

BRIEFING NOTES

NAME OF GROUP:	PLANNING COMMISSION
DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:	Wednesday, May 11, 2016, 11:00 a.m., Bill Luxford Studio, Room 113, County-City Building, 555 South 10 th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.
MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:	Michael Cornelius, Maja Harris, Chris Hove, Jeanelle Lust, Dennis Scheer, Lynn Sunderman and Ken Weber; (Cathy Beecham and Tracy Corr absent).
OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:	David Cary, Paul Barnes, Mike Brienzo, Brandon Garrett, Kellee Van Bruggen, Stacey Groshong Hageman and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Dept., representatives from various departments involved in the CIP process and other interested parties.
STATED PURPOSE:	Briefing on “FY 2016/17-2021/22 Capital Improvement Program (CIP), FY 2017-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the 2016 Community Indicators Report)” by Planning staff.

Chair Chris Hove called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the back of the room.

David Cary welcomed everyone. He noted that representatives from the City and County are present today. The documents are now online for review.

2016 Lincoln/Lancaster County Community Indicators Report

Brandon Garrett stated that there are 34 indicators in the report. A snapshot of the indicators shows there were 306,468 people in Lancaster County as of July, 2015. We should reach a population of 300,000 for Lincoln around the year 2021. There has been a steady population increase of approximately 3,000 people a year since 2001. There is an ample supply of approved lots and Tier 1 land for future dwelling units, and a reviving economy shows increased personal income, a decreased unemployment rate and increased building activity. The Census Bureau will release their latest estimates in a few weeks for the City of Lincoln. The vast majority of the population increase, 60.9 percent, is due to natural change. A 39.1 percent increase since 2000 is due to migration, both within the State of Nebraska, U.S. and international. Lancaster County is becoming more diverse. The White, not Hispanic population is at 84.34 percent, versus 88.4 percent in 2000. We also look at Lincoln Public Schools (LPS). Their own census shows a population of 67.7 percent White, not Hispanic, which is lower than the county.

We have experienced an increase in building activity. This indicates a reviving economy. Building activity within the three mile of Lincoln and Lancaster County is decreasing. For housing trends, one of the biggest stories is the major boom in apartment units. There were 3,864 multi-family units built from 2010-2015. We will continue to track the trends. There are 14,391 units in some form of approval in Tier 1, which translates to about a ten year supply. There was recently an article in the Lincoln Journal Star about the home price boom. Looking at the data, the ratio of income to housing price of existing homes is more affordable in Lincoln. There is increased activity in the downtown area.

Regarding employment, there were 16,436 jobs added in Lancaster County from 2000 to 2014. Total employment increased by about 1.6 percent per year during that same time period.

Harris questioned if there is any data showing what number of people are holding two or more jobs. Garrett replied that data is not in the Indicators Report, but he believes it is possible to get ahold of. He hears about that topic a lot. [As a follow up to this question, staff conducted some research and discovered that 14.2% of the workforce, or 22,460 individuals, are working two or more jobs in Lancaster County.]

Garrett continued that the business and commerce sectors are increasing at about 1 percent per year since 2004. The industrial section has increased 8.1 percent since 2010. A lot of the charts in the Indicators Report show a recovery period. He believes a part of this is a recovery for making up what was lost during the recession.

Regarding economic indicators, Lancaster County has a very educated labor force. In 2014, 93.6 percent of Lancaster County residents over 18 had a high school diploma or higher. Lancaster County ranks above the U.S. and Nebraska. Sales tax and lodging tax collected in 2014-15 was higher than in 2013-14. Lodging tax revenue increased by 8.1 percent.

In the environment section, we continue to preserve floodplain areas. 75 acres of conservation easements were added in 2015. There has been a reduction in per capita waste for a time period, but in recent years there has been an uptick. Gene Hanlon of the City Recycling Dept. believes part of that was storm debris from last year, along with a lot of construction. Storms last year contributed to wet carpet, damaged roof shingles and other items that would need to be removed and disposed of. Another way to explain this is that it is hard to get a hold of private recycling data. It can be a difficult indicator to tie down. Residential water consumption is an interesting trend. The number of customers is increasing, but the residential consumption seems to be averaging to a lower rate. He believes that is mainly explained by more efficient appliances.

The City of Lincoln has over 87,000 street trees that the City is responsible for. Last year, the City replaced more trees than were removed. It will be interesting to see how this trend continues with the upcoming Emerald Ash Borer. We try to develop neighborhoods with neighborhood parks. 82 percent of homes are located within one half mile of a neighborhood park.

StarTran ridership was at 2.4 million in 2015. This was the second highest level of ridership in the recording period. Similar to neighborhood parks, over 95 percent of residences are within one mile of a trail. Proximity of trail facilities to homes is an indicator of accessibility. Regarding modes of travel, 19.2 percent of work trips used alternative modes in 2014. In 1980, that number was over 30 percent. Since 2000, it has stabilized around eighteen to twenty percent. Mean travel time has increased seventeen percent since 1980. Lincoln has increased in size by fifty four percent in that time. Our daily vehicle miles traveled increased 3.6 percent per year from 1985 to 2000. This rate decreased to 0.88 percent from 2000 to 2015. The vehicle crash rate has been steadily decreasing since 1985. The population is increasing, so a decrease in the crash rate is a positive thing.

Hove wondered what is considered an approved residential lot. Garrett replied there are different ways we break that down. An annual residential land inventory is published. One level has an approved preliminary plan. Another level is final plats and administrative approvals. Hove has heard that there is an ample supply of approved lots. He is also hearing there is a large demand for lots that are not developed. Garrett stated that there is a supply of approved lots that have not been built on. Most of these are not final platted. Staff has noticed that final plats are smaller post-recession, than pre-recession.

Weber inquired why staff believes the plat requests are smaller. Garrett would speculate it is more conservative to lay out less lots. Perhaps this is due to banking practices or tax purposes. It might also be a timing issue. Cary believes lending practices have come into play post-recession. It is a tighter process. You will see with the CIP, we are in the process of talking about getting more land identified for near term development. This will allow for ample land available and city infrastructure to go with it, to have more land open up. On our end, the supply is large. In the long range for the bigger picture, we are trying to have those lots available.

Garrett noted that the residential land inventory is on the Planning Dept. webpage. It is a good snapshot of where we are with lots.

Harris would like staff to talk about affordable housing. There are a lot of statistics, but she wants to know how this relates to affordable housing and the population of people who need it. Garrett believes what we have heard from anecdotal evidence, affordability has always been a concern. There is only so much we can do from this end. We see these trends going up. He thinks we need to keep an eye on it. Existing homes have been fairly stable until recently. Harris believes it needs to be looked at two prong; how much are prices increasing and per capita income. Garrett stated that is another measure we are looking at. Harris asked what is the magical percentage. Garrett stated that in comparing ourselves to the national average, it informs us how we are doing. He thinks this is a way to measure ourselves against other areas. This data is difficult to get a hold of. Our local data came from Lincoln Realtors Association. We are doing better than the Midwest average.

FY 2016/17-2021/22 Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Kellee Van Bruggen stated that lot of people have been working hard on this for six to ten months. City staff from different departments are present today if there are questions. This process started in August, 2015. Then we moved into the distribution of CIP materials to the departments. In February, 2016, departments submitted their requests and presentations were made to the Capital Improvement Advisory Committee (CIAC). Now we have the Planning Commission version created for review. As we move forward, May 25, 2016, will be the public hearing at Planning Commission. The first two years of the CIP move forward to the City Council for the budget. This is a six year program and two year budget cycle. We also want to make sure the projects are in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. There is a priority rating. Departments are asked to look at their projects and rate them. There is outcome based budgeting to take into consideration as well. Existing facilities are looked at. Projects are prioritized. The CIAC went through the projects and made comments. The CIAC is comprised of the Mayor, staff from the Mayor's office, Planning Dept., Public Works and Finance Dept. We are asking the Planning Commission to review capital requests to determine the level of conformity. Comments will then be forwarded to the CIAC, then on to the City Council.

The project summary report show if projects are in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan, generally conforms with the plan, are not in the plan, or not in conformance with the plan. Other factors are explicit reference in the plan, plan intent, the location, project timing and definition and description.

The FIRE (Future Infrastructure Request Evaluation) process is to use available water and wastewater funds for qualified and selected growth projects. Developers and owners of property in Tier 1, Priority B and C areas were contacted in August, 2015. We received several responses. Once we received proposals, city staff evaluated the requests. One proposal near 90th St. and O St. is already supported in the CIP. Two or three were road projects, requests that could not be funded and a proposal to serve Trinity Oaks was not supported at this time.

Paul Barnes will review some of the department highlights. For libraries, replacement of the downtown library will be a significant project. This will be a new headquarters, paid for with a general obligation bond scheduled in year two. With that bond, there would be some upgrades made to the other branch libraries. Lincoln City Libraries noted they had other critical projects that need to be done. With the general revenue available, the South Branch parking lot is in dire need to repair, along with the Bethany Branch roof and Gere HVAC.

Hove inquired if the library would need a vote of the public. Cary replied this would involve a public vote for a bond.

Barnes continued with Lincoln Electric System (LES). They are included in the CIP, but they follow a separate budget cycle. There are a couple of larger projects. The Laramie River Station improvements are included in the program. The LES Operations Center is included, which is a new facility on the edge of the community. It is a very big program.

For Parks and Recreation, the Emerald Ash Borer is a new project added to the CIP. At this time, we are not aware that it is in Nebraska, but we know it is around us and it is coming. The impact on treatment and recovery could be upwards of 30 million dollars over many years. There are two other general obligation bonds in the entire CIP program that would tag onto a Watershed Management bond request. This would go out for a vote. Another general obligation bond is needed in year four for parks to accomplish all the projects shown in their program.

Public Safety is a combination of Lincoln Police Dept. (LPD) and Lincoln Fire and Rescue (LFR). The public safety group has a general obligation bond request in year six that would include new fire station, as well as a new maintenance garage for LPD. That would likely be a combined bond. The approved quarter cent sales tax increase is now being used to fund some fire stations and a LPD radio system upgrade.

Urban Development section includes parking meters. They are looking at perhaps combining parking meter units. A new project is the parking operations command center, which would be a new way to go towards a more automated system. It is proposed in existing space, in the 15th St. and Q St. vicinity. There is also a new public parking garage. The location has not been nailed down at this time. Downtown public improvements are included, including replace street trees and other elements. Part of this includes Business Improvement Districts (BID) for similar improvements across the city.

Broadband Infrastructure will replace, update and expand infrastructure for public and private use.

Solid Waste Operations proposes gas system expansion and improvements for production of electrical energy. They would like to make improvements to recycling drop-off sites, as well as create new sites. They are also doing improvements to the Bluff Road facility.

Regarding StarTran, they are proposing a biogas renewable fueling station in years one and two. This is being coordinated with Wastewater. This would use biogas that is generated at the Theresa Street wastewater treatment facility and make it for use in the city buses and vehicles. There is also a project to replace some buses and handivans. Another big project is the proposed Multi Modal Center. There has been discussion of a site for this project but no decision.

Street Maintenance and Operations are doing quite a few projects to existing facilities, such as the brine production facility at 3200 Baldwin Ave. This is a request to update and improve the facility to help be more proactive and efficient.

Wastewater foresees a five percent rate increase, assumed in years one through six. Their emphasis is on meeting developer obligations and maintaining the existing system with some new development opportunities. They are looking at where the growth areas should develop next. The Biogas Renewable Fueling Station is in years one through four. As previously stated, this is a coordinated project with StarTran.

Barnes pointed out the Stevens Creek trunk sewer on a map. There is a request to extend this. They would coordinate with the sub-basin extensions, to serve areas outside of city limits. A lot of commercial area hasn't developed yet, but is approved to move forward. This would open more of this area for residential growth.

For Water Supply and Distribution, they propose a five percent rate increase assumed in years one through six. They also place emphasis on meeting developer obligations and maintain the system with some new economic development opportunities funded.

Lust remembers a long time ago, a presentation on how Lincoln needs another water supply. She inquired if that is any part of the future plan. Barnes replied there is a project that addresses a new water source. Donna Garden from Public Works added they will start looking at funding mechanisms to find another site.

Barnes continued that for Watershed Management, general obligation bonds go out for a public vote in years two and five to provide funding for projects, stream stabilization and water master plans. There is increased cooperation with Parks and Recreation.

Streets and Highways notes a residential street rehabilitation program that is funded with 16.9 million dollars. It includes a base level of one million dollars for sidewalk maintenance, and repair in all years of the program. It also includes a pedestrian and bicycle capital program in years one through six. The roadway and bridge rehab program is funded with approx. 40.5 million dollars.

There is a CIP viewer online, which is currently being updated. It will be available online through the Planning website. This is something we are looking at enhancing in the future to make the process more transparent and make information more readily available. The CIP document is available online. May 25, 2016, is the public hearing before Planning Commission to determine conformity. It is then forwarded to the CIAC. Then it will go on to the City Council to be adopted with the city budget (first two years).

FY 2017-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Mike Brienzo stated that the TIP is a document that the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) puts together. The MPO is the official designation for oversight of Federal funding activities. TIP projects funded with Federal dollars and those of regional significance are

listed in the CIP as well. We coordinate the call for projects within Lincoln and Lancaster County. We coordinate with adjacent counties as well. It is a four year schedule of projects. The CIP is six years, with the first two years of obligated funding. TIP funds are obligated for four years. It must be a fiscally constrained document. Funds must be readily available. Projects must come from the MPO Long Range Transportation Plan. It is developed by the MPO Technical Committee, in coordination with Nebraska Dept. of Roads (NDOR), Lancaster County Engineer, Lincoln Public Works and Utilities, Lincoln Airport Authority, Parks & Recreation, Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (LPSNRD) and others. This must go through public review. The TIP is coordinated with the County and State program. The State TIP is being developed now. This must be updated annually. MPO staff develops the document. The Technical Committee reviews it. Planning Commission makes a recommendation on it. The document goes back to Technical Committee to see if any adjustments need to be made. The document then goes on to Officials Committee. The Mayor as Executive Officer for all MPO functions is the final approval.

The types of projects you will see are a little different from the CIP. These consist of capital improvement projects, along with major maintenance, resurfacing and rehabilitation projects. There are also Intelligent Transportation System projects. The major function of these is communication. This has taken on a new role lately with innovation in equipment. Traffic operations and management programs, safety and operation improvement programs and alternative transportation and enhancement projects such as bike, pedestrian and trail, and the vanpool program are all projects.

The State section lists fourteen projects. Most are rehabilitation and maintenance. The South Beltway is a State project. It is in the city CIP as well. The Streets and Highways map shows citywide projects. East Beltway Corridor Protection is shown. Funds are set aside for a future project. The Railroad Transportation Safety District (RTSD) has a project for 33rd St. and south of Cornhusker Hwy. The idea is to eliminate the at-grade crossing. It is now in a study phase. Ped, Bike and Trails section shows five projects. Lincoln Bike Share is listed. It is moving forward and the City hopes to have it in place next spring. Section 5311 is vanpool. The State is putting together this project using CMAQ funds. That is entirely a state program.

The CIP will be reviewed on May 19, 2016 by the Technical Committee. It will have public hearing at Planning Commission on May 25, 2016. June 2, 2016, it will appear at Technical Committee for any adjustments that need to be made. June 16, 2016 will be the Officials Committee. The Mayor will sign off as Executive Officer and in July, 2016, the MPO submits the TIP for inclusion into the State TIP. The federal fiscal year begins on October 1, 2016. The NDOR holds a review of the State TIP and all MPO's then submit their program to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA). October 1, 2016, the final TIP goes into effect.

Harris inquired about the 10th Street Salt Creek Bridge. Brienzo stated that funds have already been set aside for that. It will be a major project. It will be widened, as well as pedestrian facilities built. Cary added there will be a connection to the trail as well.

Quiz via Kahoot

Question: The County has experienced a steady population increase of over ___ a year since 2001

Answer: 3,000

Question: What percentage of LPS students are white, not Hispanic?

Answer: 67.7 percent

Question: How many multi-family units were built from 2010 – 2015?

Answer: 3,800

Question: How often is the CIP updated?

Answer: Every two years

Question: In Lincoln, a transportation system refers only to highways and streets?

Answer: False

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.