

BRIEFING NOTES

NAME OF GROUP: PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Wednesday, August 24, 2011, 11:45 a.m., Room 113, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Michael Cornelius, Dick Esseks, Wendy Francis, Leirion Gaylor Baird, Roger Larson, Jeanelle Lust, Jim Partington, Lynn Sunderman and Tommy Taylor. Jon Carlson, Near South Neighborhood Association; Rick Hoppe of the Mayor's Office; Marvin Krout, Nicole Fleck-Tooze, David Cary, Sara Hartzell, Brandon Garrett and Michele Abendroth of the Planning Department.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Draft LPlan 2040/LRTP Briefing

The meeting was called to order at 11:45 a.m. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act was acknowledged.

Krout introduced Rick Hoppe to present information on the budget changes. He briefly reviewed the documents before them including the recommended changes to LPlan 2040 and the Long Range Transportation Plan as well as the public comments received to date. He noted that there are major changes to the Transportation chapter due to additional funding that was received. He noted that there was a \$17 million dollar gap in funding, and this will cut into that and allow more projects to be completed

Hoppe thanked the Commissioners for their work on the draft Comp Plan and Long Range Transportation Plan documents. He explained that there is an extra \$7 million in the budget, which has changed the circumstances for the draft document. He wants to explain the rationale and the shift in funding. About \$2.7 million of the additional funding came from LES. There was also an increase in wheel tax, which would generate another \$4.4 million. \$2.5 million of the additional funding will be put toward new road construction and \$4.6 will be for street rehabilitation. The Taking Charge budgeting process reached many citizens and asked for input on the budget. Roads were a big issue identified because of the impact on job creation and growth. The legislature also passed LB 84 which allocated more money for State roads. This will very likely move up the timing for the South Beltway project. We wanted to make sure there was enough capital for the City to take advantage of that without impacting the other roads projects. Keep in mind that the LRTP as proposed does not have the South Beltway in the Plan. We also were cognizant of other opportunities that may arise as the economy recovers. The expansion of NW 48th and NW 40th could be accelerated. These are a couple of examples at the bottom of the list that we wanted to make sure funds were available. All the City Council members that voted in favor of this budget had specific recommendations from their constituency about how to use the funds. There was a lot of

discussion about how the funds should be split between rehab and new construction. This was an imperfect compromise, but he thinks we have progressed toward the objectives that have been laid out in the Comp Plan. There is still more work to do in other areas. Sidewalk rehabilitation did not receive the funding that had been identified. The good news is that the Mayor is dedicated and detailed, and he will continue to work on this. The Mayor believes this is a significant step forward, but not the end of the conversation about the objectives that have been identified.

Esseks noted that there is enough money for street rehab and roads, but asked what the deficit areas are. Hoppe stated that the deficits are pedestrian/bicycle rehab, sidewalks and other rehabilitation needs like bridges.

Lust asked if there has there been a move from rehab to new construction. Hoppe stated that we are not putting as much money into the rehabilitation piece.

Cary reviewed the handout on the LRTP Funding Summary. In the first column, this is an average of the money spent over the past few years. The next column, Draft Financially Constrained Plan, is formally what is up for consideration now. The Revised Financially Constrained Plan is the new funding based on the new budget considerations. The biggest shift is in roadway capital which increased from \$12.4 million to \$20.5 million. Cary also reviewed the 2040 LRTP Capital Roadway Projects and Prioritizations table which identifies funded projects through 2040. Due to the budget changes, we are able to fund 15 more local projects plus the South Beltway local share. He noted the State projects have been fully incorporated in the table as well.

Esseks noted that road rehabilitation is being increased from \$6.9 million today to \$11.5 million in the revised Financially Constrained Plan. Larson noted that during the public process for the Comp Plan, the public indicated they felt that rehab was a priority.

Gaylor Baird asked about the future in terms of closing the gap for maintenance. Cary stated the reality is that we still need more money for rehab.

Lust asked if we plan to do an analysis of how getting more capital projects and cutting the pedestrian rehabilitation portion impacts the rest of the Plan. She asked if we are encouraging more sprawl when we have a Plan that encourages density. Cary stated that the projects are still within our current future service limit, so he does not believe we are taking away from the opportunity to do infill. If we don't keep up on rehab, we are making our neighborhoods less walkable, so we need more funding in the future. We have added strategies in the Implementation section of the Transportation chapter to work toward getting more funding. Cary stated that the Needs Plan is still a major component of the new Plan. We consistently will be saying that we need to get increased funding.

Esseks asked if there is any hope for improving curbs and sidewalks in the Roadway Capital Budget. Cary stated that there is going to be a lot more street rehabilitation, and curbs and sidewalks will be done with the street rehab.

Cary noted that the majority of the additional Transportation amendments are due to this additional funding in the budget.

Next, Fleck-Tooze reviewed the additional changes to LPlan 2040 since the August 12th change document.

Lust asked if Commissioners could be briefed on the staff response to the changes recommended by the Near South Neighborhood Association (NSNA). Fleck-Tooze noted that the first four recommendations have been included in the August 12th change document. Items 8 & 9 have been incorporated in the August 24th change document. Staff is not recommending any changes in response to Items 5, 6 and 7.

Fleck-Tooze noted that in addition to the Transportation chapter, the major changes being recommended since the August 12th change document include a minor revision to the transfer of development rights strategy, changes to the Guiding Principles in the Neighborhoods and Housing chapter, a revision in the strategy on renovation of neighborhood pools, and a new strategy under Buildings and Landscaping in the Energy chapter. She also noted a change in the Priority Growth Tiers with Priority Areas map to display undeveloped and partially developed land along N. 84th Street as "Tier I, Priority A (Developing."

Cornelius suggested a minor revision to Item 6K for clarification purposes, as follows. "... especially when neighbors express opposition to the project, a reaction that is understandable when proposals have not been anticipated in neighborhood plans, or when ...". Fleck-Tooze indicated that staff will make this change.

Esseks asked for further discussion on the NSNA recommendations. Krout stated that staff identified areas around the City for infill opportunities. Staff tried to quantify what the real potential was. He believes there would be difficulty trying to find a place for 1,000 more downtown housing units. When we looked at existing neighborhoods, there were 1,000 vacant lots. If they all got 1 unit, that would solve the problem. It may also happen through intensification of some existing developments. That category also includes accessory dwelling units, which we have put emphasis on in the Plan. If you spread 1,000 units over 50 square miles, that would be an average of 20 dwelling units per square mile of land that contains 3,000-5,000 people already. We felt 1,000 was small, but 1,000 units times \$20,000 per unit is a savings of \$20 million for the City. This is something we felt should be encouraged. This is consistent with everything that we have said in the Plan, and we think it should be a part of smarter, more efficient thinking.

Lust commented that she believes people do not realize there are that many vacant lots.

Gaylor Baird stated that she believes the concern is the quality of the construction and if it will fit the neighborhood. She asked if the Plan could be more explicit that design standards will help prevent some of the past issues and will create density that is acceptable. Krout stated that staff has worked with Jon Carlson and the recommended changes include language of “well-designed and appropriately-placed” when referring to redevelopment.

Krout reviewed the remaining changes recommended by NSNA. NSNA had a concern with the language in the Obstacles to Redevelopment section. We started out by noting what we have heard in the community regarding issues for redevelopment, and we felt it was important to document that in the Plan. NSNA felt it wasn’t necessary to document the issues. Gaylor Baird feels it is critical information, but questions whether the problems need to be identified as it has not been done anywhere else in the Plan. Esseks stated that he agrees with Gaylor Baird. Krout stated that if a Commissioner would like to develop some language, it could be considered at the September 7 hearing.

Krout stated that the last item identified by NSNA is regarding Planned Unit Developments (PUD). One easy way to try to reduce barriers to development and provide more flexibility is to reduce the 3 acre minimum land area size for a PUD. PUDs are a way to integrate a mix of uses and be more flexible about parking and setbacks. Especially in older neighborhoods, there is not a way to waive those requirements unless you are expanding a non-conforming use, which is not always the case. A PUD is a good tool to try to encourage creative, flexible development. The proposal is to change the language to “consider reducing the area for a PUD.” He noted that Commissioners could make that amendment on September 7 if they agree with the language. Gaylor Baird felt that more conversation is necessary on this language to consider design standards and compatibility. Lust asked if this would create administrative problems. Krout stated that this is just one tool in the tool box, and we would hope to develop other tools.

Larson asked about the \$20,000 dollar figure identified by Krout. Krout stated that if you add up the total cost of roads, water and sewer and the proportional part of expanding the treatment plant, it comes up to \$20,000. Larson asked how much of that is covered by impact fees. Krout stated that is about \$6,000. Larson then asked what the impact fees are for infill. Krout stated that discussion has taken place on reconsidering policies on impact fees for infill and redevelopment. If you have a vacant lot, there would not be any impact fees. But if you are increasing the density, you have to pay that \$6,000 even though you may not change a thing about the roads, water or sewer. Larson stated that may be one way to encourage more infill. Krout stated that the plan does talk about reconsidering the impact fee policies.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:52 p.m.