



A new environmental vision for the city

One initiative. Two years. More than 4,000 volunteer hours logged by Omahans from all corners of the community. The result is the **Environment Omaha** document, a new environmental vision for the city.

The Omaha City Council voted 7-0 to adopt the document as a component of Omaha's master plan Dec. 14, 2010. Developed through a collaborative process led by the City of Omaha and Omaha by Design, it includes more than 600 recommendations in five sections – the natural environment, urban form and transportation, building construction, resource conservation and community health. The seven goals in the Natural Environment section seek to preserve and enhance the city's natural environment. The six goals in the Urban Form & Transportation section seek to improve how Omahans move around the city and determine what shape its future growth should take. The four goals in the Building Construction section seek to help Omaha become a national leader in innovative building construction, renovation and maintenance. The five goals in the Resource Conservation section seek to help the city conserve its natural and material resources and capitalize on the potential of its human resources. The three goals in the Community Health section seek to help Omaha become more active, safe and healthy.

What is the vision? An Omaha in which the air and water are clean, the buildings are energy efficient, the landscaping is both functional and attractive, the children walk or ride their bikes to school, the landfill is less full, the shops are within walking distance, the creeks are recreational outlets, the homes are safe, the access to healthy food and economic opportunity is balanced, and the streets are welcoming to cars, walkers, cyclists and users of mass transit. The implementation of this vision will take Omaha and make it stronger, increasing the city's economic and social vibrancy. Take a moment to review the goals and then think about ways you can help transform this vision into action.

FUNDERS:

- Papio-Missouri River Natural Resource District
- Metropolitan Area Planning Agency
- City of Omaha Stormwater Management Plan Program Grant from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality



Section: The Natural Environment

Omaha may not have mountains or oceans, but did you know the city is home to one of the oldest restored tallgrass prairies in the nation and close to 300 miles of natural creeks and streams? The air, climate, landforms, water features, and plant and animal communities are part of our identity and quality of life. They help form the basis of who we are and how we think. The seven goals in this section of Environment Omaha seek to preserve and enhance the city's natural environment.

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GOALS:

- **Land**
Ensure that land use and development patterns safeguard natural ecosystems and resources while providing for the long-term health of the community's economy, social climate and people.



- **Visual Resources**
Preserve natural areas and views that contribute to a scenic setting and distinctive character. Minimize adverse impacts of air and light pollution on daytime views and night sky views while providing for public safety.



- **Natural Habitats**
Preserve, protect and restore natural communities, ecosystems and their processes and habitat; provide for the needs of native species in balance with human habitation.



The Natural Environment

- **Urban Landscapes**

Promote the use of native plants in landscaping; eliminate noxious/invasive plants; ensure the health of the city's plant community; and improve the value of the urban landscape for beneficial wildlife.



- **Air and Climate**

Ensure that all areas of the community have a level of air quality that promotes the health of the people and the natural environment.



Enhance the microclimate throughout the community. Take responsible actions to minimize the community's impact on climate change and mitigate changes that are predicted for the Midwest region's climate.

- **Acoustic Environment**

Ensure that sounds and noise levels within the community promote a high quality of life and health for metropolitan area residents and avoid harmful effects of noise pollution on wildlife.



- **Water**

Preserve and restore natural hydrologic features and their functions; provide opportunities for people to experience and connect with natural



water features; reduce the impact of urbanization on stormwater quality and quantity; ensure the safety and security of the community's water supply; and ensure that water supply and demand are balanced and sustainable for the community's long-term needs and in consideration of potential climate change impacts.

MEASUREMENTS:

- By 2020, all Omaha residents will be within one-half mile of public open space.
- Achieve attainment of the State Surface Water Quality Standards in Omaha lakes and streams by 2025.
- Reduce number of air quality related health alert days to 20 by 2015 and 10 by 2020.
- By 2020, reduce night sky luminance to less than 200% Natural Nighttime Sky Luminance in public parks and open spaces and 20% below 2012 levels everywhere else.



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Section: Urban Form & Transportation

In 1950, Omaha's population density (the number of people per unit of area) was about 6,000 people per square mile. Today, it's substantially lower - about 3,490 people per square mile. What are we doing, or not doing, with all that space? Are we hampering our ability to efficiently move around the city and provide the city services we all need and want? The key elements in how our city is laid out - the type and location of housing, the presence of sidewalks and trails, the type and location of employment centers, the physical design of our roads - all impact the way we navigate around Omaha. We know cars are important, but we also need to make room for walkers, bikers and those who would use mass transit if it was easy and got them where they needed to go. The six goals in this section of Environment Omaha seek to improve how Omahans move around the city and determine what shape its future growth should take.

GOALS:

- **Large-Scale City Form**
Develop a city form that reduces the per capita cost of providing city services and establishes the density necessary to support more energy-efficient forms of transportation.



- **Land Use Development Policy**
Develop at high residential



densities and with true mixed uses that produce more diverse environments and reduce the number of necessary automobile trips.

Urban Form & Transportation

- **Land Development**

Create individual developments with components that are connected, walkable and accessible to all modes of transportation by providing safe, defined and pleasant routes from the public realm to destinations based on the needs of each mode. Through redevelopment and change to underused areas, establish densities that support transportation alternatives.



- **Transportation Network**

Develop and operate a transportation network that moves people and freight within and through the metropolitan area efficiently, maximizing access and minimizing vehicle miles traveled, energy consumed and pollutants emitted.



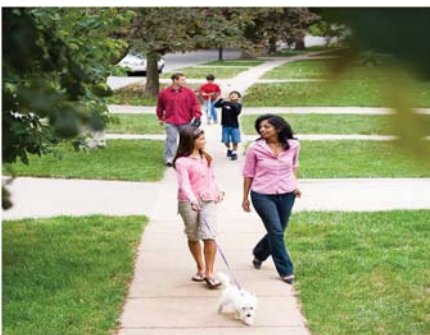
- **Transit**

Develop a public transportation system that offers a degree of coverage, convenience and amenity that provides transportation equity for dependent customers and makes transit an attractive option for discretionary passengers.



- **Active Transportation**

Provide a high level of citywide access and continuity to pedestrians and bicyclists.



MEASUREMENTS:

- Omaha's population density will grow to 4,500 people per square mile by 2030.
- 10% of all trips in Omaha will be made by active transportation modes—pedestrian, bicycle and public transportation.
- Fewer than 65% of all work commuting trips will be made in single-occupancy automobiles by 2030.
- Per capita motor vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by Omaha motorists will be reduced by 10% by 2030.



Section: Building Construction

Omaha's built environment has a substantial impact on the city's economy and culture. Maximizing the use and efficiency of existing buildings, promoting the creation of inspiring new places and providing the tools and resources necessary to make all that possible can help turn this impact into a recruitment strategy for business, industry and newcomers to the city. The four goals in this section of Environment Omaha seek to help the city become a national leader in innovative building construction, renovation and maintenance.

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GOALS:

- **Non-Residential — Renovation**
Take full advantage of the city's building resources and tools to maximize the functional, economic and cultural value of existing buildings and sites and to improve their environmental performance.
- **Non-Residential — New Construction**
The design of new non-residential building projects will result in sustainable structures and sites that efficiently use land, materials, energy and water while they also inspire creativity, increase productivity and enhance the quality of life in the city.



Building Construction

- **Residential –
Renovation/
New**

- **Construction**

Promote the renovation and construction of healthy residential properties that minimize waste and the consumption of energy and water.

Create regenerative

residential communities that produce renewable energy, feed people, promote clean water, improve health, incorporate waste into the nutrient cycle and demonstrate sustainable living.



- **Building Sites —
Residential/
Non-Residential**

Minimize the consumption of land and maximize the sustainability of building sites through the effective use of techniques such as infill development, increased density, building orientation, landscaping, stormwater retention, urban agriculture and other sustainable practices.



MEASUREMENTS:

- Meet the goal of the American Institute of Architects—AIA 2030 Challenge for residential and commercial construction.
- Adopt standards requiring all new buildings and major renovations to be designed through sound building practices.
- Reduce construction waste contributions to landfills from building construction, demolition and renovation to an amount that approaches zero by 2020.
- Develop timeline and strategic monitoring system to determine progress toward achieving the plan's strategies.



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Section: Resource Conservation

Did you know that Americans collectively use an average of 26 billion gallons of water each day or that almost one-third of the residential waste generated in the United States is packaging? We want to grow and prosper as a city, but we want to do so in a responsible way, one that respects the planet's finite resources. Thinking about what we use and how we use it is not only responsible but could jumpstart a local green economy that provides jobs and taps into our population's ingenuity and productivity. The five goals in this section of Environment Omaha seek to help the city conserve its natural and material resources by using its human capital.

GOALS:

- **Water**
Conserve and protect the high quality of water resources for future generations through educational, technological and policy solutions.



- **Air and Climate**
Develop and implement action-oriented strategies that pursue continuous improvement of air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, incorporate climate change resilience and measure progress regularly; report these findings to the community to stimulate the appropriate action(s).



- **Energy**
Meet energy demand by continuously improving efficiency and encouraging the supply of diversified, renewable and sustainable energy systems.



Resource Conservation

- Materials: Purchasing, Waste/Recycling**

Maximize the use of standardized processes that promote environmentally-preferred, appropriate purchasing and aggressively divert materials from the landfill toward a zero waste goal that also promotes the concept of rethink, reduce, reuse and recycle.



- Human Resources: Green Jobs, Technology**

Promote market transformation, new business attraction, existing business improvements, workforce development, behavior and leadership in order to maximize the social, environmental and economic benefit of resource and energy conservation.



MEASUREMENTS:

- Reduce energy use per capita by 20% by 2020, continually reduce consumption by 20% every 10 years thereafter.
- Increase the use of renewable energy to 20% of energy used by 2030, continually shift the source of energy production to renewable by at least 20% every 10 years thereafter.
- Reduce total water use per capita by 20% by 2020, continually reduce consumption 20% every 10 years thereafter.
- Increase waste diversion through recycling and composting by 20% by 2020, continually reduce generation 20% every 10 years thereafter.
- Decrease waste generation per capita by 10% by 2020, continually reduce generation by 10% every 10 years thereafter.



Section: Community Health

Can you walk, bike or take the bus to the places you frequent in Omaha (work, school, shopping, a night out)? Are there sidewalks, trails, bike lanes and well-marked street crossings in your neighborhood? Believe it or not, these things can help make or break the overall health of our community, as does access to affordable, healthy food and personal decision making that supports healthy living. The three goals in this section of Environment Omaha seek to help Omaha become more active, safe and healthy.

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GOALS:

- **Active Omaha**

Become an active community that supports healthy lifestyles with multiple and diverse environments to promote physical activity for all people in every season.



- **Safe Omaha**

Become a safe community in which all



people have community pride and opportunities to play, work, live and thrive.

- **Healthy Omaha**

Become a community that ensures all people have equitable access to foods, services and opportunities that support their emotional, mental, social, spiritual and physical well being.



Community Health

MEASUREMENTS:

- Increase the percentage of adults and youth engaged in physical activity.
- Increase from seven to 10 the number of city officials, employees and design consultants who are Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) certified at the basic and advanced levels by 2020.
- Decrease the percentage of adults with a Body Mass Index (BMI) greater than 30 and the percentage of youth with a BMI in the 95th percentile for age and sex by 2020.
- Increase the percentage of adults and youth who consume 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day by 2020.

What Now?

The Environment Omaha document, with its more than 600 recommendations in five sections, is now an official blueprint that will help change how our city and its inhabitants operate far into the future. The next step is moving the document from the planning process to the implementation process.

The City of Omaha has launched the ECOMaha web site. ECO stands for “Environment,” “Community” and “Opportunity.” Its mission is to promote integrated decision-making and strategic actions by city government and the community at large that foster environmental quality, build community capacity and advance economic opportunities for residents, businesses and government. ECOMaha, coordinated by the City of Omaha’s Office of Sustainable Development under the direction of the city’s planning department, is a collaborative effort to realize the goals identified in the Environment Omaha document. The web site will be used to identify and communicate the policies, programs, projects and progress related to Omaha’s sustainability initiatives.

Omaha by Design is a civic planning organization dedicated to the development, implementation and monitoring of urban design and environmental public policy in the metro. It facilitates partnerships between the public, private and philanthropic sectors to execute projects that improve the quality of the built and natural environments in the metro. ObD is pursuing a strategy to address the Environment Omaha document’s recommendations related to partnerships, education and outreach. Progress will be shared via environmentomaha.com. You can also follow Environment Omaha on Facebook and Twitter. If your business, civic group or neighborhood association would like to learn more about the Environment Omaha document, invite a member of the Environment Omaha Speakers Bureau to a meeting. For more information or to schedule a speaker, contact Omaha by Design at 402.554.4010 or info@omahabydesign.org.

cityofomaha.org/ecomaha

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