

MEETING RECORD

Advanced public notice of the Technical Committee meeting was posted on the County-City bulletin board and the Planning Department's website.

NAME OF GROUP: TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: April 13, 2023, 1:00 p.m., Conference Room 113, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th St., Lincoln, NE

MEMBERS AND OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: David Cary – Planning Department; Elizabeth Elliott – Lincoln Transportation and Utilities; Pam Dingman – County Engineer; Paul Barnes and Stephanie Rouse – Planning Department; Gary Bergstrom – Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department; Carla Cosier – StarTran; Roger Figard – Railroad Transportation Safety District; Stephanie Fisher – City of Waverly; Tom Goodbarn and Craig Wacker – Nebraska Department of Transportation; Chad Lay – Lincoln Airport Authority; Larry Legg – County Engineer; Rich Bishop – Urban Development Department; Sara Hartzell – Parks and Recreation; Erin Sokolik – Lincoln Transportation and Utilities; (Kelly Oelke – City of Hickman and Thomas Shafer – Lincoln Transportation and Utilities absent). Rachel Christopher and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Jarrod Walker and Jodi Gibson – Nebraska Department of Transportation; Brian Praeuner – StarTran; and other interested parties.

Chair David Cary called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room.

Cary then requested a motion approving the minutes of the meeting held January 26, 2023. Motion for approval made by Figard, seconded by Legg and carried 11-0: Barnes, Cary, Dingman, Elliott, Figard, Fisher, Goodbarn, Legg, Rouse, Sokolik and Wacker voting 'yes'; Bergstrom, Bishop, Cosier, Hartzell and Lay abstaining; Oelke and Shafer absent.

CONSENT AGENDA

PUBLIC HEARING:

April 13, 2023

Members present: Barnes, Bergstrom, Bishop, Cary, Cosier, Dingman, Elliott, Figard, Fisher, Goodbarn, Hartzell, Lay, Legg, Rouse, Sokolik and Wacker; Oelke and Shafer absent.

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following items:

- a. **Review and action on revisions to the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**
 - i. **City of Lincoln Transportation and Utilities program:**

1. **Consolidate the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act funds under the federal Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds category**
 2. **S. 70th and Nebraska Parkway Intersection Improvements – Add control number and project number**
- ii. **Pedestrian, Bike and Trails program**
1. **Waterford Trail – Add control number and project number**

ACTION:

Dingman moved approval of the Consent Agenda, seconded by Bergstrom and carried 16-0: Barnes, Bergstrom, Bishop, Cary, Cosier, Dingman, Elliott, Figard, Fisher, Goodbarn, Hartzell, Lay, Legg, Rouse, Sokolik and Wacker voting 'yes'; Oelke and Shafer absent

REVIEW AND ACTION ON REVISIONS TO THE FY 2023-2026 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) A) LANCASTER COUNTY ENGINEERING PROGRAM: I. S. 68TH STREET, HICKMAN TO ROCA ROAD – ADD PROJECT AND PROGRAM FEDERAL FUNDS

PUBLIC HEARING:**April 13, 2023**

Members present: Barnes, Bergstrom, Bishop, Cary, Cosier, Dingman, Elliott, Figard, Fisher, Goodbarn, Hartzell, Lay, Legg, Rouse, Sokolik and Wacker; Oelke and Shafer absent.

Rachel Christopher stated this is amendment to the Lancaster County Engineering program for S. 68th Street from Hickman Road to Roca Road. This will add the project and program federal funds for the current fiscal year. This project has been awarded safety improvement program funds. The funding sources are Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds and MPO Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds. For the construction phase, they would use County funds. This project is in conformance with the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

Larry Legg stated that once this is done, the S. 68th Street corridor will be improved. It is a much needed improvement. Dingman added that the goal is to do this all at the same time, realizing it will take more than one construction season to finish. They like to do two projects together to be beneficial. This is part of Nebraska Dept. of Transportation (NDOT) newer safety programs that look at roads with eleven foot widths. It is very unforgiving when you only have eleven feet of width and they are trying to make this road safer.

ACTION:

Legg moved approval of the amendment to the FY 2023-2026 TIP as recommended by staff,

a) Lancaster County Engineering program:

- i. S. 68th Street, Hickman to Roca Road – Add project and program federal funds

seconded by Barnes and carried 16-0: Barnes, Bergstrom, Bishop, Cary, Cosier, Dingman, Elliott, Figard, Fisher, Goodbarn, Hartzell, Lay, Legg, Rouse, Sokolik and Wacker voting 'yes'; Oelke and Shafer absent.

REVIEW AND ACTION ON THE PROPOSED FY 2024 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)**PUBLIC HEARING:****April 13, 2023**

Members present: Barnes, Bergstrom, Bishop, Cary, Cosier, Dingman, Elliott, Figard, Fisher, Goodbarn, Hartzell, Lay, Legg, Rouse, Sokolik and Wacker; Oelke and Shafer absent.

Christopher stated that the UPWP identifies the budget and transportation planning activities for the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the upcoming year. It follows the State fiscal year. In addition to MPO activities, the document also lists the StarTran budgets and other related transportation planning activities conducted by other departments. It is coordinated with staff from these departments who conduct these eligible activities. This draft was sent to the MPO Administration Committee for comments and none were received. This process is followed every year and activities are funded through the federal planning (PL) grant. This year, the new PL grant funds are about \$513,000. In addition, we have available about \$66,000 in unspent carryover from a prior year for a total of about \$580,000. Among the new work items identified in the UPWP are update of the MPO Public Participation Plan, update Project Prioritization and Selection Process, Vision Zero Action Plan, and update of our Bike and Pedestrian Plans.

Barnes added that the Public Participation Plan and Enhanced Bike Plan were recommendations from the four year federal review. Staff is also looking to the future to budget for a new LRTP. Initial work for the LRTP Update will begin at the end of 2024 or beginning of 2025. We need to budget for enough carryover to fund that larger project.

ACTION:

Bergstrom moved approval of the FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program as recommended by staff, seconded by Legg and carried 16-0: Barnes, Bergstrom, Bishop, Cary, Cosier, Dingman, Elliott, Figard, Fisher, Goodbarn, Hartzell, Lay, Legg, Rouse, Sokolik and Wacker voting 'yes'; Oelke and Shafer absent.

REVIEW AND ACTION ON 2023 SELF-CERTIFICATION REVIEW**PUBLIC HEARING:****April 13, 2023**

Members present: Barnes, Bergstrom, Bishop, Cary, Cosier, Dingman, Elliott, Figard, Fisher, Goodbarn, Hartzell, Lay, Legg, Rouse, Sokolik and Wacker; Oelke and Shafer absent.

Christopher stated that the self-certification is done every year and included in the TIP. It is a document that certifies that the MPO continues to meet all federal requirements. It is signed by the Mayor on behalf of the MPO. This verification continues to ensure we receive federal funding.

Cary requested a point of clarification that this certification is distinct from the review of the MPO conducted every four years by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

ACTION:

Barnes moved approval of the 2023 Self Certification Review as recommended by staff, seconded by Goodbarn and carried 16-0: Barnes, Bergstrom, Bishop, Cary, Cosier, Dingman, Elliott, Figard, Fisher, Goodbarn, Hartzell, Lay, Legg, Rouse, Sokolik and Wacker voting 'yes'; Oelke and Shafer absent.

REVIEW AND ACTION ON THE PROPOSED FY 2024-2027 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)**PUBLIC HEARING:****April 13, 2023**

Members present: Barnes, Bergstrom, Bishop, Cary, Cosier, Dingman, Elliott, Figard, Fisher, Goodbarn, Hartzell, Lay, Legg, Rouse, Sokolik and Wacker; Oelke and Shafer absent.

Christopher stated that the TIP is a federally required program. It looks at a four year period. The current program is 2023-2026. It shows all project listings for those projects that receive federal funds. It also shows locally funded regionally significant projects as well. This document is developed in coordination with NDOT. NDOT has their own State TIP. It is updated annually as well. The TIP is adopted every year and can be amended as needed in the interim to add, delete and modify projects. All projects must conform to the LRTP.

This effort is coordinated with all agencies having applicable projects needing to be listed in the TIP. NDOT includes their improvements to the Interstate and highway systems. StarTran shows operational and capital public transportation projects. Lincoln Airport Authority lists operational and capital improvement projects funded through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and local funds. FTA Section 5310 and 5311 funds are for rural area formula grants for vanpool and other public transportation services. Pedestrian, Trail and On-Street Bike facilities are listed for Parks and Recreation and Planning Department. Railroad Transportation Safety District (RTSD) projects are also shown.

New with this proposed TIP is an interactive online map. The tables for each program are still provided as well. The map allows the user to see the project in its context. More information about the project and a link to the program tables is available on the side of the map. Also, a Google Street View has been integrated. In addition, there are new review elements for equity and congestion management. These were in response to recommendations from the FTA and FHWA from the MPO's four year certification review. Information at the project level will inform decision making for the Technical Committee and Officials Committee. It will apply to new projects as they are added to the TIP, starting with this TIP for most programs. The TIP review will be integrated with other MPO plans and processes such as the LRTP and the MPO Congestion Management process through these review elements. There is an equity goal in the LRTP to help identify underserved and overburdened communities. Analysis will be done for the proposed projects. Also in the LRTP, project scoring was done. The score will be included in the analysis. The Congestion Management is a required adopted document due to the size of the Metropolitan Planning Area being over 200,000 people. It identifies congested corridors and also has some strategies listed to help address congestion from a variety of different directions. Some analysis was done in the LRTP using modeling to identify congested areas. Information from the Congestion Management Plan and LRTP related to congestion mitigation will be included in the review of new projects.

A new project proposed for this TIP qualifying for these new reviews is the W. South Street bridge over Salt Creek. This is a new proposed Lincoln Transportation and Utilities (LTU) project. There will be a variety of benefits with this project and analysis provided on the equity and congestion management reviews was included in the staff report.

The Planning Commission will be briefed on the proposed TIP on April 19, 2024. The Officials Committee will hold their public hearing on May 10, 2023. The MPO will then submit the TIP to the State for inclusion in the State TIP. Ultimately, the proposed TIP will go into effect on October 1, 2023. TIP amendments that were acted upon earlier in this meeting are included in the proposed document.

Cary appreciates everyone's work. It is a joint document in process that everyone takes part in at some point. There is a lot of funding that flows through this document.

ACTION:

Elliott moved approval of the FY 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program as recommended by staff, seconded by Barnes and carried 16-0: Barnes, Bergstrom, Bishop, Cary, Cosier, Dingman, Elliott, Figard, Fisher, Goodbarn, Hartzell, Lay, Legg, Rouse, Sokolik and Wacker voting 'yes'; Oelke and Shafer absent.

REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND SCHEDULE FOR THE NEW MPO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN:

Christopher stated this is another required document by the federal government. The Public Participation Plan (PPP) explains the MPO processes, and tools and strategies that we use for projects and efforts. It was last updated in 2014 and is due for an update. We are required to periodically review and update the document to ensure it continues to represent a full public participation process. We are hoping to have the PPP Update process take place during the 2023 calendar year. Staff has identified a few aspects thus far to be considered in terms of making the plan a little more streamlined and easier to digest, adding more visual aids, and considering new methods of public input that could be integrated such as virtual public involvement and online commenting tools. We have already started doing some peer review research to learn what other MPOs are doing. We also want to look closer at monitoring how effective the plan is over time, and are looking at ways to evaluate that. This was another recommendation from our federal certification review. The tentative schedule through May is focused on internal staff assessment of the document. In June, there would be a 30-day solicitation of input from interested parties and stakeholders, followed by input from the MPO Administration Committee, publication of the draft for a 45-day comment period. We will then incorporate any comments and take it back through the Administration Committee before hearing and action before the Technical and Officials Committees. We are excited to update this plan and encourage everyone to help send out word of the outreach when we get to that point.

Dingman inquired if it is a requirement to look at the current plan periodically. She noted it was revised in 2014 and new in 2010. She asked if there is a requirement to update this every ten years. Christopher responded that the regulations aren't that specific. They just speak to keeping the plan up-to-date and

periodic assessment. Cary added any updates that may be appropriate would also be done following periodic review. Doing LRTP during the Covid pandemic with use of online tools was interesting and will inform this process quite a bit. Bergstrom added that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is encouraging a full review of equity aspects. Barnes noted that the FHWA/FTA comments were specific about measuring outreach as part of this update. Staff would encourage any helpful ideas.

Dingman asked if the revisions are being done in-house. Christopher replied yes and added that any thoughts would be appreciated.

OTHER:

- **NDOT – coordination of discretionary grant applications**

Jarrod Walker from NDOT spoke and introduced Jodi Gibson with him who manages local systems development. He is happy to talk about any more details after the presentation. There is \$66 billion available in funding from the bipartisan infrastructure law. RAISE and a number of new grants are included. It is a long list of grants. To find out more, he would encourage everyone to look on NDOT's website at information available on federal grants through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). Summaries include eligible entities and funding available, along with program objectives. Another aspect of federal discretionary grant applications is that federal grants come with federal strings. You have to have matching funds available, typically with an 80/20 match. NDOT highly encourages all communities looking to pursue a federal grant to communicate with his or Gibson's team. NDOT can provide letters of support. A competitive grant application comes down to the type of program it is, public benefits, equity and climate change. The more you can demonstrate these are addressed through the project and application, the more beneficial it is. If you win a grant award, there is can be a lot of requirements that come with it and he would invite reaching out to himself or Gibson with any questions. NDOT can assist with grants through their strategic planning division, explain the grant programs, and explain the application process.

Gibson stated that there are some things people don't realize about the process, such as that NDOT or FHWA will help to administer the grant. If you win these discretionary grants, there is a long process to get a grant agreement approved. That process has taken anywhere from eight to twelve or eighteen months. Remember that funds aren't released until the grant agreement is approved. You pay all costs out of pocket until the agreement is approved. If you receive a grant, FHWA will reach out to work with you on it. If you use FHWA to administer, all procurement and everything else must be approved by FHWA, which can take quite a bit of time.

Dingman announced she just found out that eight states received bridge grants, although Lancaster County wasn't one of them.

Figard wondered if someone is awarded a grant, he understands that a separate grant agreement has to be put together. Gibson answered it is about five or six pages. The amount of comments that come back can be overwhelming.

Elliott stated she had high hopes one of their agreements might be done this summer, but it is looking like they will not be finished until the end of the year. Gibson stated that you need to make sure that if you are thinking of starting a project and hiring consultants, make sure you are setting yourself up in terms of preparation beforehand. Elliott reiterated that there is no pre-award authority before the paper grant is signed that will pay for associated work.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No one appeared.

Figard made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Elliott and carried 16-0: Barnes, Bergstrom, Bishop, Cary, Cosier, Dingman, Elliott, Figard, Fisher, Goodbarn, Hartzell, Lay, Legg, Rouse, Sokolik and Wacker voting 'yes'; Oelke and Shafer absent.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m.