appointed by former D.C. Mayor Vincent C. Gray as director of the D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) on July 2, 2012, and served in that capacity until Jan. 2, 2015. As director, Kelly oversaw approximately 159 employees, an operating budget of more than \$200 million and the day-to-day operations of more than a dozen services and programs geared towards creating and preserving opportunities for affordable housing and economic development and revitalizing underserved communities throughout Washington, D.C.

Under his leadership, the agency saw a 300 percent increase in the number of affordable units in its pipeline and a 412 percent increase in the funds it dispersed to development projects. This was Kelly's second tour of duty in D.C., having first served as executive director of the Housing Authority (DCHA) from 2000 to 2009. While at DCHA, Kelly led the redevelopment of several properties.

Kelly has amassed more than three decades of experience in the housing industry. He served as executive director of the Philadelphia Housing Authority and general manager of the New York City Housing Authority. Kelly is also an accomplished professor, serving as the Harvey-Wadsworth Professor of Urban Affairs at Tulane University and as an adjunct professor in the School of Architecture and Urban Planning at Howard University and the Wagner School of Public Policy at New York University.

Kelly began his career in the public housing arena as an architect for the San Francisco Housing Authority in 1983. He left San Francisco to serve at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a troubled agency recovery specialist, where he provided technical assistance to the transition team at the Housing Authority of New Orleans. In 1995, he was promoted to executive director of the New Orleans Housing Authority.

Kelly is a licensed architect and member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), a certified urban planner and member of the American Planning Association (AICP) and a LEED Green Associate of the U.S. Green Building Council. He holds a bachelor's degree in architecture and urban planning from Princeton University, a master's in architecture from the University of California-Berkeley and a master's in education from San Francisco State University.

■ Tom Murphy

Tom Murphy is a senior resident fellow, ULI/Klingbeil Family Chair for urban development. Murphy, a former mayor of Pittsburgh, since January 2006 had served as ULI's Gulf Coast liaison, working with the Louisiana state leadership, as well as with leadership in hurricane-impacted areas in Mississippi, Alabama and Florida to identify areas appropriate for ULI involvement.

Prior to his service at ULI, Murphy served three terms as the mayor of Pittsburgh, from January 1994 through December 2005. During that time he initiated a public-private partnership strategy that leveraged more than \$4.5 billion in economic development in Pittsburgh. Murphy led efforts to secure and oversee \$1 billion in funding for the development of two professional sports facilities and a new convention center that is the largest certified green building in the United States. He developed strategic partnerships to transform more than 1,000 acres of blighted and abandoned industrial properties into new commercial, residential, retail and public uses, and he oversaw the development of more than 25 miles of new riverfront trails and urban green space.

From 1979 through 1993, Murphy served in the Pennsylvania State General Assembly House of Representatives. He focused legislative activities on changing western Pennsylvania's economy from industrial to entrepreneurial. He authored legislation to encourage industrial land reuse and to transform abandoned rail rights of way into trails and green space.

Murphy served in the Peace Corps in Paraguay from 1970 through 1972. He is a 1993 graduate of the New Mayors Program offered by Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. He holds a master's degree in urban studies from Hunter College and a bachelor's in biology and chemistry from John Carroll University.

■ Kathy Nyland

Seattle Rose Fellow

Originally from California, Kathy Nyland has called Seattle home for the past 15 years. Her path to policy and public service is a little less traditional than most. Her neighborhood advocacy work has led her to achieve a rare trifecta: beating City Hall, working with City Hall and now working in City Hall.

For the past decade, Nyland has strategized and advocated on behalf of her neighborhood and other underrepresented communities. She founded a local neighborhood business association, chaired Seattle's City Neighborhood Council organization and prevailed on a number of David versus Goliath issues. One example was when she questioned the investment of \$70 million for a new intermodal waste station and instead offered the idea of increased recycling. The suggestion resonated and helped create Seattle's Zero Waste Policy.

Prior to taking on her role as senior policy adviser in Mayor Ed Murray's administration, Nyland served as chief of staff to a member of the Seattle City Council. Her policy portfolio includes land use, planning and public outreach engagement issues. She was tasked with holding a neighborhood summit within the mayor's first 100 days in office. More than 600 people attended the summit, where seven languages were represented.

Driven by a sense of fairness and a wonky passion for outreach, Nyland believes in the power of good policy and public engagement. She's adept at mobilizing community resources, engaging broad public participation in programs and projects and identifying established and emerging community leaders—all while understanding that civic engagement depends on access to information. Her driving goal is to engage with residents and each other in such a way that viewpoints can be shared and respected with the aim of finding common ground.

Summary of Follow-Up Workshop Responses

What additional development opportunities do you see based on current project and plans and where do they make the most sense?

- There should be a greenspace connection from Creighton University to Lot B along Mike Fahey Street. A linear Park to connect with a chain of green spaces to the Arts & Trades district. Pocket parks should be developed throughout, with green space located at least every quarter mile. Add plenty of street trees to green up the area. (4)
- Lot B is too valuable to park on due to its high property value. This is a location that needs a special development such as entertainment uses that support events at CenturyLink Center and TD Ameritrade Park. The lot should be fully developed with a mixture of uses, combined with an integrated parking structure and central courtyard. (4)
- The Union Pacific property north of Cuming sits in a high-visibility location and acts as Omaha's "front door" from the airport. The parcel has the potential to be developed, but there are potential environmental issues associated with it. (3)
- Give 16th Street to the trucks. Redirection of the truck route off of 11th, connect to 16th north of Nicholas. (2)
- There is the potential to add live-work units north of Cuming to support the up and coming Arts & Crafts District. (2)
- The World Herald rail line has the potential for a trail connection if it is abandoned. (2)

- Lot D should have a parking garage that also includes retail on the ground floor.
- The highly underutilized intersection of 16th and Cuming could be a special node, as it is located at the transition between North Downtown and the Creighton campus. This area is currently a dead zone. (2)
- Place liner buildings east of the stadium along 10th Street (west side) to create more of an urban feel.
- Don't cannibalize existing neighborhoods or developments, aim to create a unique housing project. Any residential structure should have active uses on the ground floor.
- Existing surface parking lots can be seen as opportunities for development.
- Slow traffic along Cuming Street.

What new infrastructure is needed to support what's in the pipeline, on the boards and the potential you see here? How can we improve access without increasing the land-use footprint of parking?

- Riverfront connections are important, which makes the connection from North Downtown to the riverfront via the "Baby Bob" bridge important. The Baby Bob would help to activate the key development corridor along Mike Fahey Street between Creighton University and the riverfront. Perhaps build a plaza at the landing of the Baby Bob bridge. Capitol Avenue is another potential riverfront connection. (6)

- Improve connections from both sides of Interstate 480. Improve the lighting under the highway and develop active uses such as a dog park or skate park in those locations. (5)
- We need to find a solution for routing North Downtown trucks. They are critical to the operations of the light industrial areas to the north, but with the current truck route in place, 16th Street is a potential disconnect to areas west and the pedestrian fabric is interrupted. (5)
- Install an urban circulator to reduce parking demand and create more efficient parking solutions to spread people around throughout the district. Encourage transit-oriented development around the stops. Phase II of the circulator system is also important to connect to Creighton. (4)
- Walkability infrastructure needs to be improved with a better connected sidewalk network. Pedestrian connections are an important aspect of the urban fabric. Potential corridors include 11th Street to Capitol Ave and the Old Market, and on 12th Street from TD Ameritrade Park to Capitol and Douglas Street. Crosswalks (3)
- Abandon the railroad track to the World Herald. This would remove a barrier and transform it into an asset. This could be a greenspace or trail addition in the vacated right of way. (3)
- Narrow Cuming Street north of TD Ameritrade Park to slow traffic as it acts as a highway in its current configuration. Perhaps put it on a road diet. Also do the same on Capitol Avenue to the river. (2)
- Improve bike infrastructure in the district, more than just sharrows and signage. 16th Street is an important corridor to make connections to the north.

- Develop high-density residential, mixed-use and parking structures on Lots B and D.
- Support the development of high-density residential uses along the riverfront by Gallup.
- The sewer easement north of Nicholas could tie into a linear park system.
- A 12th Street extension south to the CBD would connect TD Ameritrade Park to the Holland Performing Arts Center and over to Gene Leahy Mall.
- 15th Street is a good walking and biking corridor.

How can additional recommendations from the ULI riverfront advisory panel and the Rose Center study visit panel be implemented?

- TD Ameritrade Park has blocked economic development, mobility, and visibility within North Downtown.
- Create a moratorium on any new surface parking.

What principles or goals should be considered for the development of Lot B to support the overall vision and needs of North Downtown?

- Create a development that is entirely mixed-use, promoting an 18-hour-per-day activity hub. Provide access to residential, office, retail and entertainment uses.(3)
- Portions of the development need to support entertainment uses.
- There needs to be adequate green space to supplement the uses.
- Put an emphasis on housing and green space, with a variety of amenities.
- Consider the Capitol District and do not cannibalize their development, create a complementary project.

What are the three most important next steps for implementing this vision?

- Need good communication and stakeholder engagement to move forward. (2)
- The World Herald rail line should be abandoned and transformed into a north-south connector. (2)
- Generally promote density and ensure quality design and architecture within in the district. (2)
- In the short term, focus on aesthetic issues like increased landscaping within the district. In the long term, address infrastructure issues.
- There should be an east-west connector to/from Creighton located on Mike Fahey Street.
- Landmark projects should be developed at key intersections of 10th and Cuming as well as 16th and Cuming.
- Make the ballpark more usable or reorient to the new center of North Downtown.
- Walkability and mobility enhancements like a north trail, slowing traffic on Cuming and connections under Interstate 480.
- Build the “Baby Bob” bridge across the Union Pacific railroad and Riverfront Drive connecting North Downtown to the riverfront and the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge.
- Construct the urban circulator to allow for lower parking ratios throughout the district.
- Move truck traffic off of Nicholas.
- Create 11th Street mall from the Old Market to the Capitol District.

Other considerations?

- Create spaces for refuge within the new development. Having places where people can escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life in an urban place with places to relax such as pocket parks, linear parks, courtyards and plazas. Make sure that people who live, work, shop and play in these spaces have places where they can rest and recharge throughout their day. This improves quality of life, human health and is a necessary element to a thriving city. It also helps to recruit and retain talent. (3)
- Create a design overlay district that ensures appropriate design that supports density, mobility and livability. Focus on elements that support walkability within the district, including high-density development, buildings addressing the street, vibrant storefronts, complete streets, on-street parking and other parking located at the interior of lots. (2)
- Maintain the historic character of North Downtown and keep the soul of the area. Provide access to more local foods and businesses. (2)
- Developments should include multi-use structures with integrated parking solutions.
- Attract installations of public art that could be a draw to the area, like the bean in Millennium Park in Chicago.
- Cuming Street is a major barrier for pedestrians. How can we slow traffic in this area to create a more inviting and safe place to improve connectivity between the Arts & Crafts District and the heart of North Downtown?

- Create activity nodes for bicycles and pedestrians, entertainment options for families and an abundance of open space.
- Attract necessities that are important in attracting a residential base, such as a grocery store.
- For large gathering spaces, access to more restrooms is desirable.
- Work with major downtown employers to ensure that North Downtown doesn't serve as a parking lot for office workers downtown.
- TD Ameritrade Park is underutilized throughout the year. MECA and the City of Omaha should work together to attract additional users to the space to create a more vibrant district outside of the two weeks of the College World Series.
- Decrease or eliminate minimum parking requirements for future developments.
- Issues related to areas outside of the study area:
 - Gene Leahy Mall is underutilized, perhaps raising the elevation of the mall would allow for more interaction with potential users. (2)
 - Now that the ConAgra campus might be changing, any North Downtown strategy should be developed in conjunction with a plan for their campus, the Gene Leahy Mall and Heartland of America Park.
 - Install a pedestrian bridge over the Gene Leahy Mall at 11th Street.
 - Tear down the Storz Trophy Room restaurant and redevelop the area along the Missouri River.

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