A Statewide Initiative for Economic Prosperity
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Blueprint Nebraska is a statewide coalition of leaders representing large and small, ag and non-ag business interests working to develop a long-range plan for economic growth, competitiveness and prosperity as Nebraska looks to its next 150 years and beyond.
Co-Chair Lance Fritz, Chairman, President and CEO, Union Pacific Corp

“Nebraska’s business community has a duty to help bring out the best in our state, and Blueprint Nebraska’s vision is to engage all Nebraskans in a process to collectively determine what our state’s future should be.”

Co-Chair Owen Palm, President and CEO of 21st Century Holdings

“The longer I’ve lived in Nebraska, the more I’ve realized this state has some systemic challenges that a comprehensive plan like Blueprint Nebraska can address. I see this as an honest and intense assessment of our state’s strengths and weaknesses.”

Steering Committee consists of 19 leaders with statewide and diverse business interests providing project inspiration and oversight.

Advisory Council consists of 10 principals providing guidance and support to the Steering Committee and project.
Steering Committee

- Jerry Adams
  CEO, Adams Land & Cattle, LLC (Broken Bow)
- Leslie Andersen
  President and CEO, Bank of Bennington (Bennington)
- Tim Burke
  President and CEO, OPPD (Omaha)
- DJ Eihusen
  President, and CEO, Chief Industries (Grand Island)
- Mike Flood
  Owner and CEO, News Channel Nebraska (Norfolk)
- Tony Goins
  Business Optimizer & Partners (Lincoln)
- David Graff
  CEO, Hudl (Lincoln)
- Jon Holzfaster
  Owner, Holzfaster Farm (Paxton)
- Pat Keenan
  Owner, Keenan Management, LLC (North Platte)
- Hod Kosman
  Chairman, Platte Valley Companies (Scottsbluff)
- Clark Lauritzen
  President, First National Bank of Omaha (Omaha)
- Rodrigo López
  Executive Chairman, AmeriSphere (Omaha)
- Jayne Smith
  Owner, Wortman Enterprises (Aurora)
- Jeff Noordhoek
  CEO, Nelnet (Lincoln)
- TR Raimondo
  Chairman, Behlen Mfg. Co. (Columbus)
- Chris Roth
  President, Reinke Manufacturing Co., Inc. (Deshler)
- Kim Russel
  President and CEO, Bryan Health System (Lincoln)
- Dan Shundoff
  President and CEO, Inteliicom (Kearney)
- Tanya Storer
  Owner, Rocking J Ranch (Whitman)
Advisory Council

- **Pete Ricketts**, Governor, State of Nebraska
- **Hank Bounds**, President, University of Nebraska
- **Wendy Birdsall**, President, Lincoln Chamber of Commerce
- **David Brown**, President & CEO, Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce
- **Dave Rippe**, Director, NE Dept of Economic Development
- **Bryan Slone**, President, Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- **Scott Moore**, Vice President, Union Pacific Corporation
- **Cathy Lang**, State Director, Nebraska Business Development Center
- **Matt Miltenburger**, Chief of Staff, Governor's Office
- **Phil Bakken**, Special Assistant to President, University of Nebraska
Industry Councils provide focus on 16 areas key to the State’s economic success and quality of life, including:

- **Agriculture**, Don Cantrell
- **Banking & Finance**, Jerry Catlett
- **Community Vitality**, Deb McCaslin
- **Education Attainment**, Ken Bird
- **Energy & Natural Resources**, Courtney Dentlinger
- **Entrepreneurship**, Jim Jenkins
- **Healthcare**, Christie Hinrichs and Steve Martin
- **Housing**, Kathryn Mesner
- **Leadership, Diversity & Inclusion**, Carmen Tapio
- **Manufacturing**, Kyle Nixon
- **Mega-Site**, Bill Luttrell
- **Military & Veteran Affairs**, Roger Lempke
- **Taxation & Incentives**, Jim Greisch
- **Technology & Innovation**, Gary Warren
- **Transportation & Infrastructure**, Mike Piernicky
- **Workforce**, Jill Smith
Housing Industry Council

Kathryn Mesner-Chair
President, Mesner Development Co.

Garry Clark-Staff
Executive Director, Greater Fremont Development Council

Andy Colvin
City Administrator, Norfolk

Nate Dodge
President, NP Dodge

Stuart Fox
President, Nebraska State Bank

Sheryl Hiatt
Housing/Field Director, Neb Dept of Econ. Dev.

Giovanni Infante-Still
Business Owner

Quelbin Izaguirre
COO, Neighbor Works Northeast

Tim Keelan
Principal, Hannah Keelan Associates

Tim Kenny-Staff
Executive Director, NIFA

John Madsen
Director, Tri-County Band BOD Member
VP of William Krotter Company

Jennifer McKeone-Staff
Executive Director, Cozad Development Corp

Cliff Mesner
Mesner Development Co.

Mike Morrow
Sales and Engineering, Bonnavilla Homes

Rawnda Pierce
Executive Director, Twin City Development

John Wiechmann
Pres./CEO, Midwest Housing Equity Group
Overview of Housing Issues

Decent, Safe, Affordable Homes are where:
- Good jobs sleep
- Children thrive
- Aging and special needs populations find support

New and Renovated Housing Strengthens:
- Economic base of communities
- Attracts new businesses and employees
- Increases tax base

Current State of Housing in Nebraska suggests:
- Inadequate Supply--Communities across the state looking for new housing
- Affordability Problem--Cost of new housing has outpaced wages
- Sustainability Problem--Housing stock is outdated and in disrepair
Nebraska’s macro-economics are steady to improving.
- Nebraska’s economy outperforms the peer average across multiple economic indicators.

Ask any community what it needs most to thrive and “housing” will be one of the first responses.
- Recent activities are the result of growing recognition by all sectors

There is general agreement that the current cost of housing has outpaced personal income in the state.
- This means that traditional forces will not solve our housing deficiencies.
- With consensus on this issue, the door is now open to develop a realistic “game-changing” plan for successful housing development.
## Weaknesses

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<th>Shortages and Affordability--Nebraska’s housing supply is out of balance</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Supply inadequate-production too low</td>
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<tr>
<td>• New and Existing stock not affordable</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Current stock not sustainable due to high taxes, gentrification, age, etc.</td>
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<th>Inadequate Resources and Uncoordinated Delivery--Opportunities to increase production are not being pursued</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Resources are too limited and overly complex</td>
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<td>• Fees, taxes, and regulations discourage development</td>
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<th>Local Leadership and Community Housing Intelligence—Many communities across the state have little “how to develop housing” expertise</th>
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<td>• Communities view housing development as an “expense” rather than an “investment”</td>
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<td>• Housing “experts” are spread too thin and work in most populated areas</td>
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<th>Current development practices pay little attention to modern demands for public transportation, technology and quality of life amenities</th>
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<td>• Modern housing consumers want modern amenities-think HGTV</td>
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Opportunities

Substantial Public and Private Policies can be changed without legislative action
- Don’t need to totally “reinvent the wheel” just redesign the parts.

New Techniques are available to impact affordability of land use and housing development.
- Progressive changes to zoning for greater density
- Changes to taxation rules to encourage housing development
- Rethink unit design to fit older nonconforming lots

Nebraska can easily be organized into multiple regions that coordinate and collaborate to address housing needs.
- Regional approach to housing development for economies of scale in housing resources, production, and expertise
Housing Need vs. Housing Demand

- Demand is the number of willing buyers/renters able to buy or rent
- Need refers to the need for housing that might be caused by changes in demographics or cultures, family sizes, business expansion, etc.
- Often Nebraska’s housing market is need driven not demand driven
- This makes it hard to attract private investment in housing

Local Regulatory and Taxation Boundaries--Zoning regulations vary dramatically by jurisdiction and are rarely updated to address current circumstances

- Taxation of community targeted housing stifles investment and development

Nebraska has very little history of comprehensive rehabilitation and modernization of single-family units
Goals

Regional Strategies
- With 147 cities and 384 villages, a regional approach to market stabilization through collaborative development provides needed housing expertise and economies of scale.

Permission-less Modernization and Innovation
- Existing programs need to be overhauled to make housing resources efficient for the consumer and cost effective for producers.

Local Leadership and Centralized Technical Assistance
- There are no “one size fits all” solutions but communities need to understand and utilize the tools available for stimulating modern housing policies and development.
Initiatives

Create regional “Build Nebraska” Organizations with full time professional staff and plans for 1000’s of new residences by 2023

Create formal Community Housing Intelligence training with incentivized participation and digital delivery

Create a Neighborhood Homes Investment Act using optional, auctioned state tax credits for specific subsidies - $30,000 tax credit per targeted employee, $5k for six years, to fund a selection of employer incentives.

Create local non-political, self-sustaining, housing organizations
Action Steps

- Strategically encourage design and financial incentives to advance demand for smaller units with higher density, more amenities, and financial structures to lower acquisition costs and devices to preserve affordability over the life of the asset.

- Apply innovative technology to reduce transaction costs for both consumers and producers.

- Revisit tax, fee and regulatory regimes to reduce acquisition complexity, operational risk and development cost.

- Suggest development strategies to support long-term project vitality across economic, energy, amenity, technical and public policy domains.

- Develop a housing and community “Quality of Life and Housing Health” index for planning and resource allocation purposes, to prioritize needs and to measure long term progress.
**Action Steps**

1. Develop “phase-in” increases in property tax valuations for housing rehab projects, subdivision development and spec housing (much like the Nebraska Valuation Incentive Program (VIP) used on historic downtown commercial buildings).

2. Review and modernize every state housing program for today’s needs. Organize working committees to recommend and implement changes to the various government housing programs in order to meet the demands of today’s workforce, families, seniors and special needs populations.

3. Develop an accessible archive of successful Nebraska housing case studies as resources for public and private entities directing housing initiatives and development.

4. Legislate a statewide “abandoned property” cure for title defects that prevent transfer and improvement of vacant and substandard housing.
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