

MEETING RECORD

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

NAME OF GROUP:	OFFICIALS COMMITTEE MEETING
DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:	February 7, 2025, 2:00 p.m., City Council Chambers, County-City Building, 555 S. 10 th Street, Lincoln, NE
MEMBERS AND OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE	Tom Beckius, Mayor Gaylor Baird, Ryan Huff, Rick Vest and Sandra Washington; (Sean Flowerday absent.) Paul Barnes, David Cary, Rachel Christopher, Laura Tinnerstet and Shelli Reid of the Planning Department; and other interested parties.

Acting Chair Beckius called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room. Beckius asked if there had been any comments or changes to them.

Mayor Gaylor Baird wanted to note that she appreciated the minutes. She mentioned that the State had previously taken the position that Highway 77 would be a freeway. Mayor Baird expressed hope that this definition of the highway would continue, as it would help in planning with limited resources and enable the work to be completed together moving forward.

Beckius asked if there were any other statements, comments, or corrections going forward and there were none.

Beckius then called for a motion approving the minutes of the regular meeting held December 6, 2024. Motion for approval made by Vest; seconded by Washington and carried 5-0: Beckius, Mayor Gaylor Baird, Huff, Vest and Washington voting 'yes'; Flowerday absent.

Election of Committee Officers:**February 7, 2025**

Washington nominated Vest for Chair; seconded by Baird and carried 5-0: Beckius, Mayor Gaylor Baird, Huff, Vest and Washington voting 'yes': Flowerday absent.

Vest then called nominations for Vice-Chair. Beckius nominated Washington, seconded by Mayor Gaylor Baird and carried 5-0: Beckius, Baird, Huff, Vest and Washington voting 'yes': Flowerday absent.

CONSENT AGENDA**February 7, 2025**

Members present: Beckius, Mayor Gaylor Baird, Huff, Vest and Washington; Flowerday absent.

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following items:

- a. **Review and action on revisions to the FY 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**
 - i. **Include corrected funding amounts for FTA Section 5303 in the Transit Planning Work Program.**
- b. **Review and action on revisions to the FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**
 - i. **Lincoln Transportation and Utilities – Transportation program:**
 - 1. **Computer and Hardware and Software- Program federal and local funds for Fiscal Years 2025-2058 and update**

No further comments or questions on the Consent Agenda.

ACTION:

Motion for approval of the Consent Agenda made by Washington; seconded by Beckius and carried 5-0: Beckius, Huff, Vest, Mayor Gaylor Baird, and Washington voting 'yes'; Flowerday absent.

PUBLIC HEARING:**February 7, 2025****Review and action on revisions on MPO Federal Performance Measures and Targets**

Rachel Christopher, 555 S 10th Street, Lincoln, NE stated this item is for MPO adoption to support updated federal performance measure targets. The MPO is required to adopt updated targets periodically for federal performance measures. Christopher stated that there are required performance measures for FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) and FTA (Federal Transit Administration). On today's agenda are proposed targets from FHWA that have been adopted by the Nebraska Department of Transportation for safety infrastructure and system performance. Christopher reiterated that they periodically adopted updated targets for these measures. Historically the MPO has chosen to adopt and support the state's targets rather than adopt our own, due to the workload associated with tracking and reporting on your own targets. Christopher stated what that an action to adopt NDOT targets is a commitment to program projects to support these statewide goals.

Christopher explained that the first performance measure is focused on safety, with new targets adopted annually by NDOT. These targets are based on a five-year rolling average, which is compared against another five-year average that includes previous years. This is the method used to report and track safety data. Christopher showed a table outlining the safety performance measures, which include fatalities, the rate of fatalities, the rate of serious injuries, and non-motorized measures. The target year being discussed is the 2025 calendar year, with the five-year period being from 2021 to 2025. The table displayed the statewide targets for 2025, which apply to the entire state and will not align specifically with Lincoln or Lancaster County. However, local efforts will contribute to meeting the statewide goals through planning and actions. Note: The rates for fatalities and serious injuries are measured per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT). These are the new annual statewide targets, and the MPO also tracks local safety measures, which are included in the annual report. We publish and track safety information locally as well.

Mayor Gaylor Baird asked if there could be a way to modify how these targets are presented, suggesting the use of a "less than" sign in front of the numbers since the target is not to reach that specific number, but rather to have fewer than that number, ideally zero. This adjustment would help prevent the targets from being interpreted literally.

Christopher asked Huff if he saw any issues with this.

Huff explained that the report submitted to the federal government includes a specific number, but for reporting and information-sharing purposes, it might be possible to add a "less than" symbol. However, this would require discussion with the Nebraska Traffic Engineering Department, as they review the numbers each year and determine the target. Huff further explained that the reason they often don't set the target at zero is because failing to meet the target or making little progress can trigger actions, such as additional funding or resource shifts, which can create challenges. Some states have adopted a "Vision Zero" approach but end up missing their target each year. Huff emphasized that true performance management is about strategically using system information to manage resources effectively. He noted that many practitioners, including himself, try to set a realistic target and agree with the idea of setting a number.

Mayor Galor Baird stated that she didn't believe the situation should be altered. She clarified that what she meant was, ideally, there should be none of this issue. However, if changes are to be made, they should be minimal—specifically, reducing the numbers in the column to the left of fatalities, making it fewer overall.

Huff stated that he understood.

Vest commented that the discussion was valuable and agreed that it makes sense why there is a shortage of fatalities this year. Vest also noted that the railroad was not initially subject to the same review process. The railroad started with a higher number but gradually reduced it to an acceptable level.

Huff mentioned that the numbers would include crashes at railroad crossings, though these are considered a separate subset. Huff also noted that there is a distinct funding source allocated specifically for railroad crossings. However, no specific target-setting exercises are currently in place for these crossings.

Vest agreed, stating that it made sense and was a good point. Vest thanked everyone for the clarification and the explanation.

Christopher explained that the next topic pertains to infrastructure condition. The next two performance measures are based on four-year targets, rather than annual ones. These targets can be adjusted midway through the four years, and we are currently at the two-year halfway point. Christopher reiterated that these

performance measures focus on infrastructure and cover the period from 2022 to 2025. Christopher then presented the adjusted target for infrastructure conditions, specifically focusing on achieving good pavement conditions on the interstate system. NDOT missed its two-year target, with an actual result of 59.3%, compared to the 65% target. As a result, the target was adjusted downward. This adjustment was made due to improvements in NDOT's pavement data collection system, which is now more precise and able to detect additional pavement issues. The target was revised to be more realistic, reflecting the enhanced accuracy of the data.

Christopher explained that this is the final target being adjusted halfway through the performance period (2022-2025). NDOT has adopted new targets for all three of these, which focus on the reliability of the system.

- First Target: This target measures the reliability of the interstate system for personal travel. The target was missed at the two-year point, prompting an adjustment downward. NDOT cited construction projects in the Omaha metro, increased vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and economic and population factors as reasons for the adjustment.
- Second Target: This relates to the reliability of the non-interstate national highway system, such as highways and highway connector roads. The target was met, but NDOT decided to lower it due to anticipated increases in vehicle travel, which may affect system reliability.
- Third Target: The final target focuses on truck travel reliability, specifically the Truck Travel Reliability Index, where a lower number indicates more reliable truck travel. NDOT raised the target, anticipating that truck volumes will continue to rise. After a decline during COVID-19 and supply chain disruptions, truck travel volumes have been increasing and are expected to continue to do so.

Christopher concluded by noting that these targets are detailed and required by MPOs to meet federal requirements, which are essential for qualifying for federal funding and certification. Christopher then asked if there were any questions.

Vest stated that he had a few questions. The first was regarding Table Three, which uses the term "reliable." He asked if there is a working definition of what "reliable" means in this context.

Huff responded that a user wants to plan their trip and know whether they'll encounter congestion and if they can predictably reach their destination on time every day when incidents occur on the interstate or highway, causing major delays and travel time increases. Huff stated that if he is not mistaken, reliability is calculated

as the 50th percentile speed compared to the 80th percentile speed for a given route. It's a complex calculation, but the main idea is whether a person can rely on getting to their destination within the expected timeframe.

Vest acknowledged the explanation, saying the expected timeframe makes sense and added that changing dynamics, such as increased traffic, would impact reliability. Vest then thanked Huff for the clarification.

Vest's second point was that these are all NDOT standards, and we are acting on them today and mentioned that they are not Lancaster or Lincoln standards.

Christopher clarified that these are standards set by the state for MPOs to follow by certain deadlines. The MPO has 180 days after the State adopts its target to act accordingly. What we are doing today is supporting the statewide target by adopting it as our own to follow and support.

Vest responded that makes sense, and we are all on the same team here. Christopher agreed. Vest asked if there were any other questions for these items.

Motion to approve the MPO Federal Performance Measures and Targets by Beckius, seconded by Washington and carried 5-0: Beckius, Huff, Vest, Mayor Gaylor Baird, and Washington voting 'yes'; Flowerday absent.

Other topics for discussion:

Staff Update on the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan Update and Lincoln Mobility Plan

Paul Barnes, 555 S 10th Street Lincoln, NE provided an update on the Long-Range Transportation Plan. Barnes informed the committee that it has been a lengthy process, as outlined in the documents, but they have narrowed it down to one consultant team and will be entering negotiations with them. The process is nearing completion, but they are ensuring compliance with all required MPO procurement rules.

Barnes stated they are working with sub-consultant Cambridge Systematics, who specializes in transportation modeling. Barnes also mentioned an add-on project to be included is the Lincoln Mobility Plan—the update of the 2013 Bicycle and

Pedestrian Capital Plan and the 2018 Bicycle On-Street Facilities Plan, with subconsultant SRF leading the Mobility Plan effort.

Barnes commented both projects will have overlapping schedules over the next 18 to 24 months, with anticipated approval by the end of 2026, by federal highway requirements.

Barnes stated they are currently putting together the public engagement outline, though they are not yet under contract. The plan includes multiple engagements with both the committee and technical committee, as well as involvement from the Planning Commission, focus groups, and public meetings across the city and county. A hybrid approach to outreach, including both in-person and virtual options, will be used, based on the success of previous efforts.

The anticipated timeline for approval and contract finalization is early March, depending on the final steps in the process.

Beckius commented that it was only 30 days away. Barnes agreed. Beckius remarked that it was great and that things were moving along.

David Cary, 555 S 10th Street Lincoln, NE came forward and stated that he would take the opportunity to touch on the topic of federal funding. Cary mentioned that the MPO is federally funded through the State and has had long-term success over the past decade, thanks to a great partnership with the State DOT. Cary emphasized the intention to continue this work and shared some updates.

Cary noted that the situation is fluid, and they had received several updates and announcements just that morning, which he wanted to share. Cary invited others to provide updates as well, specifically mentioning Huff, who might have valuable insights on the status—whether decisions have been made. Cary started with the good news: they received confirmation from Jarrod Walker, their main liaison with Nebraska DOT, that the planning funds provided for the MPO's operations will not be impacted by the suspension of funding. This ensures that the work they are currently doing can continue as planned. Cary also mentioned that they do not anticipate any impact on next year's FY 26 PL Funds for this work, though they will continue to monitor the situation. In addition, Cary shared that they learned the NEVI (National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure) Program has been suspended. This is significant, because the State received a substantial amount of funding from this program last

year to help build out electric vehicle infrastructure along I-80. Cary concluded by inviting Huff to add any additional insights on the matter.

Huff stated that the situation is very fluid. Up until last week, they were preparing to start work on January 20th when the White House Executive Orders began to be issued. NEVI was specifically mentioned, and they began working with the congressional delegation to seek clarification on what this meant. Typically, formula funds are funds that flow into the state without competition, allowing them to be obligated as needed. However, the recent memo was something they had never encountered before, so they worked closely with lobbyist groups and the congressional delegation to get clarification. By the end of last week, they were led to believe that NEVI funding would be safe, particularly regarding the discretionary side of electric charging, called the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grant Program. Huff shared that they were preparing to make some awards this week, but just yesterday afternoon, they received a memo indicating a change. This highlighted the chaotic nature of the situation, both within the State DOT and the federal government. Huff emphasized that they are paying close attention to the developments, with a lot of resources being focused on the issue, including collaboration with state DOTs, other MPOs, and organizations supporting these groups. Huff reiterated that they would continue to work on advising elected officials and policymakers that this funding is crucial and must continue to flow predictably to allow work to proceed. Without this stability, they would spend more time on scenario planning and what-if discussions, which would not lead to any progress. Huff acknowledged the complexity of the situation, remarking to Cary it is an interesting situation. Huff stated that there was a memo sent yesterday afternoon, and it was very clear: they rescinded approvals on all NEVI plans, so no new NEVI obligations can be made at this time. They expect forthcoming guidance in the spring. As of now, the formula program is essentially on hold. He stated they may need to re-advertise and the goalposts could change entirely. The criteria we use to build projects, what they look like, and what they're supposed to accommodate may change completely. Huff continued that they've had guidance conflicts with state statutes and have had to work with the legislature to get those changed. After they began advertising and awarding, they are now back on hold.

Cary thanked Huff and you mentioned the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Program, which was the grant the City received that has now been suspended. There may be other local impacts, but we don't have any further specifics now. We will continue to research, monitor, and stay informed as changes come along. One of the bigger concerns is federal transit funding. There isn't much information yet on what

impact that might have. We receive significant federal funding for the StarTran program, and this is something that is very much on my mind.

Huff said he could share what he knows. One thing that typically happens when we update our statewide transportation plan, and the local TIP is that they used to issue something called a OneDOT approval. The approval for the TIPs and STIPs would be signed off by the Nebraska Division, FHWA, and FTA. However, when the funding issues began, the FTA stated that they would not sign off on anything or approve any projects. Huff asked the local division representative what that meant, and he said that while highway projects could continue, any amendments or transit projects in the TIP might be at risk. The FTA was waiting for the Secretary of Transportation to be confirmed, which has now happened. They've begun talks again, and though he hasn't received official confirmation, the FTA will resume approvals soon. However, it's still a concern. Transit-related projects could see delays in the timing of lettings and other related processes.

Cary stated at this point, there's no indication that our formula funds will be impacted and I'm not saying it's impossible, but it's important to note that these funds are crucial for the projects we regularly complete as a City and County including those in the TIP and related transit funding. Cary stated that he will continue to keep everyone updated as much as possible, though the situation is fluid.

Christopher added that she understood tomorrow is the deadline set by the new Secretary of Transportation for his staff to identify which programs would fall under the purview of the Executive Orders (EOs).

Cary stated that they will be trying to figure out the situation and keep working on these items.

Vest asked if there were any questions for Cary.

OTHER:

There were no other topics for discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No one appeared.

Beckius made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Washington and carried 5-0: Beckius, Huff, Vest, Mayor Gaylor Baird, and Washington voting 'yes'; Flowerday absent.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:34 pm.