

WORKSHOP NOTES

NAME OF GROUP:	PLANNING COMMISSION
DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:	Wednesday, July 27, 2011, 11:00 a.m., Room 113, County-City Building, 555 S. 10 th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska
MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:	Michael Cornelius, Dick Esseks, Wendy Francis, Roger Larson, Jeanelle Lust, Jim Partington, Lynn Sunderman and Tommy Taylor; Leirion Gaylor Baird absent. Marvin Krout, Nicole Fleck-Tooze, David Cary, Mike DeKalb, Sara Hartzell, Brandon Garrett, Shusei Kakimoto and Michele Abendroth of the Planning Department; Jeff Searcy, Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission.
STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING:	Draft LPlan 2040/LRTP Workshop

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act was acknowledged.

Fleck-Tooze stated that there are two workshops scheduled to discuss proposed changes to the draft LPlan 2040. The organizing principle for the workshops is the staff responses to the LPAC questionnaire. She noted that any proposed changes will be documented in a table.

Fleck-Tooze began the review with Esseks' questionnaire. She noted that Esseks' first question on vision statements will be addressed later. Fleck-Tooze provided clarification on Esseks' next question on the 50-year time period by noting that the Plan looks beyond 30 years in some cases.

Esseks' next question is regarding infill and redevelopment, particularly the number of dwelling units, and if there are examples from other cities to give confidence in the numbers. Fleck-Tooze stated that staff gave a presentation to LPAC at the October 6th meeting and cited a number of examples from other communities. Staff is confident that this is a reasonable projection. Esseks stated that he is concerned about the total of 8000 dwelling units and noted that there has been criticism from several sources including the Chamber and LIBA regarding those numbers. He would like to see examples from peer cities. If this is a policy choice that will drive future decisions, we need to make this as strong as possible. He believes this is a vulnerable part of this Plan. Krout stated that the criticism was referring to a more aggressive growth scenario, and since then, he has heard that all the sources are comfortable with the Plan, the assumptions and distribution of the population. It is possible to go in more depth in the Plan to try and justify it, but that would be unusual. Cary stated that the biggest criticism is how to reduce the barriers to do this. The implementation section includes

information on how to take those steps. Esseks stated that he is comfortable with that answer.

Fleck-Tooze stated that another suggestion made by Esseks is the omission of references to “prime” agriculture. Staff agreed with this suggestion and it has been identified as a proposed change.

The next concern raised by Esseks is the potential for acreage development in outlots previously created through a CUP that clustered development in the AG-zoned area. Staff is recommending that no change be made since the review process for a change of zone in this type of circumstance would offer the opportunity to address these concerns based on the factors already included in the Plan. Esseks stated that maybe this is something that should be proposed sometime in the future as an ordinance change. Krout stated that the issue of ag clusters could be revisited in the future. He understands the principle, and we should look more closely at the sensitive areas.

Another issue identified by Esseks is the criteria for evaluation of proposed acreage development. That criteria is identified in a general way on page 7.12 of the Neighborhoods & Housing chapter. Lust stated that just so it is very clear for those looking at purchasing property for acreage development, she believes it would be good to note on the land use maps that just because a particular area is designated a certain way on a map, they still have to meet the standards on page 7.12. Francis stated that she believes that is a good idea as it is important to note that more research may need to be done by the purchaser. Krout noted that there is a footnote on the land use maps reflecting that, but it could possibly be enhanced.

Another issue was regarding the services provided by the County Health Department and the Community Mental Health Center. Staff understands that the issue of services provided by these agencies is broader than the question of privatizing this sector of public health services in the County. It is expected that the current services will continue. Cary noted that there may be a repackaging of the services provided. Esseks stated that he would put a red flag here, as he believes this could diminish the credibility of the Plan if we identify an agency that doesn’t exist. He suggested a more generic description. Cary asked the Commissioners how they feel about making a more general statement that those services are important. Commissioners felt that is a good suggestion.

Esseks’ next question is regarding providing justification for the reductions for community and neighborhood parks. Staff has identified additional language to address the level of service for Community Parks, Neighborhood Parks and Aquatic Facilities. Lust understands the cost constraints, but it is an unfortunate situation. We need to look at other ways of financing. Krout stated that a neighborhood in another city saved their pool by creating a special assessment district, and this is perhaps one way pools could be saved in Lincoln. Staff will visit

with Lynn Johnson regarding this issue. The Parks Department has worked with the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board on these recommendations, but the neighborhoods were not involved in the discussion. Esseks stated that we should encourage looking for innovative financing strategies so that we can continue with our goal of having a walkable community. We recognize the financial constraints, but we are going against other goals. Larson stated that the matter of equity is important as everyone is entitled to the same level of service. Sunderman noted that in this day and age, kids do not ride their bikes to pools as when he was a kid. He believes that possibly the community pool is more efficient as more kids carpool to the pools. Lust stated that part of the Plan is to get things back to how they used to be. Taylor stated that he would like to explore the reasons for having the pools and the goals of Parks & Recreation, and he believes one of the goals should be a healthy, vibrant community. Connectivity is also important. Larson stated that he agrees with that. Every community should have a center with a pool, a community center and playground, but he understands the budget constraints. Krout stated that these are important issues, and possibly we could get Lynn Johnson to attend the next workshop to discuss these concerns. Partington stated that when he was a kid, all of his activities took place within bike riding distance. But he doesn't see that happening today as most of the activities are too far to ride their bike. Francis stated that realistically, some kids have to walk 3 miles to get to school. It is not realistic to think that we can walk to all of our activities and services because the City has grown so much. Cary stated that he is hearing that there needs to be a balance, and to try and strike that balance is a goal. Lust stated that the more we can make the community walkable, the better we will be. Larson stated that this is a real challenge in developing a sense of community. We need to be aware of that and have language to recognize that situation. Fleck-Tooze stated that there are some references to this, but staff can review this in terms of striking that balance.

Fleck-Tooze stated that the next set of comments is from Gaylor Baird. Her first suggestion is regarding the addition of a statement on socioeconomic challenges. Staff agrees with this suggestion and has identified proposed text for the Plan.

The next suggestion is regarding the mitigating impacts on environmental, social and cultural resources. Staff has suggested additional text to strengthen this section.

Another question raised by Gaylor Baird is regarding the Planning Department's role in mixed use redevelopment. Fleck-Tooze stated that the Plan assigns responsibility to Urban Development to implement the strategies identified in that chapter, and the Planning Department will have a secondary role in supporting Urban Development in these efforts.

The next issue raised by Gaylor Baird is that she believes there is more emphasis on multiple modes of transportation in the Vision & Plan chapter than the Transportation chapter. Cary stated that the financially constrained plan needs to reflect a reasonable projection in the future. The reality is that the majority of the population will use a vehicle for transportation

and we are reflecting that reality. The Plan is updated regularly, and the assumptions will be updated as things shift and change.

Another issue raised by Gaylor Baird is regarding single occupant vehicle trips. Staff has recommended text changes in the Environmental Resources chapter to address this.

Gaylor Baird also asked how Tier III was defined. Fleck-Tooze stated that Tier III is unchanged from the 2025 and 2030 Plans. This area is based very broadly on the natural drainage basins and a multidirectional growth assumption.

Gaylor Baird also suggested strengthening the statement on changing development patterns from “may” warrant to “will” warrant changes to effective emergency response. Staff agrees with this suggestion and has proposed this change in the Plan.

A concern raised by Bill Langdon was regarding a public policy chapter. Fleck-Tooze stated that the Plan Realization chapter includes considerable direction to future development. Staff is not recommending any change at this time. Francis stated that she believes the Plan Realization chapter is basically a public policy chapter, and she doesn’t believe anything further is needed. Cornelius stated that the Plan is intended to encourage special action, and sometimes the call to action gets lost in the more general guidance aspects of the Plan. Lust stated that it is important to recognize that LPAC reviewed the Summary Document, and not the entire Plan. In looking at the entire Plan, some of those public policy items are identified in the Plan. Krout stated that this could be handled in two ways: public policy goals could be identified in the Plan or it could be a separate document. Lust stated that she believes that the public policy details should not be in the Plan; rather, there should be a separate report from the Planning Commission. Esseks stated that their role is to be advisors to the City Council and County Board on land use issues, and he believes identifying those goals and strategies in a separate document would be beneficial.

Larson stated that an issue he has a concern with is acreages. We are trying to preserve agricultural land but yet we waste agricultural land. He believes this issue needs to be addressed, and one of the ways could be through a CUP. He noted that he lives on an acreage and acknowledged that acreages are part of the problem.

Fleck-Tooze stated that the next set of comments is from Steward. His first suggestion is regarding downtown being identified as a vibrant mixed use neighborhood and is a walkable and bicycle-friendly environment. Staff agrees with this suggestion and has proposed text to address this issue.

Esseks asked about a grocery store downtown. Krout stated that Steward has filed an application which would place a restriction on bars in the downtown area. He is suggesting that we are not being careful enough about the placement of bars downtown. He has a group which would like to have a co-op grocery in downtown, and that property has been purchased

for a bar. Larson stated it is not just the downtown residents who would support the grocery store, but the people who work downtown. Preservation of the area around the capitol is very important to our community, and we need to recognize that our community has a statewide obligation to preserve the capitol as well as the University. He believes there should be some language to reflect that. Krout stated that the Placemaking chapter discusses the importance of the capitol. Fleck-Tooze stated that the Vision & Plan chapter also has a statement regarding that.

Another suggestion identified by Steward is the addition of a reference to endangered species in the Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability section. Staff agreed with this suggestion.

The next suggestion is regarding GIS being used to designate inappropriate areas for acreage development. This strategy is already identified in the Neighborhoods & Housing section.

The next suggestion is regarding wayfinding and coordinating with the Green Map. Staff is not recommending any changes.

Steward also suggested strengthening socio-cultural and technologies domains. Staff is not recommending any changes.

Steward also suggested that a statement be added regarding resilience and preparation for potential natural disasters. Staff has proposed a new section on community resiliency. Lust noted that in Gaylor Baird's absence, she would like to note the issue of fire and rescue response time. Krout noted that at this point, a general statement seems more appropriate.

Sunderman's comments include identifying 3 dwelling units per gross acre. Staff agrees with this change.

Sunderman also suggested a stronger statement about the importance of keeping a strong Lincoln, Lancaster County by balancing the interests of its parts with the interests of the whole. Staff has identified proposed text changes to address this concern.

Woudenberg's comments included that she is disappointed that there is not more emphasis on public transportation. Fleck-Tooze stated that transit is an important component of successful mixed-use projects, and the Plan is identifying the need to go in a new direction for transit.

Lust stated that she would like more information on The Regional Comprehensive Plan identified in The Community chapter. Krout stated that he was pleased with that Plan and supports many of the principles identified. Cary noted that the tone of this report is consistent with the tone of the Plan. Esseks stated that one of the considerations is how the regional plan coordinates with the city and county plan. Lust stated that she believes if it is identified in the Plan, there needs to be some mention of how it affected the Plan.

Fleck-Tooze asked the Commissioners if they feel the second workshop is needed. Esseks

noted that if there are consistent issues identified by the public, he believes a discussion on that would be warranted. Lynn Johnson will also be invited to attend the August 10 workshop to discuss the parks issue on level of service.

The specific language proposed by staff can be found on the LPlan 2040 web page at lplan2040.lincoln.ne.gov under the Committee tab.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

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