



PROPOSAL FOR A NEW CAMPUS WITH A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

Institution: Metropolitan Community College (MCC)

Facility: Sarpy County Campus

Degrees: Associates Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates, and non-credit offerings

Programs: Various

Institution's Existing Degree(s) in Same or Similar Discipline: All programs are offered at current MCC campuses, centers or sites

Proposed Site/Location: Hwy 50 & 370, Papillion, NE

Proposed Start Date: 2025

DESCRIPTION:

Established in 1974, Metropolitan Community College (MCC) makes higher education affordable and accessible to residents of Dodge, Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington counties. An open-access institution, MCC has quickly grown to be the largest, most diverse public two-year college in Nebraska.

Over its first 50 years, MCC gradually expanded beyond its humble beginnings in a warehouse rental space in west Omaha. By 2014 the college attained its current 170-acre footprint (+/-), which includes three full-service campuses and an array of satellite locations featuring state-of-the-art facilities and equipment. Continued growth, especially in Sarpy County – the fastest growing county in Nebraska – necessitates another campus to serve our community.

BACKGROUND:

MCC engaged Smith Group/JJR to update the 2010 Facilities Long Range Plan. Their assessment projected significant growth in Sarpy County, supporting the College's subsequent purchase of a 146-acre parcel at the intersection of Highways 50 and 370 (Sarpy County) in 2015. The assessment is attached to this document and incorporated by reference.

Assessment predictions proved accurate as new development began locating in Sarpy County's geographically strategic corridors, leading to 14% (+) population growth between 2016 and 2024. Much of this new growth occurred near the parcel purchased by MCC, further supporting the Board of Governors' 2023 decision to adopt a four-campus model, setting the Sarpy County Campus development in motion (resolution attached).

Once established, the Sarpy County Campus has potential to meet numerous educational and community needs within this segment of MCC's service area. Local industry partners have already engaged MCC and requested increased workforce training. Likewise, nearby K-12 school districts continue to leverage MCC partnerships that provide education for college and career readiness. Meanwhile, current MCC students seek learning experiences connecting them with colleagues in their chosen and related career fields. MCC's Sarpy County Campus will bring these partners together to better serve the evolving needs of the community.

COMMISSION RULES:

Rule 10 requires any institution intending to enter into a long-term commitment for an off-campus facility to seek Commission approval. Need and demand are the criteria for the request; avoiding unnecessary duplication and insuring adequacy of resources; and consistency with the *Comprehensive Statewide Plan*. The approval of this long-term commitment makes no judgment regarding acquisition, construction, operations or maintenance costs proposed at this campus. Current costs are expected to be below \$2M and should not require a review by the Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee.

REVIEW CRITERIA:

I. Centrality to Role and Mission

Consistent with Institutional Role and Mission? YES NO

Consistent with *Statewide Comprehensive Plan*? YES NO

“Community colleges provide educational options for students seeking career training or transfer to a four-year institution. The education program may culminate in an applied technology associate degree, diploma, or certificate, or an associate of arts or associate of science degree from an academic transfer program. The community colleges are student-centered, open-access institutions primarily devoted to quality instruction and public service. They provide counseling and other student services intended to promote the success of a diverse student population, particularly to those who have been traditionally underserved in other educational settings. Students often attend community colleges for purposes other than to obtain a degree, such as for specific job-related training for career advancement.”

– Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Post-Secondary Education

MCC’s four county service area is the most densely populated region of the state, including the intersection of Omaha proper and the communities of Sarpy County. Over 850,000 people reside in and contribute to the rapidly growing development of this area. It is imperative that the MCC respond to the growing needs of this community within its four-county service area.

II. Evidence of Need and Demand for the Sarpy County Campus

Demonstrated Need and Demand for the Campus

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The development of this campus location is driven by both growing population demographics and the changing face of post-secondary education in Nebraska.

Population Changes:

The Highway 370 corridor from Bellevue through Gretna has consistently seen the largest contiguous expansion in the state of Nebraska. Census changes from 2010 to 2020 show the following:

- Bellevue is the #3 largest city with a 28% rate of growth over this period;
- Papillion is the #9 largest city in Nebraska with a 27.9% rate of growth; and
- Gretna is the #21 largest city with a 14.5% rate of growth.
- 60% of the population is between the ages of 18-65; 95% of these people are high school graduates, and 41% have a bachelor degree or higher.

Primary employers in this area include:

- Offutt Air Force Base
- PayPal
- Werner Enterprises
- CLAAS
- Infogroup
- Hillcrest Health Services
- Public school districts

These and other employers require educational training in the following sectors: Healthcare and social assistance, retail/trade, scientific and technical services, finance and insurance, manufacturing, warehousing/logistics and construction. Data updated in 2014 points to gaps in access to MCC's educational offerings due to the quickly growing populations in Sarpy County that surpass MCC's service capacity at existing locations.

There are eight public high schools within ten miles of the Sarpy Campus, and the farthest away is accessible with a 20-minute drive time:

High School	Distance from new campus in miles	Average drive time in minutes
Platteview	7	10
Papillion La Vista	8.7	16
Papillion La Vista South	4	8
Gretna East	6	12
Gretna	8	15
Millard West	10	20
Millard South	7	15
Ralston	10	18

High School Dual Enrollment has seen a headcount increase of 139% in comparing 2018-19 enrollment data with 2023-24.

Data Chart below is reflective of all High School dual enrollment and modalities:

Years	Unduplicated Headcount	Total Credit Hours
2018-19	3,618	47,974.5
2023-24	8,669	113,902.5

Looking solely at courses *taught in a high school* (not on an MCC campus or MCC online) the increase is 116% in comparing 2018-19 enrollment data to 2023-24.

Data Chart below is reflective of High School dual enrollment on an MCC campus or MCC online (excludes data for courses delivered at a high school):

Years	Unduplicated Headcount	Total Credit Hours
2018-19	990	18,235
2023-24	2,148	36,402.5

The Sarpy County Campus has the potential for many partnerships to create learning opportunities. The property size and proximity to burgeoning business and industry supports collaboration of business and education. Potential partnerships include:

- First Responder programs that address utility outages, fire response, emergency medical training, and “911” needs
- Hospitality Management
- Logistics and Trucking Training – electric trucks, advanced diesel, biofuels, collision repair for trucks, and logistics/carrier management systems
- Partnerships that enhance the quality of the student experience, such as student housing, childcare, healthcare, and other quality commercial amenities.

III. Increasing Educational Needs in Nebraska

The success MCC demonstrates with its newest facilities shows that both industry and higher education involvement is necessary in the delivery of topical, hands-on career-readiness training. MCC facilities are required to meet training needs of the most in-demand skills for local industries and are fundamental to long-term economic growth in Nebraska. The Sarpy County Campus will not only help the College become more effective delivering education but will demonstrate the resilience required to stay at the forefront of community education and training.

MCC’s relationships with companies like Toyota, Lozier, Syngenta, and Merck, demonstrate the increasing demand for high quality programs that attract students from a broad region. As unemployment remains historically low across the state, these industry partners are looking for innovative ways to grow their workforce and turning to higher education for solutions. MCC continues to grow formal earn ‘n’ learn partnerships that allow students to balance school and work while entering the workforce in a high wage, high demand, high tech career field. In the Skilled and Technical Sciences alone, over 300 students and 30+ employers are actively engaged in supporting student’s education while providing them full or part-time employment.

As the skillsets in the workforce continue to change and as companies grow to remain competitive, higher-ed must also continue to evolve. Today, people have realized the value of being a lifelong learner and have embraced the reality that educational opportunities are not simply one chapter in their life, but a collection of chapters as they grow in their careers. The advancement of technology allows higher-ed to meet the demands of the student, offering educational opportunities when and where the student needs them. Whether it be online, evening, weekend, or some form of hybrid option, students can now learn at their own pace and time. This ability to maximize hands-on time on campus while using technology gives today’s student the much-needed work/life balance.

MCC leadership views the increased digitization of all industries, including the education sector, as requiring a willingness to look deeply at current practices and programs while visioning for future changes needed to help the larger Omaha and Sarpy County communities sustain current progress.

In addition to meeting the requests of the lifelong learner, the ability to offer technical training and hands-on learning demands to high school students kickstarts their career

path, but requires modern facilities for this effort.

Data on enrollment in career and technical academies mirrors the growth seen in high school dual enrollment programs referenced in *Section II* above, increasing 55% between 2018 – 2024:

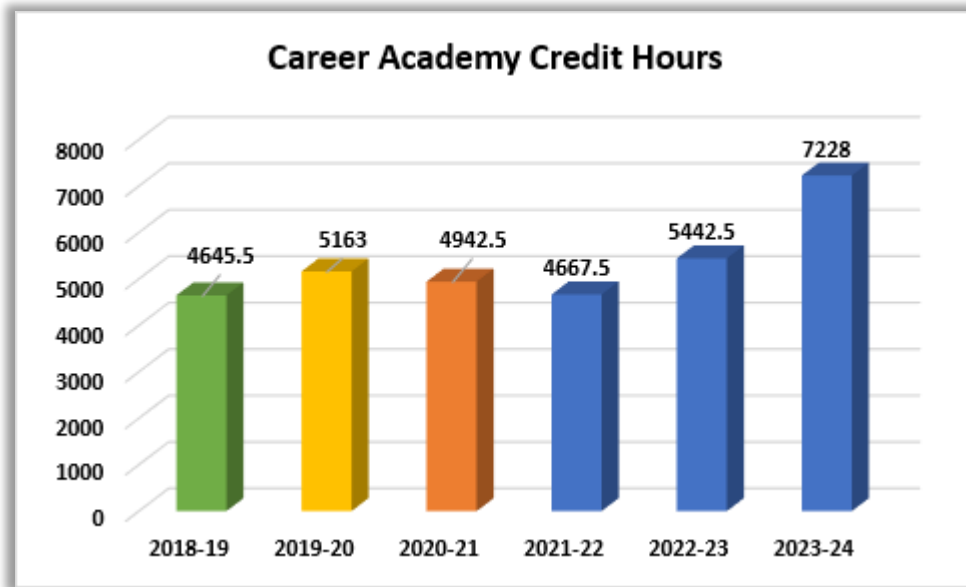


Figure 1: Data on MCC High School Career Academies, 2018 - 2024

The demand for career and technical training requires specialized equipment and labs. Most high schools do not have access to the state-of-the-art equipment needed to offer relevant technical training across a wide range of programs. However, in partnership with MCC, high schools like Blair and Fremont have demonstrated that joint facilities can serve the needs of both youth and adults. For example, Fremont High School recently collaborated with MCC to open a new Career and Technical Education Center that addresses the growing need for diversified career education and dual credit opportunities. The center is open to high school students, community members, and local industries to explore and train in high needs areas such as welding, construction, transportation, computer aided design/manufacturing, robotics/automation and health occupations.

The Sarpy County Campus location could provide similar services to surrounding area high schools and increase access to needed equipment and labs. This type of expansion would also alleviate the need for duplicate programs at each of the area high schools, in turn reducing the cost of these often-high-cost programs.

IV. Adequacy of Resources

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With acknowledgement from the Coordinating Commission, MCC purchased the Sarpy County property in 2015 using existing capital reserves. Until recently, the College has maintained the land's existing farm production keeping it in a taxable status contributing to Nebraska's economy through tax receipts. Upkeep of the property is the responsibility of the lease holder, not the College nor its service area stakeholders. Maintenance costs since purchase have been nearly \$0.

As the College completed the latest iteration of its facilities long-range plan, MCC concluded leasing arrangements, placing the Sarpy County property back into tax-exempt status. The property is now planted with a sustainable grass mix.

The entire property lies within Papillion's city limits, the authority having jurisdiction. MCC is presently obtaining zoning changes from AG (agricultural) to CC (commercial and civic use), designating areas for infrastructure, and dividing the property into streets and lots for future development.

The working schedule has this zoning and platting process slated for completion in late 2024. Currently the College is working on over-lot grading efforts to prepare for future roads, infrastructure work, and development.

Conversations with Coordinating Commission staff concerning initial capital improvements have indicated that site grading, roads, and preliminary infrastructure should be budgeted between \$10,000,000 and \$12,500,000. These costs have been included in the College's five-year Capital Budget, approved by our Board of Governors in September 2024, and will require future Coordinating Commission approval prior to final execution of work.

V. Avoidance of Unnecessary Duplication

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MCC's Board of Governors endorsed a forward-thinking Facilities Long Range Plan in 2023, which addresses ways to maximize the entire college footprint by fostering areas of specialization, while avoiding duplication across the four-county service area. Additionally, the Board of Governors approved use of the Sarpy County land as a fourth campus location for our service area to be named the Sarpy County Campus.

The following map shows the locations of existing MCC campuses and centers and the following link provides detail about these locations:

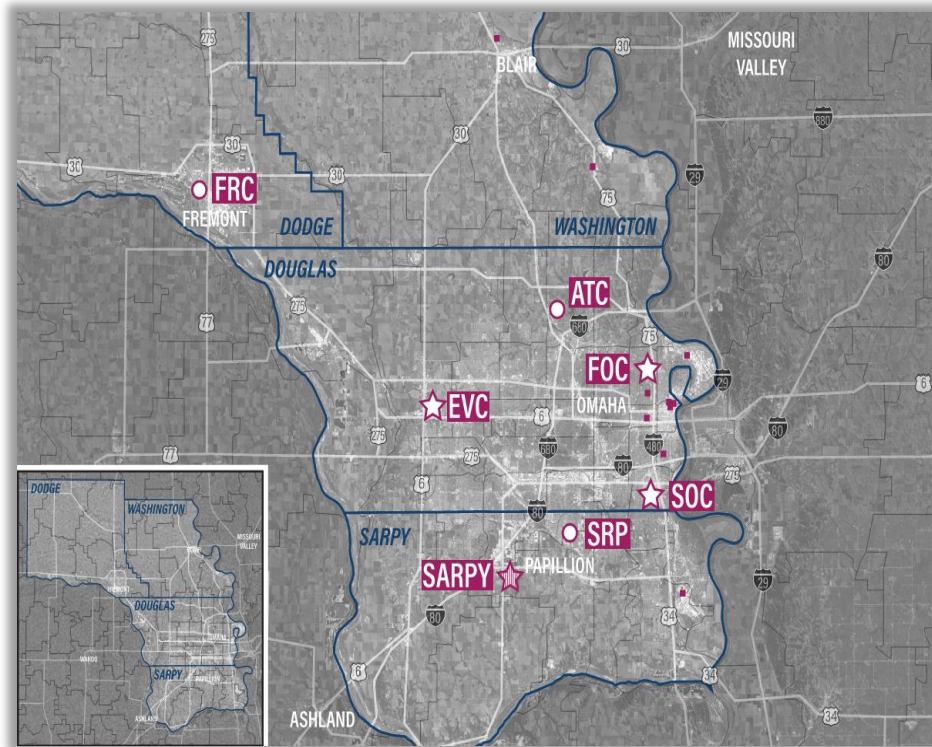


Figure 2: Source: <https://www.mccneb.edu/About-MCC-Nebraska/MCC-Locations>

The closest locations to the proposed Sarpy County Campus are the Elkhorn Valley Campus (EVC) at 204th and Dodge Street, the Sarpy Center located at 93rd and Giles in La Vista, and the South Omaha Campus (SOC) located near 30th and Q Streets.

EVC is an approximately 30-minute, 15-mile drive from the proposed new Sarpy County Campus. Programs currently offered at EVC include Design, Multimedia, English, Math, and (soon) Biotechnology programs. While having space for building expansion, current property zoning and topography limit campus expansion. These restrictions also limit the campus to single entrance and exit onto 204th Street.

Sarpy Center is a 15-minute, 7.5-mile drive from the Sarpy County Campus site. The recently approved Facilities Long Range Plan, envisioned a new focus for the Sarpy Center for K-12 programming, adult education, and non-credit programming. Part of a condominium association with the City of La Vista, this property's development potential is limited.

SOC is approximately the same distance from the Sarpy County Campus as the EVC location with a slightly shorter driving time of 25 minutes when utilizing Interstate 80.

Expansion at the SOC was completed in 2021, leaving limited options for future growth at that location.

VI. Consistency with the Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education

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Nebraska’s Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education is a call for action to all institutions of higher education to face forces such as global competition, technological innovation, and social change. The Sarpy County Campus of MCC desires to meet this challenge by offering Nebraskans an educational opportunity relevant and applicable for the next generation of learners. Outlined in the statewide plan are seven chapters/areas that MCC leadership has considered while planning for the Sarpy County Campus expansion.

By making education more accessible to large segments of Nebraska’s total population, MCC’s Sarpy County Campus supports the state’s educational attainment goal outlined in Chapter 1 that at least seventy percent of 25-to-34-year-old Nebraskans have a degree, certificate, diploma, or other postsecondary or industry-recognized credential with economic value by 2030. (*Legislative Resolution 335, 107th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2022*) The physical location of the new campus not only places educational opportunities directly in the center of the fastest growing county in the state, it also allows for the expansion for statewide accessibility through online learning and access to state-of-the-art facilities to meet the demands of today’s students and workforce needs.

Meeting the educational needs of students begins with keeping the net price of higher education affordable for students. MCC is dedicated to leveraging industry partnerships, philanthropic gifts, and continuing a focus of conservative internal budget oversight to continue to offer students relevant educational experiences at an affordable price. MCC has a history of success as we have expanded and invested over \$100 million in new facilities and programs dedicated to the construction, manufacturing, and transportation industries without an impactful increase in tuition in fees. MCC remains the most affordable higher educational institution in the state at \$70/credit hour, with a growing number of students graduating with little to no debt thanks in part due to the growing earn ‘n’ learn programs and increased scholarship dollars from the philanthropic community.

The comprehensive plan sets the ultimate goal to provide graduates the skills, knowledge, and critical thinking abilities they will need to meet their personal and career goals. The Sarpy County Campus desires to lead this effort by exposing students to courses and opportunities that challenge their minds and motivates them to learn, while preparing them for the reality of today’s workforce and society as set forth in Chapter 2.

The major statewide goal addresses the need for workforce development. Specifically, the goal calls on higher education in Nebraska to provide training for industry to help sustain a knowledgeable and skilled workforce in both rural and urban areas. The campus has the potential for many partnerships with business and industry to create learning opportunities. Its size and proximity to local, regional, and global businesses create relevant learning opportunities to meet this goal. There is ample space to explore partnerships to develop student support structures.

Potential districts could include the following:

- Hospitality Management
- Logistics and Trucking Training Center (Electric trucks, advanced diesel, biofuels,

- collision repair for trucks, and logistics/carrier management systems)
- Student housing, childcare, and healthcare
- Other quality commercial amenities of convenience

Furthermore, this campus allows Nebraska students to become skilled graduates by providing student centered support services and opportunities for hands-on participation. The intended goals meet state needs for workforce development and research and technology transfer.

MCC continues to focus on K-12 partnerships as put forth by the Comprehensive Statewide Plan. As outlined earlier in the document, dual enrollment has increased by 55% over the past six years providing countless opportunities for students to kickstart their career, earn transfer credit, or explore careers of interest. The Sarpy County Campus looks to expand on these opportunities and lean on models that have been successful in the past. For example, partnering with schools to embed MCC instructors to fill the shortage of CTE instructors across the state has helped both K-12 districts, communities, and students prepare for post-secondary education. The location of the new campus and its proximity to large school districts such as Papillion La Vista brings a comprehensive approach and makes higher education accessible to all. This collaborative partnership with districts has also had a positive impact on K-12 teachers, many of whom have become adjunct instructors and/or earned industry certifications to better prepare them for the classroom.

Perhaps most relevant in MCC's request to build out a fourth campus is the major statewide goal pertaining to statewide facilities plan. Chapter 6 of the plan states:

Nebraskans will advocate a physical environment for each of the state's postsecondary institutions that; supports its role and mission; is well utilized and effectively accommodates space needs; is safe, accessible, cost effective, and well maintained; and is sufficiently flexible to adapt to future changes in programs and technologies.

The Sarpy County Campus is MCC's first opportunity to develop a college campus that is built for today's needs while remaining flexible to the ever-changing needs of training and educational demands of the workforce. Having recently completed our Facilities Long Range Plan, MCC has identified the largest opportunities for impact centered around dual enrollment, online/hybrid learning, and industry partnerships. By leveraging a variety of funding sources, including but not limited to state and local taxes; federal grants; tuition; philanthropic; and industry partnership dollars, the Sarpy County Campus meets Nebraska's educational need to maintain accountable and effective educational institutions, strengthens existing partnerships, and provides additional opportunities for all.