

## BRIEFING NOTES

*Advanced public notice of the Planning Commission briefing was posted on the County-City bulletin board and the Planning Department's website.*

**NAME OF GROUP:** PLANNING COMMISSION

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:** Wednesday, November 18, 2020, 2:00 p.m., Council Chambers, County-City Building, 555 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Lorenzo Ball, Tom Beckius, Dick Campbell, Tracy Corr and Dennis Scheer; Tracy Edgerton, Deane Finnegan, Cristy Joy and Cindy Ryman Yost absent.

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** David Cary and Andrew Thierolf of the Planning Department; and Kris Humphrey of Lincoln Transportation & Utilities.

**STATED PURPOSE:** Briefing on the “33rd & Cornhusker Subarea Plan”.

Chair Tracy Corr called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the back of the room.

Andrew Thierolf stated this was originally submitted in January 2019. It was unanimously recommended for approval by the Planning Commission. The application was withdrawn prior to City Council action when it became clear that the preferred alternative at that time was going to change. This re-submitted plan shows a new street alignment, and there have been some other minor changes, but it is essentially the same plan as was seen in January 2019. The full plan is available at: <https://www.33rdcornhusker.com/>. Staff is making some minor changes to the subarea plan as we speak. The biggest change is for the 44<sup>th</sup> St. alignment. The updated plan is now available on the project website. This is tied to the 33<sup>rd</sup> St. and Cornhusker Hwy. realignment project that has been going on for several years now. Olsson Associates has been working on the entire project. For context, he showed a map of the subarea plan. The subarea plan outlines the vision for improvement, beautification and overall revitalization of the entire subarea. He showed the illustrative plan. This plan overlays a lot of different plans and discussions into one map. It shows potential redevelopment sites, new sites and a lot about the transportation network. We are also showing some future projects which aren't part of the current plan. The Land Use Plan is the other piece. The overall theme is creating a more mixed-use environment. Some other elements are quite a bit of greenspace. The plan calls for preserving much of the floodplain and floodway. Other items shown are the commercial corridor, light industrial and business flex parks. When staff looks at developing business guidelines, we want to make sure they are developed in a less piecemeal manner. Another important piece is that we want to have logical transition zones. The southeast and north sides

are almost all residential. This plan talks about making sure we have appropriate transition zones. A few key mixed-use redevelopment nodes are noted on the map, at both 33<sup>rd</sup> & Cornhusker and the future 33<sup>rd</sup> & Superior. The plan also looks at façade enhancement locations. There is quite a bit of vacant land that is available for development in the subarea, and the plan includes recommendations for developing the land. The final map for Aesthetics and Quality of Life Plan recommends streetscape improvements, intersection enhancements and other items. Since January of 2019, there has been quite a bit of public engagement, along with numerous one on one stakeholder meetings. There was a public scoping meeting in June 2019. There has been some great outreach happening over the last year and a half. This all started with the Planning and Environmental Linkages study that was completed in 2016. There have been open houses, a public design charrette, a visioning session and an online survey. The other piece is the Corridor Enhancement Plan. That will be an internal advisory document. The Corridor Enhancement Plan covers more area. It identifies potential opportunities within the right-of-way, and design standards recommendation for private property. Some of the items that are referenced in this plan are streetscape, pedestrian network, lighting and other items. He showed some examples of conceptual intersection improvements for N. 56<sup>th</sup> St., the future Salt Creek Roadway and the future N. 33<sup>rd</sup> St.

Kris Humphrey is the RTSD (Railroad Transportation Safety District) manager for this project. This has been a lengthy project. It is rooted in safety. Their objective is to improve the safety at the intersections. They want to reduce delay time and improve travel time. There are about 65 trains a day that use this corridor and about 20,000 vehicles. Train blockages happen about 15% of the time. This project is important for the whole State of Nebraska. In terms of the transportation project, they started taking a hard look at this in 2015. Staff has been working with the Planning Dept. on the Corridor Plan, as well as the Subarea Plan. There were numerous meetings and groups before the pandemic began. The alignment was chosen. PEL modified C is the current alignment. The RTSD board took action on this. There is federal funding involved. An environmental assessment was done. She showed the current RTSD project. It could be constructed as soon as 2026. The proposed scope of work is the closure and removal of the two at-grade railroad crossings at N. 33<sup>rd</sup> St. and Adams St.; the realignment of N. 33<sup>rd</sup> St. to intersect with Cornhusker Hwy. at approximately N. 31<sup>st</sup> St., including an overpass over the BNSF railroad; connecting Adams St. to the new alignment of the N. 33<sup>rd</sup> St. overpass; and roundabouts at N. 33<sup>rd</sup> St. and Adams St. and at N. 33<sup>rd</sup> St. at Huntington Ave. Now we are in the environmental planning stage. We are anticipating a public hearing in fall of 2021. It takes about a year to go through public comment. After that is three to four years of planning, the final design and right-of-way row acquisition. The Deadman's Run project overlaps this project and the Salt Creek floodplain. The Deadman's Run project starts at Cornhusker Hwy. and extends through East Campus. The channel will be widened to improve capacity. Bridges at 33<sup>rd</sup> St., 38<sup>th</sup> St. and 48<sup>th</sup> St. will all be reconstructed. There is a small tributary that parallels the east side of State Fair Park Drive. There is proposed to be a detention basin west of the ballfield. We are looking at the impact this would have to the area. We hope to have the hydraulic model done in

January. This is a Corp. of Engineers project. It is also being coordinated with the City, University of Nebraska Lincoln and the RTSD.

Campbell inquired where the restaurant is located. Humphrey pointed out the location of Virginia's Café. Campbell inquired if their concerns were addressed. Beckius believes they won't be impacted. Humphrey doesn't believe they will be impacted, other than construction. This was talked about with the Advisory Committee. There are a lot of different environmental conditions. There were also some socio-economic conditions that were considered. The owner of Virginia's Café, along with other business owners in the area, were on the committee. She doesn't believe they were opposed to this. The access will be different than what it is now. There are some intersections that are open now that will be closed median in the future.

David Cary commented that effort was put into making sure as many businesses as possible were located. The RTSD did a lot of work and met with many people. He believes we are in a much better spot than last time. The alignment isn't a lot different than previously proposed. He understands that not everyone will be in favor of this. He believes we have made a great deal of progress and improvement. This is a big project that has a lot of impacts. The subarea plan is meant to show a positive vision of the area and its potential.

Beckius believes that this will be game changer for 33<sup>rd</sup> St. and Cornhusker Hwy. in a positive way. He understands that individual property owners will be impacted by this. He thinks as a community, we can all see the vast benefits of improving this area. He thinks this will be a real benefit. He questioned the intersection of 44<sup>th</sup> St. and Cornhusker Hwy. and if it was decided to do anything at this time. Humphrey stated that decision wasn't made lightly to leave it from the project. They looked at three different options to accommodate pedestrian needs. We had community conversations. We talked about economic and social issues that could potentially affect this. Going through the environmental process and taking a systematic look, we talked with the advisory group and received feedback. There were some issues with the underpass. There are also two main water mains that feed Lincoln. With the overpass, we received feedback that people with mobility issues would probably not use such a high overpass. It didn't make sense to move forward at this point in time. It doesn't mean it is off the table. She believes it will still be on RTSDs radar.

Campbell inquired if 44<sup>th</sup> St. will be enhanced. Humphrey responded this is already a quiet zone. It already has the improvements needed for a quiet zone.

Corr asked if doing this with Deadman's Run will create any efficiencies. Humphrey believes this will solidify things. We will be taking a look at both projects. We keep taxpayer dollars in mind. When we look at the 33<sup>rd</sup> St. structure, there are two different options. A bridge would allow us to move the trail to the south. There is a lot of overland flow that feeds into Deadman's Run. All

the water has to go somewhere. There are a lot of things to consider in a tight area. She noted that the City also has two rehab projects going on for Adams St. and Huntington.

Corr thanked Humphrey for all the work on this.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.