

MEETING RECORD

Advanced public notice of the Urban Design Committee meeting was posted on the County-City bulletin board and the Planning Department's website.

NAME OF GROUP: URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Tuesday, May 5, 2026 3:00 p.m., County-City Building, City Council Chambers, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, NE.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mark Canney, Jill Grasso, Tom Huston, Michelle Penn, Emily Deeker and Gill Peace

ATTENDANCE: Michael Harpster absent

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Arvind Gopalakrishnan, Paul Barnes, Collin Christopher, and Kristi Merfeld of the Planning and Development Services Department; Liz Elliott of the Lincoln Transportation and Utilities Department; Cole Wycoff of HDR and other interested parties.

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

Penn said the Urban Design Committee's action today is final action on all items on the agenda

Penn then called for the approval of the minutes for the regular meetings held on April 7, 2026

Motion for approval of the minutes made by Huston, seconded by Deeker, and carried 6:0; Canney, Deeker, Grasso, Huston, Peace, and Penn voting 'yes'. Harpster absent.

ADVISE:

Advisory Review and Final Action

UDR26045- Star Tran Multi Modal Transit Center**May 5, 2026**

Members present: Canney, Deeker, Grasso, Huston, Peace and Penn. Harpster absent.

Deeker and Penn stated that they would recuse from any commentary on the item today.

Arvind Gopalakrishnan, Planning and Development Services Department, 555 S 10th Street Ste 203, Lincoln, NE came forward and stated that the proposed multimodal transportation center is a city led project located in downtown between 9th and 10th Streets and G and H Street This will place a new operations building South of the City County building. It will include customer service windows and a large public waiting space and administrative spaces for LTU staff. West of the new building a large bus loading and unloading zone comprising of 19 bus parking bays, and will facilitate bus transfers for Star Tran passengers. This project was presented in 2024 when the discussion focused on site selection and the impact studies and factors affecting community engagement efforts. This has shaped the project and now the applicant has returned to present detailed and updated concept drawings for review and final action. It is located within a public use zoning district and is receiving federal funding. This represents a significant addition to the city's transit infrastructure. While no formal design standards apply to this site, the project occupies a prominent and contextually sensitive location adjacent to the City County building to the North and residential uses to the South. There are small scale office buildings to the East and West. Project civic significances and relations to the context staff is requesting the Urban Design Committee review and take final action on the following items. Façade treatment, selection of materials including considerations of durability and long term maintenance and overall color palate. Landscape design site, furniture amenities and their contribution to the overall passenger and visitor experience. Placement of the operations building bus vehicular parking and overall approach to on site circulation. Wayfinding signage and legibility of the facility for transit users and the general public and the overall design approach with respect to massing transparency and visual connection to the surrounding public realm. Gopalakrishnan said it would be handed over to the design team to present.

Liz Elliott, Director, Lincoln Transportation and Utilities Department, 555 S 10th Street Lincoln, NE came forward and stated that this is a LTU project and has been 2 years since this has been discussed with this group. It is mainly funded with the federal

transit administration's funding. It had to be reviewed and signed off on the design. This is now ready to move forward and that is super exciting. We wanted a multi modal transportation center, but not like some of them across the US. We wanted something with a park and so HDR is the partner and has designed something based on the requests. We also wanted it to be as green as we can be and fit into the campus here as a whole, but a little more modern and inviting and also a safe place for people. We serve over a thousand people a day, so there will be a big influx of people not only using the transit but also the neighborhood. There was a lot of outreach done at the beginning to get feedback from people and then turned it over to HDR who has delivered a exceptional product. Elliott stated that Cole would now go through the details of the project. We wanted it to be environmentally friendly, but chose not to go through a leads approval due to cost and time. There is a lot of solar and a living green roof. The geothermal is being covered by a Nebraska Environmental Trust Grant. There is also an electric bike station and LED lighting, so a lot of different components in funding and people are involved.

Cole Wycoff, HDR 1248 O Street, Lincoln, NE came forward and stated that HDR and Olsson are partners to help shape this project. The initial charge of this project was to take a heavy occupied site and translate it into a transit facility that also feels like a park. We started thinking of this as a public amenity for outdoor space and also a place where people can access services provided by LTU in the City of Lincoln. H Street is planned to be decommissioned in between the block of 9th and 10th Streets. Entrance to the bus bays on the West side of the site is approximately in the same location where H Street cuts through and connects to 9th Street. Then an outdoor public pedestrian only amenity will go in its place. This facility will feel and function as much like a park as it can. There are 7 project principles that have been developed and established. They are to create a facility that supports affordable and reliable service and sustainable service needs for the City of Lincoln. Also that it is safe, universal and accommodating in a way that is climate smart while prioritizing equity. There has been a lot of emphasis in becoming fully integrated with the downtown multimodal network and tying into pedestrian pathways. Another principle is to manage connections to bike services and bike resources and all things multi modal in the City of Lincoln. It is sort of the gateway to the downtown environment, especially for the people on S 10th Street.

We wanted to support this neighborhood and be a good neighbor to the residential area of South, West and East. Also add flexibility to how this facility might evolve and change overtime. Wycoff mentioned that some of those elements would be discussed today. On 8th Street looking West and looking at the North side there will

be a pedestrian plaza space where today is a streetscape. The plant life and vision for this space will be pollinator friendly and intended to be sort of the first step for the team in thinking about this as more of a park like setting. It will have outdoor seating and shade by some of the trees that are planned to be planted in this area. There is a lot of transparency on this side of the building. The ground floor on this half of the first floor is where the public waiting space will be located to maximize transparency from inside to out and back again. This helps promote security and visibility to the bus transit elements on the West and support the facility itself. Architecturally it was very important to not only be a thoughtful neighbor to the neighborhood, but also to the buildings that we are in right now. That played a strong part in how we thought about cladding the building and composing the fenestration on the building. There is a strong emphasis in the vertical window pattern and the patterns in general on the façade that are to be a direct corollary to this building. It draws inspiration from the formal and stately nature of the architecture of this building, while not exactly replicating some of those architectural elements.

It is also driven in part by how to organize the vehicular traffic, especially the bus traffic on the West side of the site. That is a huge component of the master plan and master planning process. The site was driven by the traffic patterns and bus movement patterns and all the intricacies of making that work. There is a solution that organizes a series of bus bays in parallel paths running North and South on the West half of the site. The bays where the buses turn into park are angled slightly and create a saw-toothed curb line. This promotes an easier path of travel for the bus operators, as they come in and park. It also makes a response to that geometry in a way that helps support those angular moves, so the canopies are aligned to the buses in a series of parallel lines that are slightly askew. The street grid creates this overlay of the bus traffic geometry with a sort of rectangular street grid. The architectural response properly aligns the East edge of the building as we work from the West to East with the same back line of the city county building. It is intended to be a direct correlation to this building.

Wycoff stated that this site plan shows the improvements that we are talking about on the West and the series of bus bays, that give the capacity for up to 19 buses to be parked at any given time. This is composed of 18 bays in this loop on the West side. There is also a drive by drop off lane that can facilitate potential future inner-city buses as well. 15 of the bays have a canopy associated with them. The images do a better job of showing the alignment of the canopies to the geometry of the curb line. There is a detailed plan of what is envisioned for this pedestrian plaza. On the North side of the site, it is a bit higher as we go South. There are steps on the West and steps on the East

to help manage that great change on the far right. This is the bike link parking and are going to support another bike link series of stalls. The floor plan of the ground floor on the Northern half is the most transparent. This will be the waiting space for folks coming to wait for their transport options. There is a service desk, restrooms and security offices. There will also be some meeting spaces on the second floor, that the city will have control over having it open or locked down for privacy. There is an emphasis on a pattern of architectural themes from this building to bring to the new building. Also there will be a bit of an overhang where the building cantilevers and provides a bit of relief at that corner and interest in addition to the transparent zones. The material palette is very modest and simple. The primary material is an exterior ultra high performance concrete product. The soffit and overhang will be an aluminum wood look material. Wycoff passed around a sample of the material being used.

We wanted to incorporate some warmth and natural tones to the project, while providing maintenance durability. Those were important issues brought up from LTU and the city during discussions. This led toward a wood look product as opposed to a natural wood and would play nicely with the flora being planned on site as well. The furniture that is planned will be benches installed underneath the canopies for people waiting for buses as well as for public plaza space. Also in support of the multimodal mission, bike and scooter storage plays an important role. On the Southeast corner of the site will be an electrical screen composed of the same type of construction method and wood like aluminum product cladding those screening elements. In addition to the canopies themselves, we have monument signs that show up at every bus bay to give people a bit of wayfinding to help them find their destination. A more bronzed metal panel is being included to augment some of the neutral tones and on the left side is a screen element that has the wood look aluminum. The canopies are important component of the project. They provide shade and help power the facility. They are composed of a steel frame on top with a translucent photovoltaic glass panel system and the panels help meet the aggressive plan for this project called net zero ready. . This means it is going to generate up to 110% of the energy demands, by using these panels. We will also have geothermal heat loop system. This is a strong point from day one, as the city has an aggressive climate action plan.

Wycoff displayed some more views looking at the buses and how they address the canopies and can see the modular approach to how the canopies are constructed and composed on site. The individual bays will fit together creating this composition of folded forms. It helps create a feeling of safety for people as they sit and wait for the bus without being too opaque and creating security concerns. We wanted to pull

the form of the canopies to the ground and feel like they are emerging from the landscape or connected to the landscape. So they are being tied to a planting bed and a large planting space which will include a variety of flora that will help reinforce this theme of a park like feeling, while waiting for the bus. Underneath the canopy the translucent photovoltaic panels can be seen and they provide shade and a nice dappled light that comes through. It will be nice to see how they function as the quality of space that is created for people waiting for buses. Back on the Southeast corner of the building again looking at the cantilever moment and back to the North at the county city building and on the far right and bus bays on the far left and parking to the South. Wycoff asked if there were any questions.

Canney replied it was nice to see this come forward after a long time and it is an exciting project. Canney asked what about the hearing impaired and is there any consideration for navigating through this site for the disabled. Is this something that has been discussed?

Elliott responded that is a good reminder and we need to check the interior. At the current bus stops audio accessible kiosks have been installed and we need to make sure they are available at the transit center as well. We do have installed the wayfinding signage with electric boards announcing stops. It needs to be confirmed but there is a verbal audio announcement also.

Huston commented that it is great that we are integrating renewable energy sources, but is there a reason why the existing district energy corporation utilities could not be tapped into?

Elliott stated the building is operated like this, but the cost to connect was about 3 times as high as a geothermal HVAC system. So for budgetary reasons and still being able to achieve efficiency purposes, the geo thermal option was chosen and we applied for a grant. It is surprising to all at the cost difference. The cost difference did not make sense for this location.

Wycoff added that with geothermal they are installed underneath parking lots and horizontal construction, so this project is a really great candidate for this method.

Peace replied that this is an opportunity and a responsibility for a civic building that represents Lincoln, NE. The city needs to take this much care for all civic buildings and are doing a better job with that. When looking at the renders of this building, it should have an overall composition of the 3 existing buildings and does this building

want to fit or does it want to sit. The footprint of this building is much smaller and even though a part of an overall campus. It doesn't need to fit, but it does need context. Every building has context. It would be nice to see a delight factor in this building, that would really make a mark on the city for a civic building. This was already got federal approval but if there is any way to add some design and add delight and whimsy would be good. Also, with the budget to make multiple canopies and solar panels, could that budget be traded for a more simple single canopy that covered the whole thing? There is a lot of energy cost design effort into these fairly narrow strips of canopies This would give a highly functional area where the buses, people and drives are covered. This is also two way traffic. Peace also added a suggestion of raising the elevations a little to hide the rooftop mechanical equipment. The simulated wood aluminum is going to bring a warmth to the campus that doesn't exist with the other 3 buildings, but there should be a way to raise the delight factor a little.

Wycoff replied that all the comments were really appreciated and that there were just a few more things to add. The transparency on the North side is one way to bring the public realm into this building and create an delight factor. Also we did not not go into detail on the interior space. There will be a lot of wood tones that are in alignment with the canopies and an angled approach to the interior of the building. There will be additional color of blue tones and other materials, to get out of the public realm in that interior space and under the canopies. Just trying to think of the canopies as part of the landscape as opposed to just an object. This is where we got to that standpoint.

Peace responded that this would fit right in with award-winning transit centers, if the delight factor was just a little bit higher.

Wycoff stated that they were given an unbuilt award of excellence last year, so we feel good about that and hope to do it right. We are committed to seeing it done.

Canney asked if there was anything being done for preventative things for skaters. Some of the cutouts in the curbing could be distractions or discourage people. So if that could be addressed would be good.

It was mentioned that it has not been discussed in terms of skate stops. The simplicity of the architecture and canopy that is designed , we want to avoid the city to have to come back and clip on skate stops. The rest of the center does not have curved areas so that is probably one detail we would want to look at in more detail.

Canney responded that nothing is worse than building something beautiful like this and then skaters who are waiting for the bus, use this space to skate. The approach will be considered. Some of them are protected by planting beds and under canopies, but what about the pigeons and how to keep those out? There are also no ledges or it doesn't look like there are any ledges.

Wycoff replied that there are no significant ledges to speak of and the rails that run along the top side of those structural elements. This does not create a lot of cavity space for the pigeons. We will take a second look at this.

Canney commented that there can be a lot of smokers around the bus station, so how will that be considered and worked around? It has probably been discussed, but in case it has not, it is something to think about. There are several columnar trees that look like Oak trees. Is there opportunities to do some columnar evergreens, because then there would not be leaves in the fall for maintenance? Also some public art would look good in the right spots. There may not be money in the budget, but maybe in the future doing some public art.

Elliott replied that in regards to the trees, we don't have specific species or anything right now. There are 33 trees in the area now, and will have at least 60 when this is completed.

Canney thanked them for thinking of that, so people are not sitting in the hot sun waiting for a bus. It just doesn't show it on the plans.

Grasso stated she liked the separate canopies, as we are not making a building to house the bus stops. It was appreciated, and the North corridor is a great connection to this campus. The Southeast entrance looks less thought out and it will be used, and public art would look good here. This is a great project for the city.

Canney added all the landscaping will be great, but we need to think about a budget for the plants. In 5 years, some of these plants will need to be replaced and updated.

Elliott responded that this will be added to the project.

ACTION:

Motion made by Huston, seconded by Grasso to approve; motion carried 4-0 ; Canney, Grasso, Huston, Peace voting 'yes'. Deeker and Penn abstain; Harpster absent.

Huston asked what the schedule was for this project.

Elliott stated about 18 months, so early 2028, with a starting date of August 2026.

UPDATES:

There were no updates for the committee.

ACTION:

There was no further discussion on this item and no further business to discuss, so the meeting was adjourned at 3:47 pm.