

Lincoln Public Works and Utilities Department
Lincoln-Lancaster Planning Department
Memorandum

TO: Mayor Don Wesely
City Council
County Board
Planning Commission

FROM: Allan Abbott, Public Works & Utilities
Kathleen Sellman, Planning

DATE: June 27, 2001

SUBJECT: ***Summary of Recommendation on the South and East Beltway Comprehensive Plan Amendments #94-62 through #94-65***

COPIES: Mark Bowen, Ann Harrell, Mayor's Office
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The purpose of these Comprehensive Plan Amendments is not to determine the accuracy or merits of the Draft South and East Beltway Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), but is to determine if a particular Beltway is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. The South and East Beltway Study has undergone seven years of public input and extensive analysis. The public has reviewed and commented on the DEIS. These comments have been seriously reviewed and considered. The March 1, 2001 version of the DEIS concludes that "comparison of the four finalist beltway alternatives indicates that all of the alternatives will serve the project purpose and need, and all of the alternatives are considered feasible and cost-effective solutions."

For the Comprehensive Plan, the function of the Beltway is broader and more complex than use for vehicular traffic alone. The current 1994 Comprehensive Plan has many goals, strategies and statements relating to the function and use of the Beltway, such as:

- C Provide for a long-range plan to develop early identification of bypass corridors and right-of-way retention.*
- C Proceed with development of the Beltway and Antelope Creek Trafficway projects.*
- C Complete implementation of the Beltway to complete a circumferential system for external to external truck traffic.*
- C Consider the development of new, major corridors such as the Beltway as linear open spaces as well as major highways, integrated into development and open space patterns in developing parts of Lincoln.*

- C *Program trails development as part of the City's transportation capital program as well as its recreational effort. Include trails and linear parks in the development of new major transportation projects, such as Antelope Valley and the South and East Beltway...*

In addition, there are other relevant statements from the Comprehensive Plan for use in the analysis of the particular routes:

- C *Provide for the mobility needs of the community through a balanced and efficient system of roads, trails and public transportation alternatives.*
- C *Maintain and enhance an efficient network of roads and public ways that allows the movement of people and freight to all areas of the community, prioritized to meet the current and future needs, balancing environmental effects, safety concerns, cost effectiveness, urban design and relationships to other community goals.*
- C *Preserve highly productive agricultural land for agrarian purposes, as well as allow rural, nonagricultural residences; protect ecological and historic sites in rural Lancaster County.*
- C *Exercise stewardship by preserving, protecting and enhancing our historic resources for future generations.*

The **East Middle** Beltway route is the **best route** compared to East Close or East Far because:

- C **Transportation Functions:** The East Middle route would aid in completing a circumferential roadway and provide a new truck route without the less efficient "backtracking" found in the East Close and East Far options. According to the DEIS, all three east beltway routes will be of limited value for internal traffic relief.
- C The Comprehensive Plan encourages the development of trails, open space, utilities and alternative transportation modes along major transportation corridors. The East Middle route has the **greatest potential as a multi-use corridor** for trails, open space, utilities and other transportation alternatives, particularly compared to the other two routes. It could integrate well with a possible trail in Stevens Creek and then tie into trails along the South Beltway route to Wilderness Park trails. The potential as an open space corridor is significant given that it is within ½ mile of Stevens Creek for over a 6 mile stretch. The East Middle route also parallels an existing LES transmission line and 150 foot easement so this route could function as a joint utility and road corridor for over 8 miles. Highway 2 between 40th and 48th Streets is a good example of a multiple use corridor where there are transmission lines, a trail, open space, storm water corridor and roadway uses.
- C **Comprehensive Plan Implications:** The goals of the Comprehensive Plan encourage protecting rural and urban neighborhoods, historic resources and preserving the environment. The amount of residential impact in the East Close route is unacceptable. The East Close has double the amount of noise and visual impacts than East Middle or East Far. The East Far route will adversely impact three historic resources. This impact can be avoided by choosing the East Middle route, which impacts only one historic site which is more than 1/4 mile from the route. The proposed East Middle route minimizes impact on natural resources in that it has relatively little impact on wetlands and on native prairie. East Middle has one major stream crossing, but it could be built in a manner to minimize the floodplain impact.

- C All routes will impact some residents, their homes and farm land. Development of the beltway should not be taken lightly as the lives of people within the route and adjacent property will be significantly affected.
- C The East Middle route has greater travel savings than East Far and is less expensive to build than East Close. The East Middle requires less paving of arterial streets leading to the beltway intersections than East Far as well. East Close requires fewer miles of arterial street paving than East Middle, but East Middle may provide some cost savings as a multi-use corridor. The East Middle also uses 150 acres (approximately 1/4 of a square mile) less land than the other two routes.

The East Middle route is superior in terms of transportation function and Comprehensive Plan implications and would serve the goals of the Comprehensive Plan better than the other two routes. East Middle has about the same environmental impacts as East Far, but has fewer residential relocations, historic impacts, visual and noise impacts than East Far. It has fewer impacts in almost all categories than the East Close route.

The **East Middle Comprehensive Plan Amendment #94-64 should be approved** for inclusion in the Plan. The Comprehensive Plan amendments for East Far and East Close routes are not in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan and should be denied.

The **South Beltway route is in conformance with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan** in terms of the:

- C **Transportation Functions:** The south route would aid in completing a circumferential roadway in the Lincoln area. This route is within ½ mile of the future service limit and would reduce the amount of through traffic that otherwise would be on Highway 2 and other arterial streets in the future urban area. The proposed route will provide an alternative truck route connection between US 77 and Highway 2, which is a goal of the Plan. The route has potential as a multi-use corridor for trails, open space, utilities and other transportation alternatives in the future.
- C **Comprehensive Plan Implications:** the proposed route minimizes impact on natural resources in that it has relatively little impact on wetlands, no impact on native prairie, does not cross the existing boundaries of Wilderness Park, and could be built in a manner to minimize the floodplain impact. The Plan also encourages respect for existing residential areas and while the route will impact homes and a few businesses, every effort has been made to minimize this impact. The amount of impact is reasonable given the scale of the project.

On the whole, the proposed South and East Middle Beltway Comprehensive Plan amendments are consistent with the spirit and intent of the adopted goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Care should be taken to respect the Plan's goals during the more detailed implementation activities for the beltway. Future South and East Middle Beltway related actions –such as the development of the new Comprehensive Plan, change of zone requests, and capital improvement projects – should reflect the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. The beltway is just one part of the community's plan – it should not dictate the direction or form of the community's development.