

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: August 26, 2022, 3:15 p.m., City Council Chambers, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th St., Lincoln, NE

MEMBERS AND OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: David Cary – Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department; Pam Dingman – Lancaster County Engineer; Elizabeth Elliott – Lincoln Transportation and Utilities; Paul Barnes – Planning Dept.; Gary Bergstrom – Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Dept.; Brian Praeuner – StarTran; Kris Humphrey, Thomas Shafer and Erin Sokolik – Lincoln Transportation and Utilities; Larry Legg – Lancaster County Engineering; Dan Marvin – Urban Development; Maggie Stuckey-Ross – Parks and Recreation; and Craig Wacker – Nebraska Department of Transportation; (Stephanie Fisher – City of Waverly; Tom Goodbarn – Nebraska Department of Transportation; Kelly Oelke – City of Hickman; and Stephanie Rouse – Planning Dept. absent). Rachel Christopher and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Dept.; and other interested parties.

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

Dingman then requested a motion approving the minutes of the meeting held April 14, 2022. Motion for approval made by Shafer, seconded by Elliott and carried 10-0: Barnes, Bergstrom, Cary, Dingman, Elliott, Humphrey, Legg, Praeuner, Sokolik and Shafer voting 'yes'; Humphrey, Marvin and Stuckey-Ross abstaining; Fisher, Goodbarn, Lay, Oelke and Rouse absent.

REVIEW AND ACTION ON REVISIONS TO THE FY 2023-2026 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP); A. US-77, PRINCETON ROAD TO N-33 – UPDATE PROJECT COSTS IN THE STATE OF NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

Members present: Barnes, Bergstrom, Cary, Dingman, Elliott, Humphrey, Legg, Marvin, Praeuner, Shafer, Stuckey-Ross, Sokolik and Walker; Fisher, Goodbarn, Lay, Oelke and Rouse absent.

Rachel Christopher stated this is an amendment to the Nebraska Transportation Program for US-77 from Princeton to Highway 33. This will update the project costs under Fiscal Year 2022 to reflect the latest construction and construction engineering estimates.

ACTION:

Shafer moved approval of the revision to the FY 2023-2026 TIP; US-77, Princeton Road to N-33 – update project costs in the State of Nebraska Department of Transportation Program, seconded by Marvin and carried 13-0: Barnes, Bergstrom, Cary, Dingman, Elliott, Humphrey, Legg, Marvin, Praeuner, Shafer, Stuckey-Ross, Sokolik and Walker voting ‘yes’; Fisher, Goodbarn, Lay, Oelke and Rouse absent.

REVIEW AND ACTION ON REVISIONS TO THE FY 2022-2023 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)

Members present: Barnes, Bergstrom, Cary, Dingman, Elliott, Goodbarn, Humphrey, Legg, Marvin, Praeuner, Shafer, Stuckey-Ross, Sokolik and Walker; Fisher, Lay, Oelke and Rouse absent.

Christopher stated this is for an amendment to the work program which is the budget for PL fund activity. This updates the transit program to reflect the correct amount in the Funding by Task chart. When the work program was originally drafted, we didn’t have the amounts for Section 5303 funds. Staff is updating the document to include the correct amounts.

Praeuner noted that we previously had the amount used last year as a placeholder as recommended by the Nebraska Dept. of Transportation (NDOT).

ACTION:

Barnes moved approval of the revision to the FY 2022-2023 UPWP, seconded by Elliott and carried 14-0: Barnes, Bergstrom, Cary, Dingman, Elliott, Goodbarn, Humphrey, Legg, Marvin, Praeuner, Shafer, Stuckey-Ross, Sokolik and Walker voting ‘yes’; Fisher, Lay, Oelke and Rouse absent.

BRIEFING ON TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Praeuner stated that StarTran wrapped up the Transit Development Plan (TDP). The consultants were here a few months ago to brief this group. A TDP is a detailed review of the entire system. It sets needs and opportunities, identified community priorities and recommendations to make StarTran more effective and efficient. In 2016, there were some route changes. This study was doing fine tuning at the time. We looked at the paratransit system as well, along with ridership and destinations. There is a five year strategic plan with short and long term recommendations. They spent a lot of time on fare analysis. There was a lot of community input during this process. Near term service improvements include addressing on-time performance issues. Example of routes that they are looking at improving are Route 40 and Route 53. They need to address on-time performance issues. They are looking at additional service to Kawasaki. Route 44 will address on-time performance issues as well, along with reduce conflicts with traffic and pedestrians. Some long term improvements will be to utilize the four year vision to address growth, support economic development and respond to public priorities. We need to restart our core services. We heard from public about more crosstown routes. The downtown trolley will be expanded to better serve University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL) and the Telegraph District. There are new on-demand zones. They showed future improvements for the five year plan based on public input and ridership gains. One

of the first items is to restore core services. Service frequency is a future improvement. They did a fare analysis as part of the study. During an on-board survey they asked what was more important, making service enhancements or maintaining free fares. They have been fare free for UNL students for over two years now. They looked at foregone fare revenue and increased operating costs. Based on peer review, they found StarTran had the highest base fare of any peer agency. Our fare is \$1.75 compared to \$1.25 for peer agencies. We do not have a day pass. We propose to implement that. The consultant found that we are a leader among peers through the low income fare program. Some alternatives identified are to continue to operate with the 2019 fare structure, operate a fare free service and implement a modified fare structure.

Barnes asked when these changes get implemented. Praeuner replied they were planning on this fall but decided to hold off for a while. They don't have a date yet.

Marvin inquired what payment methods are accepted for riding the bus. Praeuner replied you can use cash, purchase a pass at various outlets or purchase a ticket through an app. The app was implemented two years ago. Marvin asked if the app was in-house. Praeuner replied it is third party. Elliott added that there is a lot of technology involved. Our current fare box isn't set up that way. It is in the TIP to upgrade the boxes and technology in the next few years. They have met with Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) to help with messaging.

Cary wondered about the effort to attract more drivers. Elliott stated they are doing a hiring campaign. There will be a hiring event on October 12, 2022. You can come in and meet current StarTran employees. They have met with Metro and they said one thing that helps is to process applications much faster. They are going to try it. They are currently 25 operators down.

Barnes understands that on-demand areas and growth has been identified. He wondered if there has been any discussion about adding other areas in the future or if that is based on the number of drivers. Praeuner replied they need to test the market. Barnes sees some areas that might have a distance to walk to get to a route. Praeuner noted they are going to test the market and see what happens.

Praeuner continued that StarTran received a grant just a few weeks ago for a multimodal Transportation Center. The service center will be in the middle. Some features are a climate controlled indoor passenger waiting area, restrooms, customer service center, administrative offices on the second floor, eighteen separated bus bays, and capabilities for inter-city transit buses between Lincoln, Omaha and Grand Island. There will be protected passenger boarding, environmental sustainability including nine in-route charging stations for 13 electric buses, a driver breakroom and 600 parking spaces. The grant we received is separate from parking. He showed some views of the proposed building. The funds are from a 2022 RAISE grant (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity). This was the eighth application they made for this grant. StarTran was awarded \$23.6 million. This is funded through the Dept. of Transportation. RAISE awarded \$2.2 billion for 166 projects nationwide. These grants are very competitive. There were over 1,000 grants. The criteria was for safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, economic competitiveness, innovation, partnership and collaboration and address racial equity.

Cary commended StarTran on persevering through many years and applications to receive this grant.

Barnes wondered if the parking can be designed and built later. Praeuner doesn't know. They will kick off the planning and environmental design next year. Elliott noted the plan will be part of the Public Building Commission. There is an upcoming meeting with some experts on how we are going to manage all this. Praeuner noted that employees wondered where they will park during construction. These are items they are working out.

Marvin questioned if the idea is to take down the existing garage. Elliott replied that is the most likely scenario. This is still very preliminary. There are a lot of questions and discussion is needed. Marvin stated that to rebuild will likely mean employees will pay more for parking.

OTHER:

- Shafer stated that Lincoln Transportation and Utilities was recently awarded two safety projects. This will come forward at the next meeting of this group with some amendments for review. One is Nebraska Parkway at 70th Street, east bound movement to south bound and a desire for a south bound turn lane. The other is 84th St. and 'O' St. improvements. They will work on the programming.
- Dingman stated that she put in a request to add shoulders on 14th St. from Lincoln city limits to Raymond Central. This is part of a new NDOT program for roads that have more than 1,000 cars and widening is 28 feet. Legg put it together and we received a quick response that was favorable. As we look at the TIP over the next four years, we can see some exciting changes.

Cary believes this is all good news when you think about how much is getting done. Safety projects are very important.

- Wacker stated that the City of Lincoln will be getting an allocated portion of funds on projects that meet a car reduction standard. He will send the information to Rachel Christopher. He has put together a fact sheet. There isn't a lot of guidance yet from Federal agencies. Anything that is eligible for TIP is eligible for carbon reduction funds. There is also some unique stuff regarding certain construction materials, sequestration of carbon and replacing traffic signals or lights with more energy efficient lighting.

Barnes asked if there is a requirement for a strategic plan to be in place. Wacker answered that the State needs to put together a strategic plan that will involve the Metropolitan Planning Agencies (MPO's). They are in the process of hiring a consultant. The money is in the bank. Programming those funds can be started.

- Barnes acknowledged Rachel Christopher as the new transportation planner. This is her first Technical Committee meeting.
- Praeuner introduced StarTran intern Kayla. She is assisting on some projects.

Cary made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Elliott and carried 14-0: Barnes, Bergstrom, Cary, Dingman, Elliott, Goodbarn, Humphrey, Legg, Marvin, Praeuner, Shafer, Stuckey-Ross, Sokolik and Walker voting 'yes'; Fisher, Lay, Oelke and Rouse absent.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.