

TAKING CHARGE 2013

a community conversation on city priorities & the budget

STRATEGIC PLANNING OTHER POSSIBILITIES

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**Taking Charge
Community Conversation
Strategic Planning Other Possibilities**

Safety and Security

E. Restore Community Mental Health funding (*Maintain a low crime rate*)

Cuts at the State level concerning the Medicaid reimbursement rate and the County's transition to non-profit providers may impact the delivery of mental health services. The availability of both in-patient and community based care is essential to the well-being of our community. Unaddressed problems associated with those facing mental health issues often become the responsibility of the Lincoln Police Department, community hospitals, the County jail and correctional systems. Additional funding for services would help keep those needing mental services out of the criminal justice system.

F. Add 911 Center supervisors (*Timely and effective incident management*)

The Emergency Communication - 911 Center's shift supervisors also must staff a telephone or radio position during their shift. This makes it very difficult to supervise the remainder of staff, to ensure quality control, to balance the workload of the positions, to ensure relief for breaks and to perform many other supervisory duties. Supervisors can be helpful in handling the unforeseen problems that can slow response time. A 911 Center supervisor would cost about \$75,000 annually.

G. Add another ambulance unit (*Timely and effective incident management*)

Six front-line ambulances serve the City at any one time. Adding a seventh ambulance would help reduce response time. An ambulance has a one-time cost of about \$220,000, and the six new full-time positions needed to staff a crew around the clock cost about \$420,000 annually.

H. Add traffic unit police officers (*Traffic safety*)

Additional traffic officers would allow for greater moving vehicle enforcement and increased traffic citations, potentially impacting the City's traffic safety indicator. The City goal is to have fewer than 850 crashes per 100,000 residents, and that has been met every year since 2005. In 2012, we had 689 crashes per 100,000 residents, nearly 20% below the goal. As a result of the low crash rate, the impact of hiring more traffic officers may have no or minimal impact on the crash rate. Each officer costs about \$88,000 annually.

I. Improving striping and signage and taking other counter measures at high-crash locations (*Traffic safety*)

An annual report identifies City intersections with expected crash rates. Traffic safety can be improved by improving lane striping and signage and taking measures such as closing driveways.

In 2011, 94 intersections were identified as having high overall crash rates or a specific crash pattern. To improve safety, 152 counter measures were recommended. The total cost of all counter measures, if implemented today, would be \$12.7 million. If all counter measures were implemented, the overall benefit to cost ratio is estimated at 25 to 1.

Additional multi-million dollar safety projects could be undertaken and some intersections, including 14th and Highway 2, 27th and Highway 2 and 27th and Cornhusker as well as railroad grade separations at Adams and 33rd and BNSF near Cornhusker.

Making local funds available allows the City to leverage Federal safety funds on some projects, which could pay for up to 90% of the cost.

J. Gang resistance programming (*Youth activity*)

A gang resistance program targeted at teens and tweens would focus on mentoring at-risk kids and building positive relationships between police and youth. The program would include recreation programming such as sports leagues offered through middle school community learning centers to provide a setting for interaction between kids and police. About \$60,000 annually would be needed for program coordination, police officer time and transportation.

K. More focus on floodplain permitting and community flood insurance rating (*Flood hazards*)

Annual flood insurance premiums are a significant cost to property owners in Lincoln. Currently, about 2,000 mandatory flood insurance policies are in effect in Lincoln, with structure and contents coverage of about \$350 million. The federal Community Ratings System helps communities save money on their flood insurance premiums by rewarding communities that go beyond minimum mandatory floodplain regulations. The ratings range from one to ten, with 1 being the best rating. A community reduction of one point provides an additional 5% savings on flood insurance premiums for those property owners who have insured structures in the floodplain. The City's current rating is six, which provides a 20% reduction in flood insurance premiums for property owners in the floodplain. An additional employee would help maintain or improve Lincoln's current rating and bring additional savings to those in the community that need flood insurance. The additional position would also help with floodplain

permitting, an area that is currently understaffed. The additional cost is about \$60,000 annually.

L. Complete more storm drain projects (*Flood hazards*)

Periodically, Lincoln experiences significant rain events that damage properties, make streets impassable and can result in flooding of local businesses and homes. Bringing the storm drainage system up to standard reduces property losses due to flooding and increases the general health, safety and welfare of Lincoln residents. The total length of storm drain pipe in the City that is labeled "highly deficient" is estimated to be 70,000 linear feet, based on past studies. An additional engineer could help complete more storm drainage projects, bringing more storm drain pipes up to existing drainage standards at a cost of about \$80,000 annually.

Efficient Transportation

F. Hire additional staff and update software for traffic signal timing
(Provide, maintain and support safe, convenient, durable and efficient transportation infrastructure)

The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) recommends that in order to properly maintain and update traffic signal timing, one traffic signal **timing** technician is needed per 100 traffic signals. Lincoln has one traffic signal timing technician for about 432 traffic signals. To meet the ITE recommendations, Lincoln would need to increase the number of signal timing technicians from one to four. Salaries, benefits and equipment for three additional technicians would cost about \$300,000 per year. In addition, the current traffic signal operating system software is about 15 years old and needs an update. The cost would be about \$250,000.

The ITE also recommends one traffic signal **maintenance** technician for every 75 traffic signals. Currently, Lincoln has four signal maintenance technicians for about 432 traffic signals. To meet the ITE recommendations, Lincoln would need to increase the number of signal maintenance technicians from four to six. Salaries, benefits and equipment for two additional technicians would cost about \$150,000 a year, and two additional lift trucks would cost about \$300,000.

G. Intelligent Transportation System adaptive signals
(Provide, maintain and support safe, convenient, durable and efficient transportation infrastructure)

Adaptive signal control technology adjusts the timing of red, yellow and green lights to accommodate changing traffic patterns and ease traffic congestion. Adaptive signals cost \$40,000 per location. Upgrading the 432 signals Citywide would cost \$17 million. Completing the Antelope Valley Parkway corridor would cost \$500,000.

H. Street signing and marking program
(Provide, maintain and support safe, convenient, durable and efficient transportation infrastructure)

Maintenance of traffic signing and marking plays a critical role in keeping drivers safe and reducing the City's liability. The City replaces signs every seven to ten years depending on sign type. Durable street markings typically last 2 to 3 years, and painted streets should be striped twice a year. To meet current needs, the marking program would need to increase by \$150,000 to a total of \$1 million annually and the signing budget would need to increase \$100,000 each year.

**I. Add position to help promote biking, walking, transit and ride sharing
(Encourage alternate forms of transportation such as bicycling or walking)**

A current study of Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategy options for Lincoln recommended that a Travel Options Program Manager should be hired. The employee would manage the regional travel options brand, develop a strategy for marketing and outreach, develop school curriculum and develop and execute a strategy to partner with the business community particularly in downtown. This manager would be responsible for affecting mode shift in Lincoln and developing and adjusting strategies over time to meet program goals. The position is estimated to cost about \$70,000 annually. The TDM report shows the \$70,000 for the position, but also includes another \$82,000 in needed funds for materials/incentives/etc.

Several projects are prioritized in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Capital Plan Project. They include:

• Existing bike routes with "Share the Road" signs – 82 miles	\$164,000
• New bike routes with "Share the Road" signs (new signs) - 53.6 miles	\$214,400
• Share lane markings - 9 miles	\$27,000
• Trail underpass lighting - 3 underpasses	\$60,000
• Bike activated signals - 2 intersections	\$80,000
• Completing missing sidewalk gaps - 2 miles	\$264,000
• Sidewalk connections to trails - 1,000 feet	\$25,000
• Enhanced at-grade trail crossings - 1 crossing	\$20,000
• Public on-street bike parking - 6 spaces	\$9,600
• Public garage bike parking - 4 garages	\$60,000
• Pedestrian countdown signal heads - 736 signal heads	\$66,240

J. Expanded bus transfer center (Provide accessible, reliable, convenient and safe public transit)

An expanded bus transfer center allows bus service to operate more efficiently and provides riders with better transfer service. A new center would allow expansion from the current 10 bus stalls to 20, eliminating long transfer waits by passengers. A new center would also provide new amenities that would make bus travel more attractive to new users. A considerable portion of the \$5 million estimated cost of the new center would be funded with federal aid and grants.

K. Downtown CNG re-fueling station

StarTran currently spends over \$1 million dollars annually on fuel. Buses that run on compressed natural gas (CNG) can save up to 50% on fuel costs. A nearby fueling station is needed to switch to CNG. A considerable portion of the \$2 million estimated cost of the station would be funded by federal grants and aid and other governmental/private partners.