

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:	June 21, 2021, 10:00 a.m., City Council Chambers, County-City Building, 555 S. 10 th St., Lincoln, NE
MEMBERS AND OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:	David Cary – Planning Department; Pam Dingman – Lancaster County Engineer; Elizabeth Elliott – Lincoln Transportation and Utilities; Paul Barnes – Planning Department; Gary Bergstrom – Health Dept.; Rich Bishop – Urban Development Department; Ron Caldi and Erin Sokolik – Lincoln Transportation and Utilities; Michael Davis – StarTran; Roger Figard – Railroad Transportation Safety District; Stephanie Fisher – City of Waverly; Craig Wacker – Nebraska Dept. of Transportation; Chad Lay – Lincoln Airport Authority; Sara Hartzell – Parks & Recreation; Larry Legg – Lancaster County Engineer; Kelly Oelke – City of Hickman; Kellee Van Bruggen – Planning Dept.; Tom Goodbarn absent. Allan Zafft and Teresa McKinstry – Planning Dept.; Roma Amundson – County Commissioner; Brian Praeuner – StarTran; Jenny Young from Felsburg, Holt and Ullevig appeared online via © Zoom Video Communications; and other interested citizens.

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

Elliott then requested a motion approving the minutes of the meeting held April 19, 2021. Motion for approval made by Barnes, seconded by Legg and carried 16-0: Barnes, Bergstrom, Bishop, Caldi, Cary, Davis, Dingman, Elliott, Figard, Fisher, Hartzell, Lay, Legg, Sokolik, Van Bruggen and Wacker voting 'yes'; Oelke absent at time of vote; Goodbarn absent.

REPORT ON THE 2050 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND PRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSED RECOMMENDED RESOURCE ALLOCATION SCENARIO

Members present: Barnes, Bergstrom, Bishop, Caldi, Cary, Davis, Dingman, Elliott, Figard, Fisher, Hartzell, Lay, Legg, Oelke, Sokolik, Van Bruggen and Wacker voting 'yes'; Goodbarn absent.

Jenny Young appeared via Zoom. She explained an overview of the schedule to convey the urgency of the need for direction from this group. This is regarding the recommended Resource Allocation. The hope is to have a solid recommendation after hearing from this group and the Officials Committee on Thursday, June 24, 2021. This will help to establish the Fiscally Constrained Plan by the end of the week, and then the next step is to conduct the travel demand modeling with the projects in this plan. This is a critical path to get ready for the August 2021 public comment period. We hope to have adoption of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) in December 2021. She wants to review the draft transportation policies today as well.

Young presented a PowerPoint. She noted that most of this information has already been seen, but there have been some refinements. We start with the 2022 revenue estimate and apply the annual growth rate that varies depending on the revenue source. We use that to establish 29 years of revenues, 2022 – 2050. Over the 29 years, there is an estimate of \$4.5 billion revenue we are dealing with. We identify revenue sources that have specific commitments such as FTA funds that must be used for transit. Commitments are things like Lincoln On the Move Projects that are committed to specific projects. That is about \$3 billion. That leaves around \$1.5 billion of flexible funds. We are assuming a general fund transfer to transit and trail, a general level of funds along with \$1 million of sidewalk. Some of those funds are fully flexible including the Surface Transportation Program and three funding sources such as the remaining wheel tax, remaining general funds and the highway allocation fund. She wanted to make clear that this recommendation has been developed based on analysis, input from the community and ongoing coordination with the Project Oversight Committee along with Technical Committee and Officials Committee. A handout was previously distributed regarding the Recommended Resource Allocation. The chart shows the recommended allocation. The categories are Nebraska Dept. of Transportation (NDOT), Lancaster County Roadways, Lincoln Roadways, Trails Bikes & Pedestrian and Transit. This is \$240 million STP funds which are flexible. The recommendation is a 70/30 split between Lincoln and Lancaster County. Within the 30 percent to Lancaster County, 20 percent would be used within the three mile area to help the transition of rural roads to Lincoln. The remaining 10 percent will be used outside the three mile area. In Lincoln and Lancaster County, we find that there is a significant shortfall. We feel with the recommended resource allocation scenario, we will be able to optimize the available funds and enable a functional transportation system. There is a clear need for more funds though. The NDOT Highways Program in the LRTP identified ten NDOT projects within the Lincoln MPO area totaling over \$612 million dollars. \$415 million in State and Federal funding is dedicated to the NDOT Highways Program. There is not enough to fund all ten projects. Construction costs are expected to increase annually.

The LRTP accounts for 10% annual inflation in the first 5 years, 7% annual inflation in the next 5 years, and 5% annual inflation in the remaining years through 2050. The LRTP lists the regional priorities. The projects were evaluated and prioritized. Priority 1 is the South Beltway and 2 is the West Beltway. For Lancaster County Rural Roads, there are three categories. Capital Projects are \$188 million. Pavement Maintenance and Pipes are \$258 million, and Operations & Maintenance are \$392 million. The funding gap identified in the 2018 study is expected to continue without additional revenue streams. For the Lincoln Urban Area Program, the revenue forecasts are not enough to address the transportation needs in Lincoln. The community has consistently prioritized that maintaining streets and bridges is the top priority. For Lincoln Transportation and Utilities (LTU) Operations and Maintenance, the funding needs exceed the projections included in the 2040 LRTP. The 2022 estimate in the 2040 LRTP was \$20.51 million in needs. The 2022 budget was \$24.77 million. The 2040 LRTP estimated an annual inflation rate of 2.5%. The current estimate is 2.75%. That is based on increasing costs for materials, wages and health care. This adds up to a higher O&M cost. The combined effect is a 25% increase over the life of the plan over what was anticipated. This requires about one third of the total available funding. \$1.08 billion was identified to fully fund Operations and Maintenance. \$518 million is needed for Road and Bridge Rehabilitation. That would fund rehabilitation at a level commensurate with what was included in the 2040 LRTP. That program includes a combination of funding commitments. \$91 million goes to Studies, PE, ROW and Statutorily Required Records. This program is essential to fully fund staff functions. For Roadway Capital Projects, the LRTP identifies 116 capital projects totaling \$1.7 billion dollars. A \$500 million allocation would fund 44 projects. This includes road impacts fees, Federal Funds Purchase Program, Highway Safety Improvement Program, 25% of Lincoln On The Move (LOTM), 25.14% of wheel tax, 40% of Highway Allocation Bond and no flexible funds. The remaining 72 projects would be unfunded. A LOTM ¼ cent sales tax and highway allocation bond would allow the City to do more projects in the first four years. 15 projects are committed, 9 are priority growth projects and 20 are fiscally constrained projects. The Lincoln Urban Area Program is where we could see some funding gaps. For two plus center turn lane projects, \$17 million could fund 2.4 miles of 2 plus 1 projects done opportunistically with rehabilitation. The next category is ITS and Technology. This includes a \$59 million allocation for continuation of existing programs such as Green Light Lincoln. It would not support the large capital costs to invest in new technologies. East Beltway Preservation is showing \$23 million to preserve a portion of the 960 acres of land needed. Next is Trails Bikes and Pedestrian. Trails projects includes a \$28 million allocation that would fund 30 out of the 64 trail projects. This is all committed or restricted funding. The Trail Rehabilitation Program would include a \$14 million allocation that could reconstruct about 16 miles of trails. The estimate is that 100 miles of concrete trails will reach their 50 years life expectancy by 2050. There are ten committed trail projects and 20 fiscally constrained projects. The On-Street Bike Projects include an allocation of \$6.5 million. This could restripe approximately 35 miles of bike lanes. This is one of the more cost effective and lower cost items included in the Lincoln Bike Plan. Pedestrian and TDM is a \$37 million allocation that could replace 46 miles of sidewalk. That includes the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) commitments and a \$1 million annual General Fund transfer. LTU

has identified \$1.5 million as the desirable amount to continue the sidewalk rehabilitation program. We might want to scale this down to \$1 million. The Lincoln Urban Area Program has a dedicated funding program. The Rail Crossing Program has \$236 million of committed funding. Transit has a \$667 million allocation which will allow for continuation of StarTran's current service levels. It will not enable service extensions or local match contributions to major projects seeking federal funds. In light of the funding shortfall, we have looked at a couple of different scenarios. If the quarter cent sales tax were to be extended over the life of the plan, there would be \$380 million in additional revenue. This could construct 30 additional roadway capital projects or rehabilitate an additional 210 lane miles of roadways or provide more adequate funding to address transit, pedestrians or bicycle needs. We also looked at increasing the sales tax ½ cent through 2050 and the numbers double. There would be an addition of \$760 million. Other new funding sources should be considered in addition such as grant opportunities.

David Cary commented that in perspective, he understands that the ½ cent additional sales tax would mean 60 projects out of the unfunded 72 could be funded. Young stated that was accurate. Cary noted there would be a similar impact on road rehabilitation miles. It would cover a significant chunk of the need. Young can provide the number of miles for rehabilitation. Cary believes if the ½ cent could be obtained, Lincoln would be positioned much better to identify the needs. He would make a similar comment regarding the County side. Additional revenues would create an opportunity to address our needs.

Young opened up the conversation for discussion. She was hoping to get support on the recommendations. She asked for any comments or suggestions.

Pam Dingman stated that she wanted to thank Young and the team. It is easy to come up with a resource allocation when you have plenty of funds. She knows it is more difficult when the funds aren't there. She thinks that this plan needs to be used as a call to action in order to take our growing community forward. She has been in communities where there isn't growth. We are gifted with growth and need to come up with a plan to accommodate the growth for the future.

Elliott believes in the need to highlight the investments in the future. It clearly is not enough as we look down the road. This reflects those needs.

Stephanie Fisher expressed support for the Lancaster County projects. Waverly and Hickman continue to grow and the continuity to the City of Lincoln is important. Most Waverly residents work in Lincoln or Omaha. Continuity of those roads are very important. She fully supports that and the East Beltway. Waverly supports anything that can help support anything in the Lancaster County area.

Dingman reiterated Fisher's concern for the East Beltway.

Roger Figard is with the Railroad Transportation Safety District (RTSD), but he is also speaking as Chairman of the Board of Public Roads for the State of Nebraska. He is the previous project manager for the South Beltway. He pleads that the corridor for the East Beltway be saved. The blessing of a county that is growing brings added needs. He suggested he doesn't think it is appropriate or possible to stop where we are and move ahead. As we look at strategies and funding in the future, there has been a significant shift from geometric based design to performance based design. That means geometrics are very important and a great place to start, but also over the last 40 or 50 years, statistics show roads that don't need all those geometrics have performed well. That means some roadways could be reconstructed or built not always going to the full reconstructed potential. This might help offset some inflationary cost. The Board of Public Roads now has authority administratively to create programs for practical design. The board is currently working closely with the NDOT for performance based design looking at cost benefit ratios. The board intends to engage on those programs and see what kinds of suggestions they may have in terms of saving dollars. This is an encouragement to look at this change and see if perhaps it could save us some money. He would be happy to facilitate a presentation if those discussions move forward.

Ron Caldi is not sure about the relinquishment of Highway 2 in the future. He inquired if that is included in the calculus of needs. Young is not sure that has been explicitly accounted for. We have the operations and maintenance that has been calculated based on historic levels. Caldi sees 50 some lane miles the City will be responsible for. There are some maintenance agreements that perhaps could be utilized. It is a significant expansion of the system. Elliott knows those discussions are ongoing with the State. That is something we will have to keep our eyes on over the next couple of years.

Cary stated this is a call to action when speaking to the needs that will not be met over time. We have a real time example of what we can do over time with the ¼ cent sales tax. We have that additional revenue source. Year five drops. If we can somehow bolster that discussion to talk about what it means for us to build better and maintain better, he thinks that is a great way to make the argument for the sales tax increase.

Allan Zafft will take all the comments and provide to the Officials Committee.

Elliott called for any other concerns or comments. She believes there is a consensus that more funding is needed. There were no more comments.

Young shared the draft policies with the group. Previous feedback has been incorporated. She wanted to make sure there weren't any outstanding comments or issues on the 18 transportation policies. Elliot called for any further comments. There were none.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.