

BRIEFING NOTES

NAME OF GROUP: PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Wednesday, May 25, 2016, 11:30 a.m., Bill Luxford Studio, Room 113, County-City Building, 555 South 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Cathy Beecham, Michael Cornelius, Maja Harris, Chris Hove, Jeanelle Lust and Dennis Scheer; (Tracy Corr, Lynn Sunderman and Ken Weber absent).

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: David Cary, Paul Barnes, Mike Brienzo, Brandon Garrett, Kellee Van Bruggen and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Dept., Rick Haden and Jenny Young of Felsburg Holt & Ullevig, Alan Baade, Austin Baade and Todd Lorenz.

STATED PURPOSE: Briefing on “**Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and LPlan 2040 Comprehensive Plan Proposals**” by Planning staff.

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

David Cary welcomed everyone. The Felsburg Holt & Ullevig (FHU) consultants are in town to give you an update on the LRTP. There has been a lot of work going on. Staff is working on the draft plan. We will ALSO be handing out staff recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan proposals at the end of the LRTP update. The intent is for staff to get direction from Planning Commissioners at the June 8, 2016 Planning Commission briefing.

LRTP Update

Jenny Young and Rick Haden from FHU appeared. Jenny Young stated that lot of work has gone on the last couple of months. The Project Prioritization Process has been ongoing. We have identified all the projects from various sources, and have gone through the exercise of prioritizing. We have also looked at revenue and are making decisions on how to allocate the resources. Those pieces fit together with a fiscally constrained plan. Roadway capital projects and trail projects are prioritized within the LRTP. She provided a list of the projects being considered. Other categories of projects will also be within the LRTP. Those will be treated as set asides, but they will not be prioritized. Those categories are RTSD Projects, Transit, Other Bike /Pedestrian, System Operations & Maintenance, Road & Bridge Rehabilitation, Two Plus Center Turn Lanes + Other Intersection Projects, ITS & Technology, Safety Travel Demand Management and Corridor Preservation

The Roadway Capital Projects map was shared at the public meeting and has been posted online. The Trail Projects map shows the existing trails and committed trail projects. With regard to project scoring, there are seven goals that are the basis for evaluation criteria to score the projects. We have discussed the weighting of the evaluation criteria with Planning Commissioners. The LRTP Oversight Committee has gone through the exercise as well. The Oversight Committee took the Planning Commission recommendation and averaged it with theirs. The scoring committee has been working hard on all the projects. We have a preliminary scoring.

Rick Haden provided a summary of public input and information. A public meeting was held on May 3, 2016 at Everett Elementary School. It was an open house format. The purpose was to obtain input from the public on their transportation priorities. There were a number of stations set up. 22 people attended. This was less than expected, but over 400 people took part in the online survey. The funds allocation exercise was at the open house as well as online. Maintaining existing streets ranked highest, build new streets was second and widen existing streets was third. Technology rated high, as well as trails. We asked participants to rank their top six roadway capital projects. The East Beltway ranked the highest, along with widening of Highway 2. The third highest priority was the intersection of 40th Street, Normal Blvd. and South St. Trail projects were ranked by attendees as well. The highest was the South Beltway Trail, 27th St. to Highway 2.

Beecham stated that the Planning Commission has been receiving a fair number of emails regarding West A Street. She wondered if that was an option on the survey. Haden replied that West A St. is considered a committed project. That wasn't part of the survey. The same would hold true for trail projects. Anything that is already a committed project was not part of the survey.

Haden continued that open house participants were asked to fill out a Travel Modes questionnaire. Using a personal vehicle to get around Lincoln rated the highest, followed by walking and biking. They were also asked to rate the ease of travel in and around Lincoln on a scale of one to five. By foot rated the highest with bike second and personal vehicle rated third. The geographic distribution of responses was widely varied across town. We had very broad interest. The age representation also showed a broad section. Other comments we received expressed a desire for expanded public transportation. There were comments regarding a desire for public transportation to schools. For bicycle and pedestrian trails, people were very complimentary of trails. Ideas most often mentioned were more bike lanes. With regard to streets and traffic, signal timing was the major focus.

Cornelius sees that some people noted disinterest in the bike/pedestrian investment. Young included all the individual comments in the handout. There were more complimentary comments than disinterest.

Haden stated that comments received for streets and traffic talked about street widening and support for roundabouts. General comments talked about using more technology and alternative modes of travel. We received a lot of good input. Young agreed. It was great that there was a strong response to the online survey. The survey is still available online. Cary added that the Mayor's Taking Charge effort for the city budget process will contain a link to the survey as well.

Young stated that in terms of funding sources, there are three categories (local, state and federal). The local funding source includes wheel tax, general revenue, impact fees, RTSD, transit fares, Lower Platte South NRD and private contributions. The state category includes state train mile tax, highway allocation and transit. The federal list includes surface transportation program, STPP hazard elimination, Federal Transit Administration, a set aside from the ST Block Grant Program, and federal recreational trails. The revenue forecasts are still in progress. We are looking at a 24 year period from 2017 to 2040. The preliminary revenue forecast for that time period is around 2.3 billion dollars. The revenue forecast assumes a roughly 2.4 percent increase per year. The first thing to do in the process of resource allocation is to look at current commitments and any restrictions. These funding sources can only be used for very specific types of projects. RTSD funding can only be used for RTSD projects. That is the same with the State Trail Mile Tax, transit funds, federal safety funds and trail funds. We have held the first two years of the CIP as the budget. We don't do that for the remaining years of the CIP, except for roadway projects in the CIP, we look at the whole six years. We have some developer commitments where the timing of these projects is subject to the developer timing. The wheel tax commitments to residential rehabilitation and construction funds are hard and fast commitments. All of these commitments and restrictions are taken out of the 2.3 billion dollars and assigned to the project categories. What remains is the flexible funding. We look at different scenarios of how those might be allocated. There are five different funding scenarios we are looking at. It follows the methodology in the current LRTP. One scenario advances the resources to the ITS category. Another scenario takes the service expansion recommendations and funds those. Then we have a rehabilitation focus for roads and bridges. Another scenario is a combination of rehabilitation and technology. We are grappling with the committee on the right balance. We talked about one other idea to increase the focus on intersection capacity. She suspects we will develop a scenario that works on that.

Lust wondered if there isn't a scenario that combines transit development plan service expansion and rehabilitation focus. One option already combines rehabilitation and technology. Perhaps there is a scenario where all three are blended. Cornelius can see incremental improvements in each. It seems like there is room for synergy between technology and rehabilitation. There may be opportunities to use smart public vehicles in conjunction with smart intersections. He thinks there is a movement that transit is being sold short in the rehabilitation and technology scenario. Beecham assumes in blending scenarios together, you give up a little on each one. She likes the idea though. Cary added that there is a combination

of things going on. There is a long list of roadway projects and funding is limited. An increase in all three scenarios declines the ability to do other projects. Lust is a little more comfortable with that, where increasing capability doesn't necessarily improve the traffic flow. Maybe a focus away from those big capital improvement projects is not bad.

Beecham can see how much our view of transportation has changed in the last five years. There could be a new opportunity in the future. She wondered if we look at roadway projects in tandem with bike projects. Cary stated that there is a Complete Streets Committee where these things are considered. We struggle with the numbers. You could say five percent of trips will be bike by 2040. The challenge is to say what can be achieved and what we plan for. We are also challenged with the majority of trips are by personal automobile.

Lust is not sure if the best bang for the buck is in cement these days. There may be better ways to utilize funds. Cary stated that is the discussion that is currently going on. We are talking about how this plan might present a shift in strategy.

Harris inquired what other comparable cities are doing. Young replied that her personal experience is mostly in Denver, Colorado. They have taken a stance that they don't add capacity to the roadways. Their approach is about person moving capacity and not vehicle moving capacity.

Beecham wondered about programs like carpooling. It looks like carpooling was high in the 1980's and has since dropped off. Technology might be a part of this as well.

Cary noted that the rest of the conversation is what is workable for expansion for some form of transit. You need a higher density to make some of those forms work. If you concentrate some of that service, you might have more ridership. Beyond that, it is a question of what will transit look like in 25 years. Is it public service or something else?

Harris believes because we focus on one thing doesn't mean we drop everything else. She thinks that a technology focus implies that you apply a technology cost savings to the other categories. Young thinks that is a fair assumption. Mike Brienzo added that we consider a technology focus with all our transportation elements.

Young stated that in the next steps we need to refine the resource allocation and apply that to the ranked project list and consider the alternative approach. She anticipates coming back in two weeks with more detailed information. She thinks there is a lot to be said for doing a finite number of projects or spread the money out more and address more of the needs if it is not to the fullest extent.

Comprehensive Plan Proposals

Cary stated that staff is handing out the staff recommendations on the Comprehensive Plan proposals. We will discuss these in two weeks.

Brandon Garrett stated that staff will do a brief presentation on each proposal and have a discussion. The intent is to have some kind of formal action on these proposals from the Planning Commission. He also provided a handout from the Comprehensive Plan related to growth tiers. This may aid the commissioners to have the different definitions of the tiers and priority areas. We will also have a brief review of these items at the next briefing.

Cary stated that we will be asking for formal direction on these proposals. As we enter summer, we will begin the process of drafting the updated chapters for the Comprehensive Plan. This is a piece to help update the land use map. It will not be an official public hearing or final action on the plan. This will give us direction on the plan. There will be an opportunity for public comment. Garrett added that Commissioners already heard from the applicants on these proposals. The staff reports provided to commissioners are available online.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m.