

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, March 31, 2021, 12:00 noon, Council Chambers, County-City Building, 555 South 10 th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.
MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:	Lorenzo Ball, Tom Beckius, Dick Campbell, Tracy Corr, Tracy Edgerton, Deane Finnegan, Cristy Joy, Cindy Ryman Yost and Dennis Scheer.
OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:	David Cary, Steve Henrichsen, Paul Barnes, Allan Zafft, Kellee Van Bruggen and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Dept.; J.J. Yost of Parks and Recreation; Pat Borer of Lincoln Fire & Rescue; Elizabeth Elliott of Lincoln Transportation and Utilities; and other interested parties
STATED PURPOSE:	Briefing on the “Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)” .

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

Paul Barnes welcomed everyone. Staff took a light approach on the CIP since this is another one-year budget due to the pandemic. The TIP is another four-year program for conformity with the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) as part of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) process. These will both be before Planning Commission on April 14, 2021 for public hearing.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

Kellee Van Bruggen stated that the CIP is for the fiscal year 2021/2022 – 2026/2027. Today we will focus on the CIP process. We will discuss Planning Commission duties and Planning Department highlights. This year has been a little atypical. It was an abbreviated process. We asked departments to look at years two through six and make adjustments. From there, Planning staff entered the data and created the draft CIP. Now we have a draft that we are working on finalizing. It will be available for public comment and hearing in April. The first year goes to City Council with the budget. We anticipate the next round of CIP will be back to biennial. In a normal year, the Mayor sends out a letter to the different departments explaining what is being requested. This year, the letter came from the Planning Department noting a different schedule.

Year One advances as part of the City's budget. We ask for revisions to timing and funding as necessary. Looking to new Year Six, we extended funding for projects that typically have funding to Year Six, but no new projects were added. We go through a finding of conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. This year was a streamlined process. We didn't anticipate many new projects. There was a smaller group that met where they discussed general revenue for Year One and other projects of importance. The draft that staff is bringing forward for a public hearing will be presented at public hearing for public comments.

Staff does the initial review for projects that are brought forward. Projects can be in conformance with the plan, generally conform with the plan, not in the plan or not in conformance with the plan. Most projects generally conform with the plan. Some factors used in the recommendation is the explicit reference in the plan. Plan intent can be a little trickier to decide. Location, timing and project definition and description are other factors used in the recommendation. On the City charter side for the capital project reassessment, the charter specifically states that 'useful life of fifteen or more years' is a critical requirement for determining capital projects.

Department highlights:

Aging has one project for replacement of two transport vehicles.

Libraries has the replacement of the Downtown library and upgrading of all libraries. Another item is the replacement of the bookmobile.

Lincoln Electric System (LES) follows a separate budget cycle. They submit projects to us after they have approved their projects by the LES board. They are working on converting overhead lines to underground lines.

Parks and Recreation has a couple of ongoing projects. Projects regarding the Emerald Ash Borer are ongoing. Parks also has the Wilderness Park Master Plan. The public gardens greenhouse has advanced and is fully funded. They grow annuals for Sunken Gardens. Additional funds were added for the Air Park Recreation Center.

Public Safety includes Lincoln Fire Department and Lincoln Police Department. There are funds for modifications and repairs. A joint Public Safety request is for a new Emergency Operations Center.

Urban Development Department has the Downtown irrigation project, West 'O' Entryway project, Downtown public improvements and parking operations.

Finance has a project for technology enhancement to streamline some operations in the City and County.

Broadband lists funds to replace and update infrastructure for public and private use.

Solid Waste has biogas for vehicle fuel project in Year Two.

StarTran is showing their maintenance facility construction and relocation for Years One and Two. This is the bulk of the funding. Also shown is replacement of 14 buses and the purchase of three charging stations. The Multimodal Center is in for design work. They will also be updating their Transit Development Plan in Year 1.

Wastewater reorganized their projects into infrastructure and new growth in the last CIP. Growth projects are focused in Stevens Creek and Salt Creek.

Water is looking at a new source of water and accumulating funds to be able to do that. There is also the ongoing replacement of lead lines.

Watershed Management is requesting a G.O. Bond in years 3 and 6, which is a typical cycle for their program.

Transportation shows main project categories of Transportation System Optimization, Transportation System Preservation and Transportation System Growth. There is also a base level for sidewalk repairs. Additional funding needs are shown in future years.

The website has been updated for a new format. The draft CIP will be available soon. This will appear for public hearing at Planning Commission on April 14, 2021. The findings are forwarded to the Capital Improvements Advisory Committee, then onto the City Council. The first year of the CIP will be adopted as part of the City's budget.

Dick Campbell wondered about the greenhouse that Parks and Recreation wants to build. He inquired if any determination has been made that there is significant savings to build a greenhouse and grow their own plants. J.J. Yost replied yes. Plants are currently grown under a contract. The contractor is indicating they would like to discontinue the contract. New estimates were significantly higher. We looked at the costs and owning and operating a greenhouse was the more cost efficient way to go.

Campbell would like further explanation of the Emergency Operations Center. Pat Borer stated that the Emergency Operations Center is technically a County operations center with Jim Davidsaver. The E-911 Center is a joint request with the Police Department. The current center was remodeled a few years ago with the understanding that a new, larger center would be needed in the future. As the City grows, we are looking for a new site for the E-911. The Lancaster County Emergency Operations Center is where the Emergency Manager works out of on S. 14th Street. Before that, they shared space with the Emergency Communications Center for 911. Both of those groups were growing so large they couldn't continue to occupy one space. The CIP shows the City project for the E-911 Communications Center.

Campbell inquired if the 911 Center is moving out of the building next door. Borer replied yes. When that building was renovated, 911 knew it was just a short term fix. The City is growing and outgrowing their current space.

Ball asked if the CIP will be available on the City website. Van Bruggen responded yes, it will be on the website. Staff is working on finalizing some details and when it is available, we will let you know.

Ball inquired how you distinguish between the TIP and the CIP. Van Bruggen noted that the TIP is federally required. It is important to have transportation projects in both locations. Sometimes projects have federal funding and the TIP shows or confirms the match, and that funding is confirmed. This is important to have. The TIP and CIP should mimic each other. The TIP is part of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) which also lists the Lincoln Airport Authority, Railroad Transportation Safety District, Lancaster County and others that the City doesn't show.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Allan Zafft stated that the TIP is reviewed for conformance with the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The TIP is one of the key projects of the Lincoln MPO. We need to list the projects to meet federal requirements. The purpose is to provide a coordinated list of projects. This is coordinated with the State TIP. We submit our TIP to the State of Nebraska and they reference it in their State TIP. The TIP is a four year schedule of projects. It can be amended throughout the year to add, delete and modify projects. Projects come from the LRTP. This TIP is financially constrained. It must indicate the project's funding, its schedule and phase. The TIP is coordinated with plans from the City, County and State. The State's plan is the Surface Transportation Program, and Lancaster County's plan is the One and Six Year Program. The TIP encompasses projects in the MPO planning area. Our planning area is Lancaster County. The MPO Project Coordination Committee of the Technical Committee meets throughout the early process to coordinate projects and funding. The TIP must go through public review. Planning Commission holds the public review. All comments received go in the final document. The TIP also goes to the Technical Committee for review. After that, it goes on to the Officials Committee. It is then submitted to the State to include in the State TIP.

Division highlights:

State of Nebraska has 11 projects. They include resurfacing, bridge replacements and maintenance projects.

Lancaster County has 7 projects. They include safety projects, four capital roadway projects and a bridge replacement project.

Lincoln Transportation and Utilities has categories of projects. There are nine projects of note in Transportation System Preservation. They receive federal funding. Transportation System Optimization has six projects. Four capital projects are shown.

StarTran has 13 projects consisting of bus and transit replacement, charging stations, updating their software and the Transit Development Plan update.

Lincoln Airport Authority has 10 projects, including rehabilitation and construction.

Pedestrian, Bike and Trails has 3 trail projects.

RTSD shows the 33rd & Cornhusker project.

The Selection Committee met four times. The TIP will be before Planning Commission on April 14, 2021, Technical Committee on April 19, 2021 and Officials Committee on May 19, 2021. The MPO then submits the TIP to the State for inclusion in the State TIP. Nebraska Department of Transportation holds a public review and then it goes to the Federal Highway Administration in September for approval.

Finnegan asked about the potential for relocating the StarTran maintenance facility. Elizabeth Elliott stated this is currently one of their goals. They are moving down the road to a larger facility, a multi-modal facility. They are in the process of applying for grant funding.

Joy questioned as we tie in the Climate Action Plan with improvement infrastructure plans, how do we program in floodplains? How does that modify when we do infrastructure? Barnes believes it happens at multiple levels. There are Comprehensive Plan Growth Scenarios where we try to keep growth outside the floodplains. As we look at transportation improvements, there are eight goals in the LRTP. One of them has to do with environmental impacts. There is an environmental component to each project in the LRTP and this is carried over to the TIP.

Joy wondered what happens to the ten year plan when the Corp. of Engineers adjusts the floodplain boundaries. Elliott stated that this comes up in a number of different areas. Sometimes it is a map revision with the Corp of Engineers. We are also working on floodplain resiliency studies. In the future, it is part of the Climate Action Plan. The need to update the flood maps is known. The Corp. of Engineers doesn't do that for us. It is a lengthy and expensive process. This will be discussed over the next few years. There is also the Salt Creek Resiliency Study as well.

Zafft stated that the TIP is currently available online.

David Cary wanted to note we will be getting the CIP published soon and will let you know.

Finnegan thanked everyone for a very concise presentation. She questioned if the CIP is more of a 'must do' than a dream list. Cary would say it is both. Last year and this year, the CIP has been one year due to Covid. The rest of the outer years are a planning document to show needs with a sense of realism. Finnegan appreciates the work.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

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