
Equity Subcommittee Summary

SEPTEMBER 2021

PlanForward 2050
Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department

Appendix B



Lincoln-Lancaster County
2050 Comprehensive Plan

Acknowledgements

The Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department would like to thank the members of the Equity Subcommittee for their hours of work and contributions to the equity review of PlanForward content. This work has brought awareness and inclusivity to the content in the Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan.

Committee Members

Heather Loughman, Community Action Agency
Jill Bomberger, Early Head Start Director
Abbi Swatsworth, OutNebraska
Nawaf Haskan, New Americans Taskforce
Professor J. Kalu Osiri, UNL Professor
Becky Gould, Nebraska Appleseed
Maghie Miller-Jenkins, Nebraska Appleseed
Nancy Petitto, Civic Nebraska
Walter Powell, Lincoln Public Schools
Kathy Kay, League of Human Dignity
Paska Juma, Black Leaders Movement
Dominique Liu-Sang, Black Leaders Movement
Carlos Servan, Nebraska Commission on the Blind and Visually Impaired
Connie Daly, Nebraska Commission on the Blind and Visually Impaired

Staff Members

Kellee Van Bruggen, Planning Department
Andrew Thierolf, Planning Department
Paul Barnes, Planning Department
David Cary, Planning Department
Francisca Beltran, Lincoln Commission on Human Rights
Adelle Burk, Mayor's Office

Advisor

Maja Harris, Hormel Harris Foundation

Consultant Facilitator

Robbie Summers, Inclusive Communities

Outreach Summary

Introduction

The Lincoln-Lancaster County 2050 Comprehensive Plan embodies Lincoln and Lancaster County’s shared vision for the future, out to the year 2050. The theme of the Comprehensive Plan is “Plan Forward,” because it will envision a future that not only looks forward in time, but also forward in concept with new and innovative ideas to support our growing community.

The development of the Comprehensive Plan includes extensive public input with contributions from all facets of the community – from local leaders and topic area experts, to citizens who have shared interest in building a strong vision for Lincoln and Lancaster County. All public input and community outreach follows the guidelines that were set in the [Public Engagement Plan](#).

The Equity Subcommittee was formed in August 2020 as staff began the process of reviewing existing policies and developing new policies that will help drive future development and community projects, while simultaneously promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion for all community members.

The Equity Subcommittee kicked off their work in September 2020 and continued work through June 2021. These work efforts have shaped a Comprehensive Plan that attempts to address a variety of challenges that face many of our community members.

Key Participant Organizations

Equity Subcommittee

Since the Equity Subcommittee was asked to have a primary role in reviewing existing policies through an equity lens, staff reached out to over 20 organizations that provide services to marginalized community members and encouraged inviting an additional representative or member of their organization that would bring a unique perspective. A total of 14 members are on the subcommittee which consists of staff or members of organizations from Community Action, OutNebraska, New Americans Taskforce, Afrikan Community Network, Nebraska Appleseed, Civic Nebraska, Lincoln Public Schools, League of Human Dignity, Black Leaders Movement, and the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

The Equity Subcommittee was led through a series of meetings that focused on specific policies and broad topics that have intentionally and/or unintentionally have provided a disadvantage(s) to any person or groups of people.

Maja Harris, Harris Hormel Foundation

Maja Harris is a Director of the Hormel Harris Foundation and a former Planning Commissioner for the Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Commission. The Hormel Harris Foundation's initiatives include support for affordable housing, criminal justice reform, mental health and substance abuse treatment and services. Maja participated in the Equity Subcommittee work as a co-facilitator of group discussions, guided pre- and post-meeting discussions, and developed a methodology for considering changes to or additions of new policies for PlanForward.

Inclusive Communities

Planning Staff contracted with Inclusive Communities (a 501 (c)3 non-profit based in Omaha) to assist with the Facilitated Discussion process. Two additional facilitators, Francisca Beltran (Community Outreach Coordinator), and Maja Harris (former Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Commissioner) were asked to assist with the process for smaller group breakouts. Inclusive Communities has worked with the City of Lincoln in the past through a series of trainings designed to reflect on identity, bias, culture, and communication.

Inclusive Communities' planned facilitated discussions focused on developing equitable policies while promoting respectful and inclusive behaviors. The discussions were aimed at building empathy; examining personal and societal stereotypes, biases, and prejudices; and increased the knowledge, language, and dialogue skills to forge meaningful intergroup relationships. Planning staff prepared material for the Facilitated Discussions and completed an initial review of the existing policies within the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Inclusive Communities led the Equity Subcommittee through topic areas that are already established in the existing Comprehensive Plan to determine what inequities currently exist in our community and established strategies to remedy those inequities.



Meetings and Facilitated Discussion Work

Kick-off Meeting (September 2020)

During the kick-off event, Planning staff started by presenting a breakdown of the different divisions of the Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department, the work effort involved with the development of the Comprehensive Plan, and demographic trends that are expected out to 2050.

In relation to equity, the conversation was set by discussing how equity fits into the Comprehensive Plan to create better communities. Clean environments, affordable housing, open spaces, accessible transportation options, and good educational opportunities were noted as future topic items for discussions. It was also important to acknowledge at the beginning of the process, that staff understand that marginalized groups have been left out of the planning processes in the past either intentionally or unintentionally. Some planning practices have had a disparate impact on certain communities. The group was asked to provide input on creating a definition for the purpose of the group and the Comprehensive Plan update.

Second Meeting (October 2020)

The group made a final determination on the Equity definition to use throughout their process and to be used as the new fifth theme of the Comprehensive Plan included as a part of the PlanForward 2050 vision statement. It reads:

Equitable: provide meaningful access to all opportunities and establishes a culture of belonging, regardless of a person's identity (i.e. economic status, race, ethnic background, culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, or mental, physical, or linguistic ability).

The group was informed about the upcoming Facilitated Discussions that were scheduled to run between November 2020 and February 2021 that would focus in on specific topics within the Comprehensive Plan. The subcommittee was split into small group discussions to prioritize what topics they wanted to review during the Facilitated Discussions. The areas of interest were:

- ❖ Workforce Development
- ❖ Community Facilities
- ❖ Neighborhoods and Affordable Housing
- ❖ Energy, Utilities, and Climate Change
- ❖ Technology
- ❖ Business and Economy
- ❖ Public Transportation
- ❖ Early Childhood Care and Education
- ❖ Health

Facilitated Discussion #1 (November 2020)

Before the subcommittee worked on the topic areas, Inclusive Communities provided an activity to compile a collected body of definitive strategies for a community of one based on identity and collection. The activity was used to get to know each other, but also to reflect on our similarities and differences. The activity also set the tone on how each person shows up each day to their jobs and more specifically, how each person views this process, policies, and strategies.

The topic areas for discussion centered on Environmental Resources, and Parks, Recreation, and Open spaces. Specific topics focused on the implementation and education of the Climate Action Plan and future potential

catastrophes, ways to help those with food insecurity, ways to make our parks feel more inclusive, and what facilities do our residents need in the parks or for recreation. Important items of note prior to breakouts were:

- ❖ Nebraska is projected to be hotter on average and receive more precipitation. This will impact Lincolniters, specifically those who live near a floodplain.
- ❖ In 2018, 12% of Lancaster County residents had food insecurity. Due to the pandemic, those numbers are increasing at an incredible rate.

Key Take-aways from Facilitated Discussion #1

Below are the key thoughts from the Facilitated Discussion that stood out as important take-aways and required additional follow-up or reflection.

- ❖ Translation of materials that have succinct message, instead of text heavy documents
 - Words matter.
 - Remove jargon.
 - Text that focuses on how policies and strategies impact people directly.
- ❖ Be active on multiple social media platforms to reach a wide array of the population. Be accessible.
- ❖ Discussion and strategies aimed at making transit more accessible for riders running errands.
- ❖ Make parks more welcoming.
 - Signage in multiple languages.
 - Non-gender specific restrooms. Family restrooms.
 - More flexibility with community centers.
 - Discussion with neighborhoods on what recreation opportunities are missing or need additional amenities in their local parks.
- ❖ Grocery store within 1 mile of all residents.
 - This item is market driven but could be a future Community Indicator that staff could track the percentage of population is within 1 mile of a grocery store and map disparities.

Facilitated Discussion #2 (December 2020)

The topic areas for discussion centered on Business & Economy and Transportation. Specific topics that the group focused on included how neighborhoods can be built to support working families, what are barriers to economic stability, how the City could assist residents with economic stability, how the City can help address the issue of access to technology for all residents to fully participate in the economy and civic life, and how the City and County can achieve the Transportation Equity Goal. Important items of note prior to group discussion were:

- ❖ Example improvements to neighborhoods may include, but are not limited to, enhanced transit, safe pedestrian connections, and neighborhoods with a mix of residential and commercial uses.
- ❖ Defined the Transportation Equity Goal as: Transportation investments developed through an inclusive process that promote equitable outcomes. An example of which may include identify and remove connectivity and access gaps for sidewalks, trails, and transit.

Key Take-aways from Facilitated Discussion #2

Below are the key thoughts from the Facilitated Discussion that stood out as important take-aways and required additional follow-up or reflection.

- ❖ Considerations for developing the city for the working class by providing easy access to:
 - Childcare options
 - Education
 - Transportation
- ❖ Remove language barriers.
- ❖ Remove barriers to transportation, entrepreneurship, in-home childcare, and access to technology.
- ❖ Work with transit agencies to reduce travel time on public transit.
- ❖ Look into on-demand and carpooling options.
- ❖ Plan for and invest in all modes of transportation.

Facilitated Discussion #3 (January 2021)

The topic areas for discussion centered on Neighborhoods & Housing and Placemaking. Specific topics that the group focused on included how Lincoln should define what a complete neighborhood means to us, how should the Comprehensive Plan address housing types and should one type be elevated more than others, is there a burden to request special needs housing enhance neighborhoods or should they fit the context of the existing neighborhood, how to provide safe housing through code enforcement while maintaining affordability, reducing or eliminating parking requirements for affordable housing and what those impacts may be, the addition of a goal or policy that supports renters similar to support for homeownership, and providing opportunities for underrepresented communities to participate in the public placemaking processes. Important items of note prior to group discussion were:

- ❖ Complete Neighborhoods: This term is found in planning documents from Portland, Oregon. A complete neighborhood is where one has safe and convenient access to the goods and services needed in daily life (i.e. housing, transportation, etc.)
- ❖ Special Needs Housing generally includes low income, elderly housing, assisted living facilities, group homes, domestic shelters, and children's homes.
- ❖ The Placemaking chapter speaks of protecting community values and expressing community pride through good urban design and placemaking efforts. However, there's an implicit assumption here that the entire community is being properly represented when defining these values.

Key Take-aways from Facilitated Discussion #3

Below are the key thoughts from the Facilitated Discussion that stood out as important take-aways and required additional follow-up or reflection.

- ❖ Continue to discuss technology and how it can be affordable and provide equitable access for all.
- ❖ Affordable and safe housing should be a significant part of Complete Neighborhoods.
- ❖ Develop policy and/or action item for renters in addition to homeownership policy and coordinate benefits to both groups.
- ❖ Reevaluate "special needs housing" phrasing and evaluate the support needed in accessing resources for these housing types.

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- ❖ Continue discussions on Interior Proactive Enforcement with city staff and evaluate options to eliminate power imbalances between landlords and tenants.
 - ❖ Invest in trust and access to city functions and meetings.

Facilitated Discussion #4 (February 2021)

The topic areas for discussion centered on Community Resources. The group focused on specific areas of Community Resources that included essential services that improve the quality of life for existing residents and what can attract others, how we can address the life expectancy gap in Lincoln through the Comprehensive Plan, how residents can connect socially through community building activities, trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve, access to Wi-Fi for Lincoln and Lancaster County residents, availability and need for online City and County services, and how we can foster innovation, creativity, and play at the Lincoln Libraries. Important items of note prior to breakouts were:

- ❖ A 2017 Vital Signs Report by Prosper Lincoln revealed that life expectancy between Lincoln neighborhoods varied as much as 20 years.
- ❖ A new policy being considered for the Comprehensive Plan's law enforcement section is: Implement cooperative programs with neighborhoods that both build local trust and engage and redirect at-risk youth.
- ❖ The first phase of the Lincoln free Wi-Fi network was launched in 2014 in Iron Horse Park in the Haymarket. Free public Wi-Fi has since been expanded to other public spaces, such as Centennial Mall, and is also available in public buildings. Other free Wi-Fi hotspots are found throughout Lincoln at coffee shops, restaurants, hotels, etc.

Key Take-aways from Facilitated Discussion #4

Below are the key thoughts from the Facilitated Discussion that stood out as important take-aways and required additional follow-up or reflection.

- ❖ Social connectedness and open, fun spaces for people to belong and feel safe in, create a good quality of life for the community.
- ❖ Consider providing City or government services in neighborhoods. Promote events to underrepresented populations and go to them instead of asking them to come to us.
- ❖ Revisit Law Enforcement draft policy and remove problematic language.
- ❖ Host conversations about systemic racism but most importantly, listen and work together to make progress.
- ❖ Rather than add more policies to Law Enforcement, add more to the plan that mitigates the need for interactions with Law Enforcement. Add more to community investments and focus on equity for marginalized populations.
- ❖ Provide more services online and have staff available to answer questions by phone in multiple languages as necessary.
- ❖ Continue to use and enhance amenities that the libraries provide to the community with job fairs, agency outreach, STEAM programs, etc.

Small Group Discussion (March 2021)

There was some great dialogue that occurred during the February Facilitated Discussion related to the trust between law enforcement and the communities served that staff and some members of the committee wanted to expand upon. During the Facilitated Discussion it was acknowledged that systemic racism is in many areas of our country and many communities of color do not feel that the phrase “protect and serve” involves them. It is vitally important that during this process and continuing in the future, we sit down and really listen. Planning staff also noted that the Comprehensive Plan is a big picture policy document that does not get into the details on many topic areas.

It was decided that it would be beneficial to have an extended conversation and talk about other policies the City could place investment into to mitigate issues or problems within neighborhoods and schools. Planning staff met with a smaller group of Equity Subcommittee members to assist in drafting new policies and action steps to achieve this. The draft policies that were developed from this meeting are *Community Resource Accessibility and Awareness* and *Resource Availability and Awareness for Youth* and can be found in the Outcomes section of this summary.

Post Facilitated Discussion Follow-up (April 2021)

Planning Staff hosted a follow-up meeting of the Equity Subcommittee to review changes and additions to PlanForward based on subcommittee feedback and to update the status on the other items that were worked on. This meeting was used to make sure the thoughts and suggestions were being appropriately interpreted through the development of the document.

Community Committee (April 2021)

Inclusive Communities and Planning staff presented the initial summary and findings of the Equity Subcommittee’s work during the Facilitated Discussion process at the Community Committee’s April 29th meeting. The facilitators noted that some policies and action steps need to be examined since they are beyond traditional land based planning and explore more community visioning areas. The Committee discussed whether or not PlanForward should be more general and less prescriptive. The plan could also be aspirational. The group then examined specific changes in topic areas of early childhood care and education, housing and neighborhoods, workforce development, and transportation.

Key Take-aways from Community Committee Discussion

Below are the key thoughts from the Facilitated Discussion that stood out as important take-aways and required additional follow-up or reflection.

- ❖ There are a lot of moving parts within the topic of Early Childhood Care and Education and changes would have impacts to in-home daycares, Head Start, and LPS. Overall, encourage quality childcare rooted in the standard of quality by the State.
- ❖ Past comprehensive plans have included a goal for home ownership. PlanForward should include a goal for renters as well.

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- ❖ Encourage programs to assist workers with development of skills. Encourage conversations between employees and upper management.
 - ❖ Is the City in a position of influence to promote or require electric vehicles?
 - ❖ Tax incentives should be considered to encourage the use of alternative fuel vehicles.

Facilitated Discussion #5 (May 2021)

This discussion focused on five PlanForward policies (Health Care Access, Technology, Civic Participation, Skilled, Diverse, and Trained Workforce, and Industrial Hazard Areas). The presentation included a discussion on the methodology that was created to determine if community visioning goals were appropriate for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan. Staff provided an example and explained that some visioning goals need further public input before including them in the Comprehensive Plan. Some strategies though may be suitable for including in the Comprehensive Plan if they are introduced in a way that provides additional explanation that substantial community discussion is required in order to determine implementation. A way of including topics that need further public discussion is to introduce them with a “light touch”.

Key Take-aways from Facilitated Discussion #5

Below are the key thoughts from the Facilitated Discussion that stood out as important take-aways and required additional follow-up or reflection.

- ❖ Not all community visioning goals will be included in PlanForward as some will require additional public conversation.
- ❖ Technology, including hardware and software, should be accessible to people with disabilities.
- ❖ Nearly 70 percent of people with disabilities are unemployed or under employed.

Facilitated Discussion #6 (June 2021)

This discussion focused on a review and demonstration of the overall plan hierarchy including background information, growth framework, population projections, plan assumptions, vision statement, and the five PlanForward themes. PlanForward contains 15 goals and will be connected with the Community Indicators that the Planning Department already publishes. Staff provided a more detailed review of each of the goals.

Key Take-aways from Facilitated Discussion #6

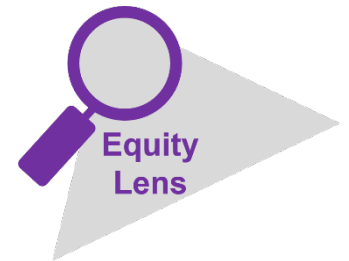
Below are the key thoughts from the Facilitated Discussion that stood out as important take-aways and required additional follow-up or reflection.

- ❖ A household that spends more than 30% of their income on housing expenses is considered cost burdened. In our community, approximately 40% of renters are cost burdened, along with 25% of owners with a mortgage.
- ❖ Complete Neighborhoods is a new concept in PlanForward. A complete neighborhood includes a variety of housing options, grocery stores, public schools, and other civic amenities. A complete neighborhoods review tool provides a more wholistic review of our community and can be used in many ways to improve our decision making and community investments.
- ❖ The Existing Neighborhoods policy was updated to encourage a mix of housing and examine the current zoning districts and propose modifications to encourage ‘missing middle’ units.

- ❖ The term ‘special needs’ is outdated and will be stricken from PlanForward. Instead, the term Group Living is being considered.
- ❖ Additional funding is needed for all modes of transportation.
- ❖ Sharing the history of Lincoln and the mishaps of the past is very important and powerful. Addressing the issues of inequity is appreciated with this plan.

Outcomes

As Planning Staff met with the Equity Subcommittee and received their feedback on the existing policies in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and potential new policies, staff created a series of revisions and added new goals, policies, and action steps. These items have been incorporated throughout PlanForward, and in some cases are called out with the equity lens graphic, which highlights the important work undertaken by this subcommittee.



Revisions

Below is a listing of the revisions made based on Equity Subcommittee review and feedback.

"Provide safe and decent affordable and special needs housing for low- and moderate-income households throughout the city that is integrated into and compatible with residential neighborhoods."

Changed to

"Balance expanding housing options and neighborhood character. Infill development includes housing for a variety of incomes and should complement the character of the existing neighborhood and provide appropriate transitions where needed. Site and building considerations include transitions, scale and context."

"Enforce better property maintenance, both interior and exterior, to help preserve affordable housing and encourage residents to take pride in and maintain their homes."

Changed to

"Enforce better property maintenance, both interior and exterior, by implementing proactive code enforcement, to help preserve affordable housing and encourage residents to take pride in and maintain their homes."

"Implement strategies for sharing risk in the development of affordable housing and build strategic housing partnerships as an essential component for creating new housing product types and lower price-points."

Changed to

"Support development of an Affordable Housing Consortium to build strategic partnerships, develop a shared vision, and create a funding mechanism for shared risk as essential components for creating new housing product types and lower price-points."

"Retain existing predominately single-family blocks in some existing neighborhoods, in order to maintain the mix of housing types."

Changed to

"Retain and encourage a mix of housing in existing and new neighborhoods in order to provide a mix of housing types at a variety of price points."

"Preserving existing housing and promoting homeownership should remain the focus in established neighborhoods, with modest opportunities for infill and redevelopment."

Changed to

“Preserving existing housing for owners and renters and a mix of supporting uses should remain the focus in established neighborhoods, with modest opportunities for infill and redevelopment.”

New Policies

Below is a listing of the new policies with accompanying action steps based on Equity Subcommittee review and feedback.

Early Childhood Care and Education: Evaluate methods to improve access to and quality of early childhood care and education experiences.

Beginning education early in life has many benefits. Access to high-quality early childhood care and education should be available across all income levels. Early childhood care and education experiences include settings and programs that aim to support positive outcomes for young children, birth to age 8, and their families (i.e., child care, home visitation, preschool, early intervention services, parks, cultural institutions).

According to UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization): “Early childhood care and education (ECCE) is more than preparation for primary school. It aims at the holistic development of a child’s social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs in order to build a solid and broad foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing. ECCE has the possibility to nurture caring, capable and responsible future citizens.”

More than 125 child care centers are located across Lincoln, including many preschools. A specific example of ECCE is Lincoln Public Schools’ Early Childhood Programs. These programs provide quality learning experiences to help promote growth of young children and their families. They accomplish this by offering a variety of free quality programs from birth, including the student child learning centers, birth-five early childhood special education services, and half-day preschool with several options to best meet the needs of families. Currently, 29 of 40 elementary schools have free, early childhood programs.

Action Steps

- 1. Locate child care centers within neighborhoods and near schools, parks, and outdoor learning environments when possible.*
- 2. Examine building and zoning code requirements for child care centers and family child care homes to determine if there are any obstacles that could be removed while maintaining the safety of the building occupants.*
- 3. Consider access to educational institutions, places of employment, and childcare services, when planning public transportation investments.*
- 4. Expand the use of park facilities, public buildings, and cultural institutions for enriching early childhood experiences.*
- 5. Support philanthropic and advocacy groups that provide all children with access to high quality early childhood care and education (i.e., Lincoln Littles).*
- 6. Support efforts that build capacity of ECCE workforce to support stability of experiences for children and families (i.e., childcare providers, professionals that work with families).*
- 7. Support the City’s Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes programs to foster economic stability and access to healthy and safe housing.*

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8. *Promote public-private partnerships to increase resources for low-income families to access high-quality early learning programs to promote kindergarten readiness.*
 9. *Support Lincoln Public Schools' efforts to provide early childhood programs in all elementary schools.*
 10. *Support an increase in access to prenatal care and targeted home visitation services for new parents, including fathers.*
 11. *Support continued collaboration with providers of healthcare and social services, and partner with organizations to support healthy development of babies and toddlers.*
 12. *Consider ways to leverage seniors in assisting to create intergenerational connections (i.e., NeighborLNK, grand-friends).*
 13. *Expand community partnerships between Lincoln Public Schools, the University of Nebraska, and other social service agencies to provide additional funding and services (such as EduCare Lincoln).*
 14. *Educate childcare providers on climate-related health issues for young children, including climate related health emergencies, heat events, air pollution events, floods, and evacuation plans.*

Skilled, Diverse, and Trained Workforce: Support development of a skilled, diverse, and trained workforce that enables economic growth and high-quality jobs.

The benefits of a high-quality workforce are twofold: 1) it is important that residents from diverse backgrounds have the opportunity to acquire the education and skills necessary to obtain quality jobs, and 2) it is important for business owners and entrepreneurs to have access to a top-talent workforce so that they can sustain and grow their businesses. A high-quality workforce benefits the entire community because it attracts quality employers and entrepreneurs, which helps to grow our population and tax base and facilitates quality of life investments across a variety of sectors, and it ensures that Lincoln and Lancaster County are well-positioned to compete in tomorrow's economy.

Supporting jobs and career pathways that create economic stability and mobility is critical to cultivating an economy beneficial for all. A key barrier to achieving economic stability and mobility is inequitable access to education and skills training.

Action Steps

1. *Support workforce development programs that work to eliminate employment disparities. An example is the current job training partnership managed through a collaborative effort between the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development, and the Lincoln Manufacturing Council.*
2. *Support implementation of the workforce recommendations from the Mayor's Economic Recovery Task Force.*
3. *Support high-quality community-based, culturally appropriate, and accessible employment training programs that allow employers to hire a more diverse workforce and provide more residents access to living wage jobs; and ensure that workforce development programs and City initiatives emphasize in-demand careers that provide for financial stability. As an example, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, administered through the City of Lincoln and the Greater Lincoln Workforce Development, can help fund both classroom and work-based training for eligible job seekers.*

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4. *Expand partnerships and opportunities to create apprenticeship and training programs for trade professions and growing professions such as information technology with employers throughout the community.*
 5. *Promote healthy, safe, just, and equitable workplaces with adequate protections for all workers.*
 6. *Promote ongoing training around cultural competency with local businesses and within City and County government to help combat implicit bias in hiring and to support retention of diversity in the workforce.*
 7. *Continue to collect and use workforce and demographic data to inform investments in employment and training programs, and other community services such as transit routes.*
 8. *Continue to recruit, retain, and set clear pathways for advancement to support a diverse City and County government workforce that reflects the demographics of the community.*
 9. *Promote and invest in resources that provide professional networking opportunities and exposure to career and job opportunities, with a focus on targeted communities based on needs. An example of an existing program is the New Americans Task Force’s CareerLadder program to support immigrant and refugee residents, which includes professional connectors, employment pathways, and MyCity Academy.*
 10. *Expand and implement strategies to eliminate barriers to workforce training and employment for individuals who have been convicted as a felon or previously incarcerated.*
 11. *Expand and implement strategies to develop workforce training opportunities and career exposure for youth, through internships, on-the-job training, and apprenticeship programs.*
 12. *Utilize the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to promote workforce development for “green” industries. Examples include increasing on-the-job training subsidies for green employers and working with Southeast Community College (SCC) to create career ladders targeted for green industries.*

Industrial Zoning and Pipelines: Discourage residential land uses and buildings with vulnerable populations from locating near high-pressure pipelines and industrial zoning districts. Provide adequate separation between vulnerable populations and hazardous materials to protect and promote the public’s health.

There are several major pipelines that travel through Lancaster County and parts of our community. Our community will continue to grow into where these high-pressure pipelines are currently located and additional pipelines will be required to support the growth of our community and the nation. Most of these new pipelines are proposed and developed by private companies. These pipelines transport large quantities of hazardous materials that can have serious public health and safety impacts to adjacent properties in the event of pipeline failure or damage. Therefore, uses with vulnerable populations including residential structures, childcare centers, retirement facilities, schools, or hospitals should not be located near pipelines. Uses that are acceptable near pipelines include residential garages, commercial and industrial uses, parking lots, open spaces or roads.

Industrial zoning can also pose a significant risk to adjacent properties with vulnerable populations due to the types of uses that can store, use or produce hazardous materials. Rail lines are also a concern near vulnerable populations due to the transport of hazardous materials in large quantities.

Action Steps

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1. *Land uses with vulnerable populations should not be located within pipeline planning areas. For large high-pressure pipelines, pipeline planning areas are established based upon pipeline metrics or the United States Department of Transportation's Emergency Response Guidebook. Most high-pressure pipelines have a planning area of approximately 150-250 feet from either side of the pipeline.*
 2. *Land uses with vulnerable populations should not be located within 300 feet of an industrially-zoned district or heavy industrial use such as a rail line. Even if a given industrial site does not include hazardous materials at present, a hazardous use could be added in the future.*
 3. *Do not support expansion of existing residential uses currently located within a pipeline planning area or within 300 feet of an industrial zoning district unless the pipeline is decommissioned, or downzoning is planned for the industrial area.*
 4. *Businesses and government agencies should continue to work together on developing and updating Emergency Management Plans for dealing with accidents and emergencies.*
 5. *Continue strategic re-zonings of legacy industrial districts to less intensive commercial zoning districts when near residential uses.*

Transportation Equity: Prioritize equity in planning and implementing safe transportation systems to facilitate freedom of movement for all community members.

Every community member depends on a transportation network and services to meet their access and connectivity needs. As such, equitable transportation means identifying and working to eliminate disparity in the quality of and access to transportation options for all community members. Lincoln is actively working to engage stakeholders across the community who can illuminate issues of inequity in various forms, including transportation, through the One Lincoln initiative.

Inequity in some U.S. cities is reflected in historical transportation decisions that physically divided or severely hindered less affluent neighborhoods and residents of color (especially Black populations). Some of those decisions illustrate how lasting damage can occur through unjust and short-sighted transportation policies. Lincoln must avoid these types of disruptive transportation investments moving forward. Transportation investments should intentionally eliminate disparity and undue barriers to already overburdened and underserved populations. By keeping the needs of diverse community members in mind, Lincoln and Lancaster County can commit to transportation decisions that support the mobility needs of all residents.

Action Steps

1. *Expand and maintain infrastructure for all modes of transportation serving overburdened and underserved populations.*
2. *Remove physical, temporal and language barriers to transit ridership.*
3. *Offer night and weekend transit operational hours for overburdened and underserved populations.*
4. *Broaden transit public input and validate priorities, alternatives and plans with diverse stakeholders.*
5. *Expand representation of overburdened and underserved populations serving on the StarTran Advisory Board.*
6. *Continue working with Lincoln Public Schools that support transit use by students from overburdened and underserved populations.*

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7. Routinely distribute multi-lingual transportation information through human service providers locally and One Lincoln partners.
 8. Provide equitable access to transit and shared mobility options for unbanked community members and those without access to credit card payment options.
 9. Use insight and information from municipal and county service agencies to target mobility support for our aging population.

Civic Participation: Maintain a commitment to engaging all members of the community with civic processes.

It is important to ensure that all members of the community have the opportunity to be informed and involved with civic processes.

Action Steps

1. Create an on-demand virtual participation option for all public input events. On-demand virtual events allow for participation from home or other location with internet access at a time that fits with an individual's schedule.
2. Explore enhanced accessibility options at public hearings, including virtual participation, as state law allows.
3. Create a language access policy for the City and County to ensure greater access to translation and interpretation services for residents with limited English proficiency.
4. Continue to support diverse representation on appointed City and County boards and commissions.
5. Continue training and education for the local government workforce to understand biases that may be built into our processes and how to address those biases.
6. Actively engage with cultural groups and neighborhood organizations so that residents can stay informed about activities in their community and provide ideas for planning and public policy.
7. Continue to follow the City of Lincoln Equity, Access and Diversity Plan, that endeavors to recruit and retain employees that reflect the diversity of the community.
8. Encourage developers and others with planning proposals to make early contact with neighborhood groups and other interested parties. This will allow for a greater understanding of the issues and for time to seek resolution of contentious items.
9. Maintain current mailing and contact lists of local neighborhood groups and homeowner associations that is available to the public.
10. Notify surrounding property owners, interested groups, and other appropriate agencies of formal development applications.
11. Explore options to expand free internet access for those in need.

New Goals

Below is a listing of the new goals based on Equity Subcommittee review and feedback.

Equity and Inclusion: Lincoln and Lancaster County will establish equity - regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, country of origin, religion, age, economic status, or zip code - as a core principle in the planning, decision-making, and policy development processes.

Acknowledging disparities that exist in our community is vital in order to properly discuss equity as a core principle of PlanForward. We also acknowledge in this plan that there are ongoing work efforts which are moving us in the right direction toward eliminating disparities. Under this goal and others in PlanForward, we identified local trends that relate to measurable aspects that focus on race and ethnicity disparities within housing, income, poverty, juvenile justice, educational attainment, labor force participation, and health. In 2020, the total percent of minorities living in Lancaster County was 20.5%. It is anticipated by 2050, the total percent of minorities living in Lancaster County will be approximately 35.3% based on historic trends and growth projections.

This goal includes a discussion on redlining practices in Lincoln's history and health inequities that exist amongst different zip codes.

High-Quality Workforce: Lincoln and Lancaster County will strive to remove barriers to economic stability and mobility in the community by supporting a skilled and educated workforce that is able to adapt to economic, technological, and cultural changes.

The benefits of a high-quality workforce are twofold: 1) it is important that residents from diverse backgrounds have the opportunity to acquire the education and skills necessary to obtain quality jobs, and 2) it is important for business owners and entrepreneurs to have access to a high-quality workforce so that they can sustain and grow their businesses. A high-quality workforce benefits the entire community because it attracts quality employers and entrepreneurs, which helps to grow our population and tax base and facilitates quality of life investments across a variety of sectors, and it ensures that Lincoln and Lancaster County are well-positioned to compete in tomorrow's economy.

This goal includes a discussion on the connection between educational attainment and poverty status and the race-based disparity in educational attainment.

Healthy, Active, and Connected People: Lincoln and Lancaster County will be a healthy community that continuously creates and improves both its physical and social environments where every person is free to make choices amid a variety of healthy, available, accessible, and affordable options.

The interaction between people and their environments, natural as well as human-made, has re-emerged as a major public health issue. A community that encourages healthy, active, and connected people is one that continuously creates and improves both its physical and social environments. Examining the interaction between health and the environment requires considering the effects of factors in the broad physical and social environments, which include housing, access to community facilities and resources, land use, transportation, industry, workforce development, and agriculture.

This goal also mentions the important work that is done amongst the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department, Bryan Health Systems, CHI St. Elizabeth, Nebraska Hospital Association, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, and others.

Civic Participation: Lincoln and Lancaster County recognize the need for an equitable civic process and community buy-in during the planning and decision-making processes.

The City of Lincoln and Lancaster County have long encouraged the public to participate in local government activities. Keeping people knowledgeable and involved in implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and other community initiatives is crucial to ensuring their ultimate success. It is important to give all members of the community a voice and the capacity to influence decisions.

A key element to allowing everyone to have a voice in the civic participation process is removing barriers that prevent some members of the community from being fully engaged.

The goal looks at barriers that prevent engagement with historically underrepresented groups and discusses methods to remove those barriers.

New Action Steps

Below is a listing of the new action steps proposed based on feedback during the Equity Subcommittee review.

“Encourage ‘missing middle’ units (single-family attached, cottage courts, townhomes, live-work, and a variety of three- and four-plex configurations), including affordable units, to people with a range of incomes.”

“Encourage a variety of housing types including townhomes, senior living facilities, low/no maintenance condominiums, accessory dwelling units, multi-family development, and small lot single-family units.”

“Encourage creation of rental rehab programs to improve the quality of affordable rental housing and support the City’s Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes programs.”

“Provide for 10 additional acres of community garden space on public lands by 2030. Examples of public lands appropriate for community gardens include underutilized park areas, rights-of-way, and schools.”

“Promote urban gardens in all parts of the community, with focus on neighborhoods that lack convenient access to fresh foods.”

“Identify opportunities to acquire and develop Neighborhood Parks in established neighborhoods that are deficient in Neighborhood Park resources, particularly in those neighborhoods where indicators of vulnerability are higher.”

“Continue to monitor local and national trends in recreation in order to provide recreational opportunities that reflect the needs and desires of the Lincoln community.”

“As the community continues to grow and diversify, it is critical that the Parks and Recreation Department continue to work with various agencies, organizations and the community to evaluate recreational needs and desires and to partner with others to make sure the quality and variety of Lincoln and Lancaster County’s recreational facilities remains at the high level we currently enjoy.”

“Replacement of a damaged street tree is at the request of the property owner. Assess street tree coverage and provide assistance as needed to ensure consistent street tree canopies across all neighborhoods.”

“(Introduce) A program to circulate internet hot spots for those who do not have stable internet at home, with consideration also for access to reliable equipment and effective training.”

“Continue to follow the City of Lincoln Equity, Access and Diversity Plan, that endeavors to recruit and hire employees without discrimination based on an individual’s protected classes.”

“Continue to implement cooperative programs with the community, such as the TRACE (Trust, Respect, Accountability, Collaboration, and Equity) initiative, Project Restore, or Take Pause and seek opportunities to interact with the public in less formal settings.”

“Maintain a quality transportation system in all areas of the community by balancing the distribution of program funding equitably.”

“Implement the Lancaster County broadband plan to bring fiber to every incorporated place in Lancaster County and make wireless internet faster for rural users.”

“Ensure that all residents have equitable access to information infrastructure.”

Future Consideration

As noted above, many changes were made to PlanForward goals, elements, and policies to address potential inequities. In some instances, community visioning items were identified that raised additional questions. A methodology was developed to evaluate community visioning items to determine if they were suitable for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan or if additional public input would be needed. The Equity Subcommittee encouraged additional resources be devoted for those at risk and/or marginalized communities. Some of the recommended community visioning items led to broad agreement and are included in PlanForward (see new action steps above as well as notes below); however, some community visioning items require further community discussion and thorough cost analysis before being formally adopted as goals or policies. It is recommended that the following draft policies undergo additional public discussion before being adopted as standalone policies in the Comprehensive Plan.

Community Resource Accessibility and Awareness: Encourage collaboration across the community by forming lasting partnerships to achieve greater outcomes and provide a

support base for sustaining programs for those at risk and/or marginalized communities.

Action Steps

- 1. Support early childhood home visits and group-based parent education programs to provide parents assistance with a broad range of health and developmental outcomes and to link families to resources that can help in not only meeting basic needs but allow families to thrive. (Broadly included in P. 45)*
- 2. Support grassroots efforts that provides preventative strategies for children and families who are at risk for future substance use, and reverse violent behavior patterns and issues in adolescents who are already involved in using substances and exhibit violent behaviors. (Broadly included in P. 45)*
- 3. Explore and implement strategies to eliminate barriers to workforce training, employment, and housing access for individuals who have been convicted as a felon or previously incarcerated. (Broadly included in G. 3)*
- 4. Ensure that all community members are safely and stably housed. (Broadly included in G. 1, G. 2, E. 1, P. 1)*
- 5. Support integrated community centers that provide space for recreational and educational programming, creative arts programs, counseling and support services, and socialization. (Broadly included in P. 30)*
- 6. Provide opportunities for older residents to leverage their experience and contribute to their communities through volunteering, working, intergenerational engagement, and lifelong learning.*
- 7. Expand and promote mental health and wellness initiatives and activities for all residents. (Broadly included in P. 42)*
- 8. Collaborate with government agencies, non-profits, and service providers to create a Navigation Hub that provides a universal intake for multiple services to eliminate the redundancy of paperwork and eliminate barriers to accessing resources for the individual or family. The Navigation Hub should be staffed by people that can provide services in multiple languages and accommodate outside of work hours. (Broadly included in G. 5)*
- 9. Ensure an equitable path and process to affordable, appropriate, and inclusive housing options in all parts of the community for people with disabilities and their families. (Broadly included in G. 1, E. 1, P. 1-3)*
- 10. Expand the opportunity for adaptive athletic, arts, and community and civic engagement programs. (Broadly included in E. 5, P. 47)*

Expand Resource Availability and Awareness for Youth: Our community will help youth at-risk by developing strategies that invest in marginalized youth to increase the probability of successfully transitioning to adulthood, achieving economic self-sufficiency, and providing access to resources that support their goals and achievements as they determine their future.

Action Steps

- 1. Support community programs where youth receive support in the areas of education, artistic expression, employment, fundamental living skills, crisis intervention, financial literacy, leadership, civic engagement, and building healthy relationships. (Broadly included in E. 5)*
- 2. Evaluate the need and available funding resources to provide space for additional recreation, creative arts programs, socialization, and educational opportunities at public facilities for youth at-risk to utilize outside of school hours. (Broadly included in E. 5)*
- 3. Eliminate barriers that prevent children, youth, and young adults from participating in civic opportunities in their community. (Broadly included in G. 8, P. 47)*
- 4. Work with youth to determine what makes a space safe for them and provide accessible spaces to seek resources, help, and connection.*
- 5. Encourage and support programming that establishes or re-establishes social connectedness in the community's youth post-pandemic.*
- 6. Invest in and expand resources for physical and mental health services for youth. (Broadly included in P. 42)*

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7. *Support programs that provide youth peer mentoring and intergenerational mentoring. (Broadly included in P. 44, P. 45)*
 8. *Support programs that assist teens that are aging out of foster care.*

Conclusion

Planning staff continued working in 2021 to incorporate the feedback received throughout the Equity Subcommittee work during our facilitated and small group discussions. It is important to note that this process has helped humanize the Comprehensive Plan and not just view the City through the physical landscape. Together we have evaluated how the planning process and the document itself affects each resident. A significant effort was undertaken to review the statements in previous Comprehensive Plans and determine whether the statements burden anyone in the community and how such impediments can be remedied. This process was the first step in continuing to evaluate our work through an equity lens and maintain this approach on a consistent basis.

The Equity Subcommittee's time and effort is incredibly appreciated throughout this process.