

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Wednesday, May 23, 2007, 12:00 p.m., Rm. 113,
First Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street,
Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jon Carlson, Gene Carroll, Michael Cornelius, Dick Esseks, Gerry Krieser, Lynn Sunderman, Mary Strand and Tommy Taylor. Roger Larson absent.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Kent Morgan, Stephen Henrichsen, David Cary and Michele Abendroth of the Planning Department; other interested parties.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Transit Development Plan Briefing

The meeting was called to order at 12:03 p.m.

Cary opened by stating that he is briefing the Commission on the Transit Development Plan (TDP). The study purpose is to develop near-and long-term policies and actions, enhance service and improve efficiency. There has been a detailed public involvement effort with public open houses, stakeholder meetings, drop-in sessions, public meetings of the Advisory Committee and an on-board user survey.

They have developed service standards and policies, completed a Comprehensive Operation Analysis, developed management and funding options, and developed a near-term service proposal. It is important to keep in mind that we are in a tight budget crunch this year, so they have used the same amount of service hours today but have re-designed the routes and service levels. They also have developed long-term service options.

Public open houses were held at the end of March. Plan adjustments were made in April and May with the review process scheduled in May, June and July. The City budget approval is in August 2007. The transit plan marketing will take place at the end of 2007 and beginning of 2008. The plan will be implemented in June of 2008 pending approval.

For the near-term proposal, they have created a more efficient and enhanced fixed-route bus service, added new neighborhood routes and enhanced downtown shuttle services. They have used a revenue neutral strategy with the current funding levels.

The weekday fixed route service proposal used new service standards to develop routes, has downtown interlining of routes, and concentrated service on major streets. There will be 30 minute peak service with 60 minute off-peak service on most routes. There will be

a 14 hour service day with 6 hour peak service.

Strand asked about the school children riding the bus and the amount of time it takes to get to school. Cary stated that they currently have a school booster service which will stay in place. Neighborhood routes have been added as well, which may help some schools.

Two neighborhood routes are being proposed. One will serve the south and east neighborhoods to South Pointe and Westfield Gateway, and the other will serve the northeast neighborhoods via Westfield Gateway. These routes will not go downtown.

The Saturday fixed-route service proposal will have downtown interlining of buses, concentrated service on major streets, replicates weekday routes with some exceptions, has 60 minute service on most routes with a 12 hour service day and no neighborhood routes.

Carlson asked about the target demographics. Cary stated that they heard many comments from seniors about getting to medical facilities. Census information such as median household income and number of cars per household were used to determine areas in most need of transit service.

Esseks asked about posting the route times at the bus sites. Cary stated that StarTran has received federal funding to implement automated vehicle locator as well as real-time bus tracking. The timing of the routes is such that time is not being wasted but drivers will not leave stops early either.

Taylor asked if there will be Sunday service. Cary stated that is a long-range service option but is not high on the list of priorities.

Cornelius asked how they accounted for potential new ridership. Cary stated that they are estimating there will be an increase in new ridership by the end of the first year.

Cary continued his presentation by stating that the downtown shuttle concept supports the Downtown Master Plan. The shuttle will run along P and Q Street which is the primary retail corridor. There will be frequent service and will possibly set the future framework for a streetcar. Service will go to the Haymarket and the University campus. The daytime route will run from approximately 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. and will serve the weekday downtown businesses and workers. It is free to ride both at day and night. The nighttime service provides service until midnight, services the evening entertainment and retail corridor and will operate Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. The daytime shuttle does not run during the day on Saturday. The buses will be branded differently than the fixed-route buses. This is a commitment to downtown.

There is a net increase of on-street downtown parking with increases on 13th Street and O Street. There will be impacts at the Gold's building and at the State Office Building where second stops will be needed.

Future expanded service considerations are contingent upon additional funding. The top two requested services are expanded evening service and increased service on key routes. Other future service possibilities include expansion to new generators and neighborhoods, express buses, park-and-ride, demand/response and a downtown streetcar.

Capital improvement possibilities include vehicle replacement, bike racks on buses, new downtown transfer facility, additional transfer facility, park-and-ride, a future trolley service, transit enhancements, real-time bus tracking and AVL technology, a bio-diesel fuel program, security enhancements, and new fare boxes.

The next steps in the study process include the final TDP Advisory Committee meeting, the StarTran Advisory Board public hearing on June 16, StarTran Advisory Board action and the City budget approval process.

Strand asked if communication has taken place with Lincoln Public Schools to ensure their needs are met with summer school. Cary stated that special StarTran bus service provided to the schools, also called booster services, will continue to be provided as they are today. Those services have not been studied as part of the TDP process and are considered to be the same in the future. Changes or additions to booster services in the future are possible based on changing needs and continued discussions between StarTran and LPS. Cary also stated that regular fixed bus route service to middle schools and high schools was a consideration in developing the proposed route structure. Middle and high schools are well served under the proposed route structure.

Cary stated that they feel they have a very good plan to move forward with, and they are hopeful they can implement the plan in the near future.

The meeting concluded at 12:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Abendroth
Planning Department