

MEETING MINUTES

Officials Committee Meeting

Friday, September 27, 2013

10:00 a.m.

Mayor's Conference Room

Members Present: Mayor Beutler; Carl Eskridge, City Council; Brent Smoyer, County Board; Thomas Goodbarn, Nebraska Department of Roads.

Others Present: Michael Davis, StarTran; Marvin Krout, David Cary, Mike Brienzo, Michele Abendroth, Planning.

The meeting was called to order at 10:16 a.m. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act was acknowledged.

1. Review and action on the draft minutes of the August 19, 2013 Officials Committee meeting.

Due to the lack of a quorum, the meeting minutes were not voted upon.

2. Review of the *Lincoln Travel Options Strategy* for the MPO planning area.

Brienzo introduced Tom Brennan of Nelson Nygaard, who is the consultant for the travel options project. A team has been working on strategies for travel options, or Travel Demand Management, since December of last year. A draft report has been prepared called Lincoln Travel Options Strategy.

Brennan began with a presentation on the travel options strategy for Lincoln. He provided a definition of travel options, which include: strategies that deliver, expand and reduce barriers; programs that outreach, encourage, incent and educate; and investments that support options. He reviewed the events that have taken place since the initiation of the project in December which include reports on a landscape scan, best practice review, a community survey, stakeholder outreach, proposed organizational alternatives, the draft work plan, a business case, and a revised work plan.

Brennan reported that there are 88,650 commuters who live and work in Lincoln. There are 47,078 workers the live outside the urban area but work in Lincoln, and 23,040 of Lincoln residents that work outside Lincoln. There are several major factors that affect future travel in Lincoln which include a projected 22% increase in UNL enrollment by 2017, 6% of residents do not own a vehicle, 8% of residents have a disability and 15% fall below the poverty level. There are several programs in Lincoln that encourage walking and biking as well as health and safety and human service transportation. The Downtown Lincoln Association and Lincoln Chamber of Commerce serve as downtown business partners. The online survey showed that 68% of the respondents drove to work alone.

Brennan stated that stakeholder interviews were conducted and reviewed the key themes found during this time including:

- Many traditional drivers of TDM are not in place such as congestion, travel time, etc.
- Transit headways, service hours and user perceptions are a challenge to attracting users.
- Public health and reducing "brain drain" cited as key drivers for increasing travel options.
- Economic development cited as driver, but in practice parking is seen as primary access mode.
- Opportunity to focus on education and acceptance (reduce negative perceptions of cyclists and transit riders by non-riders).
- Opportunity to build on success in biking realm, seeking to attract more commuters.

Next, Brennan provided a review of strategies used in our peer cities. The peer cities were chosen based on size, if they have a major University and an advanced transportation system. The peer cities all have a higher percentage of using alternative modes of transportation.

Brennan reviewed the reasons why a travel options program is needed, which includes a desire to maintain short commuter times, support a healthy economy, maintain good air quality, manage parking access, support community health, enhance value of transit, and expand the life of roads. Lincoln has seen a decline in using alternative forms of transportation over the past 20 years.

Brennan continued by reviewing the goals of the travel options program, which are to establish a travel options program structure via new partnerships; improve awareness of travel options to encourage more people to use sustainable modes of travel for more trips, provide safe and accessible travel options for people of all abilities and for types of trips; reduce community-wide costs associated with transportation.

A general timeline for the strategies is as follows: year 1 would include program development, partnership building and branding; year 2 would include rideshare matching and bike map; and years 3-5 would be universal pass program, carshare and bikeshare.

The interim strategies are to secure funding, build organizational knowledge and support, and initiate a coordinating committee. Funding options include federal (CMAQ), state, local partnerships, and foundations/trust grants.

Beutler asked if Lincoln has used CMAQ money in the past. Brienzo stated that Lincoln has used it for street projects in the past. CMAQ is a subcategory of the Federal STP funds, which goes to the State and is allocated to other programs. They are encouraged to support local programs like this with these funds. The City will have to document the use and report back to the State how the funds were used. Beutler asked how that money is accessed. Brienzo stated that it would be in the form of grant money. The MPO will need to put together a Work Plan to request funds from the State. Brennan stated that the funding is flexible even though is mainly used for capital projects.

Brennan stated that they looked at organizational options, and the recommendation is a City/MPO-led program due to the supportive city/regional policy, the existing political support, infrastructure and program coordination, overhead costs savings and centralized user information. Program priorities include branding, working on partnerships, and providing an incentives program.

For staffing, they are recommending a full time travel options program manager, a full time StarTran marketing coordinator, and a half time travel options program coordinator.

Estimated program costs for year 1 are \$183,920, year 2: \$275,678, year 3: \$238,909, year 4: \$345,854 and year 5: \$328,002.

They are also recommending the continuation of the oversight committee as a coordinating committee. The goals of the coordinating committee are to revise the work plan as needed, implement performance measurement, coordinate programs and leverage funding.

Beutler asked if there are websites that coordinate carpooling. Brennan stated that there are services users can register for that match riders for carpooling.

Eskridge stated that bike parking in parking garages has been discussed in the past. Brennan stated that having well-dispersed, convenient bike parking is an important factor in influencing a person's decision to ride their bike.

Eskridge stated that one of the criticisms they hear is that people are not going to ride their bike in the winter, so he appreciates that all of the examples cited are northern cities.

Goodbarn asked about best practices for getting people to use the bus. Brennan stated that transit pass programs have been very effective. A couple communities have used neighborhood passes. Frequent service also makes a big difference as well as service hours and reliable service.

3. Other topics for discussion.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

*** Please note that these minutes will not be formally approved until the next meeting of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Officials Committee. ***

ma/mb

Q:\MPO\Officials Committee\Minutes\2013-2014\130927.docx