

BRIEFING NOTES

NAME OF GROUP: PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Wednesday, March 16, 2016, 11:30 a.m., Bill Luxford Studio, Room 113, County-City Building, 555 South 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Maja Harris, Chris Hove, Jeanelle Lust, Dennis Scheer and Lynn Sunderman; (Cathy Beecham, Michael Cornelius, Tracy Corr and Ken Weber absent).

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: David Cary, Paul Barnes, Mike Brienzo, Kellee Van Bruggen, Stacey Groshong-Hageman, Paul Barnes and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Jenny Young of Felsburg Holt & Ullevig; Sara Hartzell of Parks & Recreation; Brenda Lilley of County Engineer; and Kyle Fischer with the Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development.

STATED PURPOSE: Briefing on **“2040 Long Range Transportation Plan Update”** 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.

Jenny Young stated that she would like to talk about the prioritization process. She would also like to get input on weighting the goals and project categories. She handed out a summary of the public meeting that happened February 8, 2016 at Culler Middle School. The primary purpose was to convey the importance of the LRTP. Information of the current and future transportation system was available. 33 people signed in at the open house. Most people stayed for quite a while and seemed to be quite engaged. She believes they appreciated the opportunity to learn and provide input. There were stations on “Why Transportation Planning is Important”, “Vision and Goals”, “Current and Future Needs”, “Love/Change Exercise” and “Issues and Opportunities”. The goal priority that was noted most important by attendees was the livability and travel choice, followed by maintenance and then safety and security. This was a little different compared to the focus groups. In doing the Love/Change Exercise, we heard a lot of love for the N Street Protected Bike Lane, the trail system and bus/bike options. For the change, people would like to see the signal timing changed, alternative transportation, set bike/walk goals, better bus service, balanced transportation and identify rail lines for future passenger/commuter rail.

There was a survey that 20 people filled out. The first question was “What travel modes do you use on a regular basis?” The highest answer was a personal vehicle. Question two was: “How would you rate the ease of traveling?” She found it interesting that car and bike were rated on

the higher end. They also asked for the three most significant transportation challenges in the next 25 years. The highest was aging and deteriorating infrastructure.

Harris wondered why travel by car is not reaching the highest ease. She wonders if the expectation is too great for stopping too much. Young was surprised to see by car and by bike were both rated the same. She suspects Harris has hit on the answer. Perhaps there is a mindset that travel isn't as easy as it used to be. This gives a little understanding. Hove added that he believes ease of travel is widely defined. It could be potholes as well as driving time.

Young continued that there is more detailed information in the summary that she handed out. The last page shows some comments that were given at the open house.

Young continued with the project prioritization process. This is the bigger picture of where we are headed and how this will be used. The first step is to identify projects. The sources of projects come from the 2011 adopted LRTP. There is a list of projects. Some have been completed, many have not. We have also developed the travel demand model. We want to talk about how we prioritize the projects. Two main categories are roadway and trail projects. Understanding all the funding sources and restrictions is the next step. The next step is resource allocation. The way this worked previously was to look at the pool of money and identify the different types of projects. Those are all treated as a set aside. What remains for roadway and trails capital projects will be prioritized. The money that is expected over the next 25 years will allow us to develop a fiscally constrained plan.

Seven transportation goals are the basis for the performance measures and evaluation of projects. There is a scoring committee. This is a subset of the LRTP Oversight Committee that will go through and rank the projects. We are trying to keep it as subjective as possible and will present a scoring packet based on the data collected. There is a series of questions we ask. Each of the goals will have a weighted number. The scoring committee will evaluate each project. The questions are a little different for roadway versus trail projects.

Hove inquired if roadway projects are maintenance or expansion. Young replied there are no stand-alone maintenance projects. Cary added that there is a line item for maintenance in general. Our street capital program exists today. This is for capital projects, widening, etc. Hove questioned how maintenance is addressed in this. Young stated that if this were with regard to a capital project, if the project happens to be on a stretch of road that is in poor shape, the road would be improved. Cary noted there is a lot of data that is available to the LRTP Oversight Committee. The committee could recognize that the road is in poor shape and take that into consideration. Young noted that the weight for the project would stay the same. Harris asked if this translates into dollars. Young replied no. Cary added this is already built into the plan. Scheer understands that this exercise rates the goals and weighs them against each other. Young replied that is correct.

Young explained how project scoring occurs. Each project is rated on maintenance; mobility and system reliability; livability and travel choice; safety and security; economic vitality; environmental sustainability; and funding and cost effectiveness. We are not doing a strict cost/benefit calculation. We want the scoring committee to look how the benefits compare to the cost.

Harris thinks this is more of a value judgement. Cary believes this will give information to help determine what these items mean to the system, based on a general feel.

Harris wondered if the questions are the same for trail projects. Young replied that the trail questions are maintenance; mobility and system reliability; livability and travel choice; safety and security; economic vitality; environmental sustainability; and funding and cost effectiveness.

Young continued that the goal priorities of the focus groups were varied. Cary stated that Commissioner's input today will add to the process for the committee to get into the details of scoring. Trail projects also have their own funding availability, more often than not.

Young passed out a questionnaire for the commissioners to complete. She would like them to identify the relative importance of the seven goals and weights as assigned to each goal category.

Cary wondered if we could find a way to have the absent commissioners complete this. Brienzo stated that this won't be available since we will use this data tomorrow. We could give them a worksheet and ask them to fill it out and compare if it is wildly different.

The commissioners filled out the questionnaire and Young compiled the results. The average range for roads was 11-16. The average for trail projects was 10-18.

Scheer gave the highest rating on funding and cost effectiveness on trails because he feels you want to get the most bang for your buck. He loves this process of scoring.

Young asked how the commissioners feel about the scoring averages. Harris believes it would be better if the absent commissioners' scores were reflected, but all in all, this is good. Brienzo stated that staff will contact the commissioners who are absent and try to get their responses as quickly as possible.

Young continued that the next steps will be the scoring committee. They will be looking at all the information and the list of projects, and will come up with the prioritization. We will also be looking at the funding piece.

Kyle Fischer with the Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development introduced himself. He submitted a letter identifying what the Angelou Infrastructure Task Force recommends for the

order of the overall goals of the city's transportation plan. Lincoln has had a lot of great stuff going on. Going back as far as the recession, Lincoln continued to do well. He believes Pinnacle Arena was a factor. We have made a number of lists. The community leaders and the Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development want to look at what we need to do next. We contracted with Angelou Economics who put together a plan in the early 2000's. He thinks this work set the stage for where Lincoln is today. Angelou released his report last June. We set up a task force to look at the three areas of emphasis: work force development, entrepreneurship and infrastructure. The final recommendations came from the infrastructure group. He found it interesting. If your goal as a community is to grow jobs and become viable in the next decade and beyond, this is the way they would prioritize projects. This is where an independent group landed as well.

Lust would like Fischer to explain the comment in the letter regarding high speed fiber with ALLO Communications and Public Works. Fischer replied as part of the ALLO deal, the City of Lincoln will provide 1GB high speed fiber. We have dumb signals in Lincoln. It is an old system that runs off Windows XP. This will utilize high speed fiber and implement some new plans. These plans include new management software and radar at intersections to detect traffic. Part of the recommendations, depending on funding, is how we can get this done in the next three to five years.

Hove questioned how Fischer's group ranked these questions. Fisher replied we ranked them from a priority standpoint, strictly from the aspect of growing jobs in Lincoln. Brienzo added that we are going to have a discussion at some point on intelligent transportation. Cary added that the project Green Light Lincoln is a Public Works project. The challenge is getting the technology implemented as quickly and efficiently as possible. ALLO fiber is part of that, but not available yet. Implementation of technology will be a significant area in the CIP. We are at a stage where we need to maximize our existing system. Fisher noted that geographically speaking, we can't build our way out of some of our congestion issues.

Scheer asked if it is possible to predict the degree of functionality. Cary believes Lonnie Burkland with Public Works has that information.

Cary stated that the next Planning Commission briefing will be regarding Chapters 3 and 9 of the Comprehensive Plan. That will complete a review of all the chapters.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.