

FACTSHEET

TITLE: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 94-59, an amendment to the 1994 Lincoln/Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan, requested by the Director of Planning, to amend "Chapter 4, Transportation" as identified in the **REVIEW DRAFT REPORT: LONG RANGETRANSPORTATION PLAN**, dated July 31, 2000 (as amended by the Planning Commission on September 6, 2000), and associated maps, figures and other supporting documentation as identified in the draft report, which is submitted under separate cover.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval.

SPONSOR: Planning Department

BOARD/COMMITTEE: Planning Commission
Public Hearing: 09/06/00
Administrative Action: 09/06/00

RECOMMENDATION: Approval, with amendment deleting all references to the Boulevard Concept for Public Way Corridors (8-0: Krieser, Newman, Hunter, Duvall, Taylor, Schwinn, Carlson and Bayer voting 'yes'; Steward absent).

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The Planning staff recommendation to approve this Comprehensive Plan Amendment is based upon the "Analysis" as set forth on p.2-7.
2. The presentation by the applicant is found on p.8-9.
3. Phyllis Hergenrader testified in support (p.9-10); however, she recommended that the future planned roadway improvements should be completed prior to putting a needs analysis study for the Wilderness Park Crossing at Yankee Hill Road in the Comprehensive Plan.
4. Richard Schmeling testified in opposition as Chairman of the Board and former President of Pro-Rail Nebraska. He is opposed because the proposed plan does not include any provision for alternatives to building roads, such as commuter rail and light rail (See p.10-11). The handouts submitted by Mr. Schmeling are found on p.14-15.
5. Mark Hunzeker testified on behalf of the Home Builders Association of Lincoln and the Lincoln Board of Realtors in opposition to the 120' right-of-way width for all arterial streets. Mr. Hunzeker also requested that references to the Public Way Corridors concept be deleted from the LRTP until the Planning Commission has made a recommendation on Public Way Corridors. (See p.11)
6. The staff response to the opposition is found on p.11-12.
7. On September 6, 2000, the Planning Commission agreed with the staff recommendation and voted 8-0 to recommend approval, with amendment deleting all references to the Boulevard Concept for Public Way Corridors (Krieser, Duvall, Newman, Hunter, Taylor, Schwinn, Carlson and Bayer voting 'yes'; Steward absent). (See Minutes, p.12-13)
8. The Planning Commission has not forwarded a recommendation on the Public Way Corridors Concept, Comprehensive Plan Amendment No. 94-58. That amendment is scheduled for continued public hearing before the Planning Commission on September 20, 2000.
9. This Comprehensive Plan Amendment No. 94-59 is also being reviewed and acted upon by the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners, with public hearing tentatively scheduled for October 3, 2000, at 1:30 p.m.

FACTSHEET PREPARED BY: Jean L. Walker

REVIEWED BY: _____

REFERENCE NUMBER: FS\CC\FSCPAP94-59

DATE: September 18, 2000

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quality levels, save energy, and to improve socioeconomic conditions in the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County. The Plan considers all principal modes of transportation as an integrated system including highways, mass transit, bikeways and pedestrian facilities. It addresses access to the developing neighborhoods and employment centers. Preparation and implementation of the transportation plan is coordinated with other long range transportation plans of the State and adjoining communities and counties.

The objectives and strategies contained in the Long Range Transportation Plan are consistent with the comprehensive land use plans of the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County. A principal focus of the transportation plan is the transportation investments that are needed to serve the growing demands projected as a result of this growth over the next 25 years. This is used as a guide by policy makers and the public, for the maintenance, management, and further development of the transportation system in order to meet the travel demand of future populations.

Since the transportation plan is to provide the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County with direction to develop our community's street and road system to serve the existing and developing areas, the Long Range Transportation Plan needs to be updated to reflect recent changes in the land use plans and travel demands. The "Chapter 4, Transportation" in the Comprehensive Plan is being updated at this time to 1) meet the demands created by the new growth areas and expanded future service limits identified in the community's land use plan and 2) to meet federal regulations requiring the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan to be updated at least every five years.

Federal Transportation Planning Regulations

The federal transportation planning regulations direct that at least every five years the long range transportation plan *"shall be reviewed and updated...to confirm its validity and its consistency with current and forecasted transportation and land use conditions and trends..."* The current Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Lincoln-Lancaster Metropolitan planning Organization (MPO) in December 1994. As of December 1999, this plan was no longer recognized by the Federal Highway Administration which restricts the city, county and state's ability to program projects that use federal funds.

*"450.322 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS: TRANSPORTATION PLAN. (a) The metropolitan transportation planning process shall include the development of a transportation plan addressing at least a twenty year planning horizon. The plan shall include both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods. **The transportation plan shall be reviewed and updated at least triennially in nonattainment and maintenance areas and at least every five years in attainment areas to confirm its validity and its consistency with current and forecasted transportation and land use conditions and trends and to extend the forecast period.** The transportation plan must be approved by the*

Land Use Plan

The currently adopted land use plan for the City and County was used in the Long Range Transportation Plan Update process. Since the adoption of the City-County Comprehensive Plan in late 1994, there has been numerous amendments to the land use element of the plan. Amendments have ranged from small modifications to major additions that have significantly expanded the planned future service area of the City of Lincoln. The major amendments to the future service limit and land use plan in the south and north growth areas for Lincoln have sizable implications in the providing roadways and other transportation facilities in these areas.

Federal transportation planning guidelines indicate that the five year Long Range Transportation Plan Update is intended to confirm the effectiveness of the Long Range Transportation Plan in serving the current and forecasted transportation and land use conditions over the forecast period. The underlying land use plan is a key assumption in demonstrating that the guidelines would be met.

Plan Assumptions

The underlying planning assumptions utilized in the update of the Lincoln-Lancaster County Long Range Transportation Plan remain valid.

1. The planning goals used in the development of the overall Comprehensive Plan and their relation to the Long Range Transportation Plan were retained in this Update;
2. The current adopted land use plan was used as the underlying conditions in the Long Range Transportation Plan Update process; and,
3. The land use planning assumptions that served as the demand base for the travel demand modeling element of the Long Range Transportation Plan Update continue to be applicable.

Public Involvement Process

The public involvement process for Lincoln City-Lancaster County Long Range Transportation Plan Update and Public Way Corridors included the following activities.

LRTP Citizen Advisory Task Force. - The LRTP Citizen Advisory Task Force met on a regular basis from February through July, 2000 to provide guidance on the development of the LRTP. StarTran Advisory Task Force. The StarTran Advisory Task Force met regularly from January through May, 2000, to provide direction to the LRTP process regarding the provision of public transit services.

MPO Technical Committee. - An Technical Subcommittee was established by the MPO Technical Committee and met regularly (weekly) to provide guidance on the technical aspects in the traffic modeling and the development of the LRTP.

MPO Technical Committee. - The MPO Technical Committee met to formally review and take action on the LRTP on July 27th. The LRTP was accepted and recommended to the City-County Planning Commission for public review.

Planning Commission Public Hearing. - A Public Hearing on Public Way Corridors was held by the Planning Commission on August 9th and a second Hearing on Public Way Corridors is scheduled for September 6th, 2000.

Mayor's Neighborhood Roundtable. - The Mayor's Neighborhood Roundtable was Briefed on LRTP on August 10th, 2000.

City-County Common Briefing. - The City-County Common was briefed on the LRTP August 18th, 2000.

Home Builders Association of Lincoln, Lincoln Independent Business Association, Lincoln Board of Realtors. - These groups were briefed on the LRTP on August 23rd and the Public Way Corridors on August 25th.

LRTP Open Houses. - Two Open Houses for the general public were held to provide a detailed review of the LRTP: Open House No. 1 at County-City Building, August 23rd and Open House No. 2 at Gere Library, August 29th.

Planning Commission Public Hearing. - A Public Hearing on the LRTP is scheduled for the Planning Commission for September 6th.

Product - "Chapter 4, Transportation"

The key elements in the proposed Lincoln City-Lancaster County Long Range Transportation Plan are identified below.

Streets and Highways Highlights

1. The Currently Approved Long Range Transportation Plan was used as the Planning Foundation which includes:
 - ' Approved Future Land Use Plan,
 - ' Programmed Improvements in Built Up Area (Inc. East 'O' St.),
 - ' Completion of the "Two plus Center Turn Lane" Concept (2+1) for the built environment as recommended by the Congestion Management Task Force,
 - ' Retain the High Impact Corridor Study Areas and Monitoring Program.

2. Key Assumptions Used in MODELING of future traffic needs included:
 - ' A Beltway System in place,
 - ' Antelope Valley as a full 4-lane facility,
 - ' Interstate 80 as 6 lane facility,
 - ' Highway 77 With Freeway Status (Inc. Interchanges at W. A and Warlick).

3. South and East Beltways and Antelope Valley Remain As Studies.
4. Expansion of the Current Urban Arterial Grid System into the Future Urban Growth Areas to the North and South.
5. Widening of Highway 2 from Four to Six Lanes from Approximately the South 40 Street Intersection to the Van Dorn Street Intersection.
6. Completion of Southeast Lincoln Arterial Grid, including Van Dorn Street widened from Normal Blvd. to 84th Street.
7. Upgrading of West Lincoln Area Grid, including a proposed overpass at S.W. 40th Street, West "A" Street Coddington Ave. and Van Dorn Street.
8. Proposed "*Capacity Enhancement Study Areas*" for:
 - ' North 1st - North 14th Street,
 - ' North 70th - North 84th Street Corridors.
9. Proposed "*Needs Analysis Study Areas*" for:
 - ' Highway 34 in Northwest Lincoln (Study Underway),
 - ' Pennsylvania-Humphrey between North 1st and North 14th Streets,
 - ' South 14th Street between Highway 2 and Old Cheney Road,
 - ' Yankee Hill Road - Highway 77 Connection, Bridging Wilderness Park,
 - ' Antelope Valley - Interstate 180 Connection.
10. Proposed "*Intersection Studies*" for:
 - ' Three intersections along Highway 2 at 14th, 56th and 84th Streets,
 - ' South 14th - Old Cheney Road - Warlick Blvd. (Study Underway).
11. County Roads Improvement Program Includes Continued Enhancements Including Additional Roadway Pavings, Railroad Viaducts Near Hickman and Firth, State Highway and Federal Highway Improvements, and Potential Fringe Area Road Openings along Bluff Road and 98th Street

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Revise the ***1994 Lincoln City-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan***, to amend “Chapter 4, Transportation” as identified in the REVIEW DRAFT REPORT: **“Chapter 4, Transportation” City-County Comprehensive Plan (a.k.a., Long Range Transportation Plan), City of Lincoln and Lancaster County, Nebraska, July 31, 2000**” and associated maps, figures and other supporting documentation as identified in the draft report.

Prepared by:

Michael D. Brienzo, Transportation Planner

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 94-59

PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE PLANNING COMMISSION:

September 6, 2000

Members present: Krieser, Newman, Hunter, Duvall, Taylor, Schwinn, Carlson and Bayer; Steward absent.

Planning staff recommendation: Approval

Proponents

1. **Mike Brienzo** of the Planning Department reviewed the proposal to amend Chapter 4 of the Comprehensive Plan according to the review draft of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The LRTP is a long term plan for improving and maintaining the transportation system, including improvements for the street network, public highways, public transit, railroads, airports and the trails network. There are several reasons to bring this forward: 1) federal regulations require us to have a current and valid LRTP. The current Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the MPO in 12/94 and five years have lapsed. We are in the process of updating that plan according to the regulations which requires a broader view than the annual transportation update. This is a broader overview and review of the goals and policies as set by the Comprehensive Plan and the improvements. The LRTP is to coordinate planning between the city, county, state and other transportation agencies to keep pace with the Land Use Plan adopted last year and addressing the growth areas of Lincoln.

Brienzo further explained that the review draft document was developed with citizen groups; the LRTP advisory task force met over the last eight months to advise staff and provide input; there was a special StarTran Task Force that worked on the public transit elements; a subcommittee of the Mayor's Trails and Pedestrian Committee worked on the trails element.

The proposal begins with the current Comprehensive Plan as its base and then builds upon that base. There are several major improvements in the plan identified in Figure 31. The major elements in the plan that were considered but which are not part of this amendment are the south and east beltways and the Antelope Valley Project. They remain as studies in the LRTP and are coming forward in the future as a separate amendment.

Interstate 80 was added to this plan, proposed as 6 lanes throughout the county; East O Street reflects the approved design elements that have been adopted; the key element to the plan is the 2+ center turn lane for the built environment. This continues the recommendation of the Congestion Management Task Force. The proposal is to continue widening two-lane roads in the built environment to two lanes plus center turn lane. It addresses the growth areas to the north and south along the mile line arterial configuration. To the south it addresses the S1 and S2 growth areas; the N1 and N2 growth areas in the north; and maintains the mile line arterial system to the southeast; another area to the northwest has been developed into the four-lane

configuration; the West “A” area network has been fully developed with 2+ center turn lane configuration; there is a viaduct introduced along S.W. 40th over the railroad lines providing a rear entrance to the West A neighborhood area.

Other highlights include continued development of four-lane proposal for Capital Parkway from 56th to 84th Street. Hwy 2 is proposed to be a 6-lane facility from Van Dorn south to approximately 48th Street. Intersection studies are proposed for 14th, 56th and 84th. Hwy 6 between Sun Valley Blvd and Cornhusker Hwy is proposed for realignment reflecting the current Comprehensive Plan.

Brienzo pointed out that there are six needs analysis study areas—areas that require further analysis and are identified as studies in the plan. They are in sensitive or older neighborhood areas, including the Wilderness Park connection across Yankee Hill Road; South 14th from Hwy 2 to Old Cheney; 14th Street from Antelope Valley to Cornhusker Hwy and to I-180; Humphrey Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue from No. 1st to North 14th; U.S. Hwy 34 for the northwest; and the segment of University Heights along North 48th Street.

There are capacity enhancement study areas where capacity is identified as needed--areas where we intend to add capacity but there needs to be more detailed study to identify scheduled need and the corridor. Between 1st and 14th Street from Cornhusker Highway north to Superior Street; 70th Street to 84th between O and Cornhusker Highway are identified for additional capacity.

One other element would include Public Way Corridors. It is important to note that as that amendment is identified it would become part of this plan.

The Planning Commission recommendation will go forward to the City Council and County Board. The MPO will review and transmit the Plan to the State, FHA and Federal Transit Administration.

Proponents

1. Phyllis Hergenrader, 5701 Yankee Hill Road, testified in support. She has studied this in detail. On balance she believes it is a very good plan which will, if constructed according to the plan, meet the future transportation needs for the Lincoln metropolitan area. There are two specific recommendations she wants to discuss. It is proposed that the beltways and Antelope Valley remain as specific studies. Based on her own personal observation of increased truck traffic on Hwy 2 and future projections, she believes that the south beltway needs to be built as soon as possible. Noting the rising interest in extending Wilderness Park to the south, she believes it makes good sense from an economic and political standpoint to acquire the necessary right-of-way across Salt Creek for the south beltway as soon as possible. A needs analysis study area should be included for the Yankee Hill Road/Hwy 77 connection bridging Wilderness Park. As a taxpaying citizen, how much taxpayer’s money is going to be spent studying this idea before it is ultimately rejected? It has already been studied at least 3-4 times using public funds. The crossing was previously included in the south beltway studies as non-beltway option #1 and was rejected by HWS for a variety of reasons, including environmental regulations plus the likely litigation and associated costs that would ensue from any attempt to cross Wilderness Park with a new roadway. The Wilderness Park mediation group also considered the issue of new roads crossing the park. The Parks Department recommendation on the Wilderness Park subarea plan states that: “no increase of human disturbance such as additional roads, trails, utilities corridors, etc. should be permitted, especially in the southern 2/3 of the park”. The S1/S2 transportation study was included as part of the Wilderness Park subarea study. One option

was the crossing of Wilderness Park at Yankee Hill Road. A bridge connection between 14th and Hwy 77 was discussed; however, several of the recommendations were not supported by the study data. A modeling study of alternative network options also included crossing Wilderness Park. How many taxpayer dollars are going to be spent studying a new crossing of Wilderness Park at Yankee Hill Road? She objects to this waste.

Hergenrader believes the LRTP has many great ideas and planned improvements, such as beltways, Antelope Valley, expanding the arterial grid and widening Hwy 2, which will go a long way toward meeting the needs. Hergenrader recommended that before a needs analysis study for the Wilderness Park crossing at Yankee Hill Road is put in the Comprehensive Plan and therefore in line to receive even more taxpayer funds, the future planned roadway improvements should be completed. Let's make those improvements and see what impact we have on alleviating transportation problems. We would know then whether a needs analysis was a justifiable expenditure of tax dollars, but let's not give needs analysis more stature than it deserves. Hergenrader requested that the needs analysis study for the Wilderness Park crossing be deleted from the LRTP.

Opposition

1. Richard Schmeling testified in opposition. He grew up in south central Nebraska, was educated at UNL, received a law degree; went to the US Army Transportation Corps and completed the basic officer's course. As such he studied motor transportation, rail and seat transportation. He has had an avid interest in railroad transportation since he was four years old.

Schmeling is currently the chairman of the Board and former President of Pro-Rail Nebraska. He has looked at the plan and quite frankly, he sees no innovation, no vision and nothing in this plan that would indicate that we properly analyzed the problems that Lincoln faces and is going to face. There is a proposal to build a commuter rail between Lincoln and Omaha and he finds no mention of that in this transportation plan and what part that system could play in dealing with the future needs. Kawasaki is going to build light rail and passenger rail cars in Lincoln but there is no mention in the Comprehensive Plan of light rail for Lincoln.

Schmeling contends that the basic problem is that we have a proposal to deal with future traffic congestion by paving and expanding lanes and building. We're going to pave over the City. Regarding the beltways, every study that he has seen says that the further out you build these beltways, the less pressure that takes off the interior street system. And what have we done? We've moved them clear out east and clear out south. They are not going to help our traffic within the city.

Schmeling has watched with great interest the debate about ambulance service. If all we do is continue to deal with traffic and transportation needs by building more streets and widening, those ambulances won't be able to get where they need to go. We're going to get gridlocked. Do we have vision for 25 years, or are we doing this thing piecemeal?

This plan needs to include some alternatives to building more roads. He can move as many people on a single track of a double track railroad line in an hour as he can on 10 lanes of highway or street. We can decrease the unfavorable emission problems if we can get people to ride the rail system as opposed to driving their cars. The average car occupancy is 1.2. This is not efficient transportation. This plan encourages people to drive their vehicles and when we build those roads we are going to clog them and fill them. When we add two additional lanes to a four-lane roadway, we think we've increased capacity by 50%. In actuality we add 40% capacity. Let's add a couple more lanes. We then gain 30% total capacity increase. The next two add 20% and when we get to five lanes each direction, we add 10%.

Schmeling wonders whether this is a wise investment of taxpayer's money. He doesn't think so. Everywhere the light rail has gone in, the ridership has exceeded the projections. Schmeling suggested that this draft be returned to the staff to include alternatives to widening streets and building beltways to include commuter rail and light rail. Schmeling does not see any provision for light rail right-of-way in the public way boulevard concept. It should be included.

2. Mark Hunzeker appeared on behalf of the **Home Builders Association and the Lincoln Board of Realtors**. Hunzeker requested that the references in this document to the Public Way Corridors be taken out if a recommendation on the LRTP is forwarded today.

Hunzeker also pointed out that this proposed amendment will put into the plan a right-of-way standard for virtually all arterial streets of 120', which is now 100' with 120' at major intersections. He believes this contradicts the text of the amendment which refers to the standards on Figures 29 and 30. Hunzeker attended a meeting where the volumes were projected and he believes that none of the traffic volumes that were projected except in rare exceptions, justified street improvements that exceed two lanes, much less four lanes with dual lefts and right turn lanes. The numbers generated by the computer models do not justify the D+ right-of-way. We already have standards that are in the plan that show 120' of right-of-way being called for at major intersections, but even by Figures 29 and 30 that D+ cross-section is for major commercial areas and there are no major commercial uses shown in the land use map anywhere south of Pine Lake Road, except possibly along South 14th Street. Hunzeker suggested that some modification of those rights-of-way would be appropriate. If you stayed with the D right-of-way section with the D+ at major intersections, it would make some sense. To the extent there is traffic data to support wider right-of-way, then those could be identified on an individual basis.

Response by the Applicant

Schwinn inquired of staff as to the south bypass and Wilderness Park crossing. Brienzo advised that in the study, the south bypass was assumed to be completed at the middle alignment. It is not in the plan as a facility. It was assumed during the technical elements of the study. The overpass of Wilderness Park was included in some of those initial network analyses, which shows that it would serve the southern area just like the Wilderness Park study suggests. It does not take traffic off of the south bypass. It serves local traffic. It does take traffic off 14th Street. The staff felt that it was premature to put it in the plan since it is a developing area. There is potential in the future to make adjustments to the land use plan.

Schwinn was not sure he wanted to make all the streets 120' row. D+ is separate from the Public Way Corridors in terms of traffic projections. He wondered why 98th Street isn't 98th shown as a D+ designation. Brienzo explained that to be because it is outside the future urban service limits. Newman asked staff to address the question about why we're not talking rail transit, i.e. this is a catch-up rather than projected. Brienzo clarified that most of the improvements that are added are on the fringe areas and there is a need to serve the growth areas. In terms of light rail, that is designed to serve dense land uses or high intensity land uses in terms of direct movements between two locations. Traffic patterns in Lincoln are dispersed in webs rather than single line systems. Public transit was addressed in the committee.

Kent Morgan of the Planning Department advised that the StarTran task force did address the light rail issue. It will be looked at in the context of a regional type of system connection to Omaha and he is sure it will be looked at in terms of the context of the growth of the city. It is perhaps premature. We would like to see the results of the Pro Rail feasibility study that is being developed. Morgan assured that it will be addressed.

Carlson noted that the overpass remains a study area. Are we spending money on that? Brienzo responded that the subarea study completed by Olsson Associates recommends a more detailed study. We weren't ready to move forward with that study and wanted to complete the overall system study. Keeping it as a future study is to be forward-thinking. We don't want to lose any opportunities.

Carlson wanted to know the process for that more precise study. Brienzo explained that we need to get some of the network developed and determine the intensity of growth to the south before we take that on. This LRTP is a one and 25 year improvement program. Carlson wondered who would be authorized to use of those funds. Brienzo stated that it would be an administrative decision to move forward with the study, authorized by the City Council or the Mayor. The possibility exists that taxpayer funds will be spent on this study.

Public hearing was closed.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION BY PLANNING COMMISSION:

September 6, 2000

Duvall moved approval, with amendment deleting references to the Public Way Corridors, seconded by Newman.

Duvall pointed out that a lot of this plan was catch-up because we needed a current 5-year study. We need a current plan to access federal funding. Due to change in administration we fell behind.

Newman would like to be a part of the transit question. There were things that were improved by the StarTran Task Force. She believes they have done a good job playing catch-up. Leaving the bridge over Wilderness Park as a study would allow us to address it again in the future if needed.

Hunter agreed. In the concept of making sure the city has all the options available, leaving the potential for a study there is no damage, but eliminating it deletes that option. While maybe a lot of plans in the past have been more short-sighted than they could have been, long range planning is to open up all the options.

Schwinn stated that originally, he was going to lean toward too many lanes being designated as D+, and maybe that should be dealt with when we reach finality on the Public Way Corridors. He will leave them in place because we need to have the ability to let people know that this can happen. As these areas are populated, it would be nice to know that they will be major thoroughfares. This is probably one of the most ambitious looking long range transportation plans he has seen in a long time and he is very pleased at the work that has been done by the committee and the staff.

Carlson was also very pleased.

Motion for approval, with amendment deleting Public Way Corridor references, carried 8-0: Krieser, Newman, Hunter, Duvall, Taylor, Schwinn, Carlson and Bayer voting 'yes'; Steward absent.