

## BRIEFING NOTES

**NAME OF GROUP:** PLANNING COMMISSION

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:** Wednesday, January 20, 2016, 11:30 a.m., Bill Luxford Studio, Room 113, County-City Building, 555 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

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

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** David Cary, Mike Brienzo, Brandon Garrett, Kellee Van Bruggen and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Jenny Young and Rick Haden of Felsberg, Holt & Uelvig

**STATED PURPOSE:** Briefing on “**LRTP and LPlan 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update**” 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 stated that the focus for today is the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Focus groups are ongoing this week. There is a lot of information gathering happening. We are continuing to work on the LPlan update.

Jenny Young stated that she would like to talk about the vision and guiding principles of the LRTP. There is an exercise we have been doing with the focus groups. It has been interesting so far to hear the different ideas and perspectives. The last time we were here, there was a discussion on the changes over the last five years and trends for the future. We would like to talk about possible strategies today. We have been working on the technical side of the needs assessment.

The vision is in the current transportation plan. She wanted to know if Commissioners believe it still rings true for transportation in Lincoln. The Commissioners agreed that no changes were needed to the current vision statement.

There are also four guiding principles; A Connected City, A Balanced Transportation System, Transportation as a Formative System and Planning as a Process.

Beecham likes the emphasis on one community.

Cornelius asked if there is a need or a desire to reflect something about environmental impact in the balance section. The other Commissioners indicated it would make sense to add some language.

Young wondered about adding flexibility to the plan as a guiding principle. Cornelius believes that is already incorporated into "Planning as a Process".

Beecham believes perhaps flexibility for future modes of transportation could be added to a guiding principle. Lust does not see a need to add that particular point. She believes it is already covered as well.

Harris believes something could be added to public health with regard to bicycling, walking and healthy living. Scheer thinks the transportation system needs to address the health, safety and welfare of the community. We talk a lot about the location of fire stations. The transportation system is in the middle of how the fire truck is sued and where it needs to go.

Young has an exercise for the Commissioners to think about the transportation system in Lincoln. She asked everyone to write down three things on yellow notes stating what they love about transportation. She then asked everyone to write down three things on blue notes stating what they would change about the transportation system

The notes were collected and placed at the front of the room. Young noted that a lot of the yellow notes referenced a city where you can get to most places in twenty to thirty minutes. Other notes referenced the great care taken of major roads and the connectivity to old pieces from new pieces of the system.

Rick Haden announced some of the change list. It consisted of better transportation modes, a bus system that doesn't funnel everything through downtown, better public transit opportunities, a variety on how roundabouts need to be more pedestrian friendly and improve air travel. Another theme dealt with beltways and corridors, better perimeter connectivity and how local streets are considered and cared for.

Young went over the seven goals: Maintenance, Mobility and System Reliability, Livability and Travel Choice, Safety and Security, Economic Vitality, Environmental Sustainability and Funding and Cost Effectiveness. She questioned the Commissioners on strategies that could be deployed to be able to reach these goals. Are any policies barriers to achieving these goals?

Lust knows that we came up with new funding for streets, but she wondered if we have an idea how much was gained on the deferred maintenance issues. Cary has no specific numbers, but wants everyone to keep in mind that Lincoln significantly caught up on the sidewalk issue. Our

ongoing funding will be able to better keep up with the actual problems. During the summer of progress, an effort was made to put more money towards maintenance on streets. Haden added that they are still compiling the data for 2015. Lust believes the committee was most concerned last time that we were falling so far behind with maintenance. Cary stated that the decline has been stabilized on arterial streets. There is still a lack of funds on maintaining neighborhood streets. Haden noted that we don't have the hard numbers yet, but he believes the decline has stabilized, as well.

Cornelius understands we would like to have crash rates at zero. He inquired how we compare to other communities. Cary replied that Lincoln's crash rate is very low and has been declining every year. He would have to follow up on injury accidents. Mike Brienzo stated that over the last year, statewide fatal accidents have gone up. It continues to be a concern, not just in Lincoln but statewide. It could be a trend that could make its way into Lincoln. More people are not wearing seatbelts which causes more fatalities.

Beecham believes funding of county roads and bridges needs to be addressed. The County Engineer is working very hard, but at some point we are going to get to dangerous liability issues. She also sees amazing things being done in downtown and what an economic boon it has been to Lincoln. As our business model continues to broaden, not everyone wants to live in the suburbs. She thinks it behooves us to find a way for neighborhoods and businesses to work well together. She thinks the funding should all work together as well. A lot of the people we want to attract to our city want good roads and parks. She wants us to broaden our business model. She thinks that business is changing in a great way and we should capitalize on that to attract a new generation.

Cornelius stated that the Comprehensive Plan has provisions for infill development. He believes that is a reflection of what Beecham is saying. There are populations that want to be closer to the city core, and those that want to be on the outskirts. He believes there is a gulf between those two communities that needs to be bridged.

Beecham thinks the common ground is that this is great for our economy. She thinks the emphasis is we have these great multi-generational opportunities and a good quality of life for every generation. Attracting the drivers of the economy benefits everyone.

Cornelius believes in recognizing some common ground, some of these goals will serve both constituencies. There may be ways to market these differently.

Lust wonders about Environmental Sustainability. One thing she remembers from the past was in the 1970's and 1980's, a lot of people carpooled and then there was a large drop-off. It seems if we could come up with a ride sharing policy, if there was a way we could connect people, we should encourage it.

Cornelius has read about automotive manufactures considering getting into ride sharing. It seems like it is something about to explode. From what he reads, major manufacturers are looking into changing the ownership model. He personally can't imagine being a GM subscriber to ride sharing.

Cary stated that staff has had many discussions regarding a combination of emerging technology and its effect on transportation, i.e. driverless vehicles. We have talked about the importance of technology and what it means for the future of transportation in general.

Cornelius agrees. We are talking about policies and policy changes. It seems he is not privy to what policy makers are thinking about, with regard to ride sharing. Maybe we want to get ahead of this. He thinks generally it is a positive change. Driverless vehicles will be a similar kind of thing. He would like to get ahead of the new technology.

Beecham agrees. A lot of millennials wants to ride share and not own cars. She would like to get ahead of this as well and have some policies that can be flexible.

Young stated there is a US DOT (United States Department of Transportation) Smart Cities Challenge trying to encourage cities to think ahead and how can we be smart about it. It strikes her the most important thing to be planning for, is the idea of sharing, that people want to transition seamlessly from one mode of transportation to another.

Sunderman wonders about driverless vehicles. He thinks it will take a while for the idea to catch on, but he thinks it is well on its way. He sees the idea of downtown living changing.

Cornelius believes we have many opportunities for pedestrian and bike. He wants to achieve a seamless transition between all modes. We have people who are currently dependent on public transportation and he sees where improvements can be made.

Beecham thinks before we see driverless vehicles, we will see car sharing just like bike sharing. Perhaps we should look ahead at locations and policies. Cary noted that UNL (University of Nebraska Lincoln) already has a car share.

Young stated that designated parking could be done for car sharing. Lust wondered how that is enforced. Cary believes that the city Parking Manager has already thought about that.

Harris stated that millennials may be driving the change, but baby boomers are a large population. They are aging but still want to be active. It would be interesting to know what ideas there are for retired people getting around. She thinks the older generation is going to be interested in freedom. It seems there should be an incentive to help people be independent as long as they can.

Beecham believes another piece is with regard to all of the one way streets downtown. She doesn't think drivers are very good about yielding to pedestrians. She doesn't know how to make that safer. There has to be some way on busy thoroughfares to increase pedestrian safety.

Cary stated that there has been a lot of discussion nationally on getting rid of "right on red" laws.

Cornelius still has a lot of concerns about low price gas. He wonders how much more driving people will be doing because it is cheap again.

Scheer stated that when we talk about connectivity and sharing with modes of transportation that are available, it sounds like we are more focused on developing connectivity with sharing for the modes we have in place. In comparison with other cities, we are lacking. We have cabs and buses. We aren't even close to light rail and other modes. We seem to be more focused on developing what we have, as opposed to creating and developing something new. Logically, it seems that we could do so much. Young noted that also has to be balanced with maintenance needs.

Harris stated that when she first moved to Lincoln, she used StarTran a lot. She inquired if there is an app associated with StarTran. Haden replied that an app is available on StarTran's website. It shows the bus lines and where the bus currently is. Harris thinks it would be great to pay your fare online while you are waiting for the bus. Everyone else agreed. Cornelius knows that the StarTran app was not created by the city. Beecham believes that an app to purchase tickets has the potential to increase ridership with people who use their phone exclusively and don't carry cash. The other Commissioners agreed that would be a good idea.

Haden stated that some of the Needs Assessment has been completed. Other parts are ongoing. There has been a lot of data gathering. Household, commercial and industrial growth are three areas that go into the assessment. These numbers are being plugged into the transportation model. 120,162 people live and work in Lancaster County. 44,199 are inbound workers and 22,167 outbound workers. We have talked about the limitations of car sharing. The average commute travel time is 18 minutes. A downside is, if you have to go out of your way to pick someone up, you add five minutes. A 25 minute trip is not all that great. 81 percent of people drive alone. That is an area that could change with people working from home. The city did a very robust traffic count program, so we have a good basis for travelers today. Another major component is the bike system and trail network. We heard a lot of positives about the convenience and access of trails. We need to fill in the gaps in the system. Regarding pedestrians, there has been an effort to address the sidewalk repair and maintenance. Another major effort is ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance. The Transit Development Plan is currently being updated. Rail is a component that was mentioned as well. We will be able to identify the needs.

Young stated that they will be back in February, 2016, to present the input from the focus groups. We will also begin the process of discussing how we prioritize needs. There will be an open house on February 18, 2016 from 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. at Culler Middle School.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.