

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Wednesday, May 1, 2019, 1:00 p.m., Hearing Room
112 on the first floor of the County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Dick Campbell, Tracy Corr, Deane Finnegan, Maja Harris, Christy Joy, Denis Scheer, and Sändra Washington; Tom Beckius and Tracy Edgerton absent. David Cary, Steve Henrichsen, Brian Will, Geri Rorabaugh and Amy Huffman of the Planning Department; media and other interested citizens.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Planning Commission Hearing

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

Scheer requested a motion approving the minutes for the regular Planning Commission hearing held April 17, 2019. Motion for approval of the minutes made by Campbell, seconded by Joy and carried 7-0: Campbell, Corr, Finnegan, Harris, Joy, Washington and Scheer voting 'yes'; Beckius and Edgerton absent.

CONSENT AGENDA

PUBLIC HEARING & ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

BEFORE PLANNING COMMISSION:

May 1, 2019

Members present: Campbell, Corr, Finnegan, Harris, Joy, Washington and Scheer; Beckius and Edgerton absent.

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following item: **SPECIAL PERMIT 19017**.

There were no ex parte communications disclosed.

Campbell moved approval of the Consent Agenda; seconded by Corr and carried, 7-0: Campbell, Corr, Finnegan, Harris, Joy, Washington and Scheer voting 'yes'; Beckius and Edgerton absent.

Note: This is **FINAL ACTION** on **SPECIAL PERMIT 19017**, unless appealed by filing a Letter of Appeal with the Office of the City or County Clerk within 14 days.

MISCELLANEOUS 19002, LINCOLN MPO PROPOSAL: REVIEW AS TO CONFORMANCE WITH THE CURRENT LINCOLN METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) LRTP THE DRAFT 2020 TO 2023 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP).

PUBLIC HEARING

May 1, 2019

Members present: Campbell, Corr, Finnegan, Harris, Joy, Washington and Scheer; Beckius and Edgerton absent.

Staff Recommendation: Conformance with the LRTP.

There were no ex parte communications disclosed.

Staff Presentation: Paul Barnes of the Planning Department stated this is the 4-year schedule of transportation improvement projects that use federal dollars or that have significant impact on the local transportation system. It encompasses federally-aided systems such as the interstate and state highways, major arterial streets, public transportation such as Star Tran, maintenance and capital projects such as bridges and bike and pedestrian trails, and regional projects that have impact. The TIP includes a description of various projects and of the funding sources for each.

The plan was developed by multiple agencies and was reviewed by a project selection committee on April 4th of this year. They voted to move the plan forward. The MPO Technical Committee also met last week and their recommendation was support and approval of the draft. If this body determines conformity, the next step will be the MPO Officials Committee which will meet on May 10th. Staff recommends a finding of Conformance. After the Officials Committee, the draft will be sent to the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) for inclusion in their State TIP, which is a consolidation of plans from across the state. The final stop is the Federal Highway and Transit Administration for approval on October 1st of this year.

Barnes went on to highlight the projects included. The NDOT included safety and systems operational upgrades, two major maintenance project areas, five surface repairs and South Beltway projects that are being carried forward from the last plan. They also include a mill and overlay project for Highway 77 that was delivered this morning. If this body recommends support for that, the motion will need to include the associated staff-recommended amendment to the plan.

Lancaster County Engineer has included two new capital projects for two segments of S. 98th Street between Old Cheney Road and O Street. Since this is so close to the City limits, the City will coordinate closely with the city and the county on the design and construction. Lincoln Transportation and Utilities mentions traffic management and intelligent transportation systems. They are also concerned with safety and operations costs. Projects include sidewalks, some

bridge improvements, as well as two segments of West A Street, Pine Lake Road, S. 40th, and East Beltway protections.

Star Tran includes operations and other capital improvement programs. These are mostly funded through the Federal Transit Program and are matched locally. They seek a maintenance facility relocation and a multi-modal center feasibility study. The Airport Authority projects are funded through Federal Aviation Administration dollars, matched locally. They include runway improvements and an airport masterplan. The MPO includes membership from the airport.

The Federal Transportation Administration carried forward the NDOT Vanpool Project and the Section 5310 Program shown in prior fiscal years. Pedestrian and bicycle trail projects are the LPSNRD's Rosa Parks Way Trail and the City's Parks and Recreation Department' Beal Slough Trail Project, Wilderness Park Bridges, Fletcher Landmark Trail, and Stonebridge trail. The Railroad Transportation Safety District's main focus is on the grade-separated crossing for 33rd Street and Cornhusker Highway.

Corr asked if there is a site selected for the StarTran facility or the multi-modal center and how large the multi-modal center is expected to be. Barnes said there is a site identified for StarTran and they are working through the environmental and federal processes to acquire that. The upcoming feasibility study for the multi-modal center will provide more detailed answers about potential needs, including size and location.

Campbell asked if the County's S. 98th Street project will be carefully coordinated with City growth, with the potential to add lanes in the future as needed. Barnes said the design will be considered carefully by both in terms of including the rural to urban transition that this area is expected to go through. Campbell noted one portion is already within City limits.

There was no public testimony on this item.

MISCELLANEOUS 19002

ACTION BY PLANNING COMMISSION:

May 1, 2019

Campbell moved to recommend Conformance with the LRTP, as amended by Staff; seconded by Washington and carried, 7-0: Campbell, Corr, Finnegan, Harris, Joy, Washington and Scheer voting 'yes'; Beckius and Edgerton absent.

Scheer called for anyone wishing to speak on an item not on the agenda to come forward.

Richard Schmeling, 4610 Van Dorn Street, came forward representing Citizens for Improved Transit. He provided Commissioners with two handouts (See Exhibit A and a few copies of the current StarTran Route Map). In 2016, Star Tran hired a consultant from Seattle to review the

Star Tran system. They held a number of public meetings and came up with a plan that was adopted, to be implemented in five phases. The first step revised the routes and times of buses. Routes were removed from residential areas, increasing their efficiency by avoiding travel on slower, narrower streets. Service hours were increased on several major routes. Eventually, they would like to see all routes offer expanded service hours. Frequency of stops also increased. Under the old system, buses would arrive every 30 minutes during peak rush hours, but during quieter times, service slowed to an hour between buses. We have seen a steady 5% increase in ridership since these changes were implemented. When all phases of the plan go into effect, the consultants predict it could be a 7% increase. There was no dip in service when changes were implemented.

He has told the City Council it is important to invest in these services. Planning Commission also plays an important role because they can implement transportation-based zoning, where density is increased adjacent to transportation corridors and then tapered back. There are two types of riders – captive riders who ride due to a disability or lack of vehicle ownership, and choice riders who own cars, but choose public transportation. The first handout shows how much money this group can save by taking the bus instead of driving.

In terms of planning, there is a developer interested in the current maintenance site and there is a dramatic need for the new site. There is also not compressed natural gas fueling near the maintenance building, so drivers have to go across town, wasting time and energy. There should be fuel at the new facility. One exciting development is the introduction of electric battery busses.

As an experienced public transportation user who has visited many other communities, he would like to see long range planning for inclusion of a light rail; along O Street would be a great start. StarTran is an older style “hub and spoke” system; a grid system would make travel from one quadrant of the city to another much easier. The Gateway Mall area is one area to consider as a transfer facility. These types of plans are not antipathetic to long range planning.

Harris encouraged Mr. Schmeling to come back with even more detail when it is time to update the Comprehensive Plan. That is the document with the “bird’s eye” view and visionary/mission thinking and planning that he is talking about.

Campbell asked about the funding for public transportation. Schmeling said it is typically 60% Federal, 20% State and 20% local, with some adjustments made in communities where it is necessary. Campbell asked where the biggest bottleneck in funding is. Schmeling believes the current presidential administration has not been as supportive as promised, and has even abolished infrastructure projects. He believes the current City administration has been very supportive and he hopes to see a continuation of that legacy.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Schmeling for his input and urged him to continue his discussions in the future.

Cary came forward to state that the formalized process for updating the Comprehensive Plan will begin in 2020. It is a relatively lengthy process with many opportunities for input.

Cary took a moment to thank Amy Huffman for her work with the Planning Department. Today is her last day as she moves to another position with the City. Many changes occurred during her years and her efforts have been appreciated. Commissioner Harris commented that the quality of Amy's work has been commendable, particularly the quality of meeting minutes which are a helpful resource for providing historical context to Commission actions. Commissioners thanked Ms. Huffman.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Note: These minutes will not be formally approved by the Planning Commission until their next regular meeting on Wednesday, May 15, 2019.

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FREE STARTRAN SENIOR/LOW INCOME BUS PASS DISTRIBUTION

In conversation with various social service agencies in Lincoln, CFIT became aware of a need to furnish clients of those agencies with StarTran Senior/Low Income bus passes. In addition to other needs, the passes would help support mobility for clients to come to the agencies for services as well as allow them to use the bus passes for doctor and medical appointments, job interviews and transportation to and from work as well as accessing food distribution centers.

The agencies report the demand for the bus passes always exceeds their ability to supply the bus passes. Some agencies were purchasing bus passes out of their own funds, but this often means that they do not have funds to deal with utility shutoffs, eviction notices and other programs that they offer.

CFIT decided to try to meet this need by establishing a free bus pass distribution system. In the summer of 2015 CFIT received a grant from the Lincoln Community Foundation for \$20,000 which provided 2,500 bus passes which were distributed to over 20 different social service agencies. The need is ongoing and CFIT has also been purchasing additional passes from funds raised at cookouts to make the free bus passes available.

Without exception, the agencies are most grateful for free passes. Each agency monitors the persons to whom the passes are being given to make sure that these people qualify for Senior/Low Income passes. This program helps to support people who are attempting to rise out of poverty and improve their lives.

You can help by donating to CFIT through the Lincoln Community Foundation. This will qualify your donation for a deduction on your income taxes. Please mark your donation with "CFIT - Free Bus Pass Program."

We have a wonderful, dedicated group of social service agencies providing a wide variety of services in Lincoln. If people cannot travel to these agencies, delivery of services becomes difficult and often impossible. CFIT seeks to address this problem with the free bus pass program. Will you please help us to keep the bus passes available by donating.



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WANT TO SAVE BETWEEN \$7,000 AND \$10,000 A YEAR BY MAKING AN EASY CHANGE? READ THIS TO FIND OUT HOW!

Your car is a big cash hog. American Automobile Association's "Your Driving Costs" study just released says the the annual cost of a motor vehicle is in the thousands of dollars. We don't realize this because we pay it out in bits and dribbles over a year's time, but it's very real. Your annual costs vary somewhat depending upon the type of vehicle you own.

Here are some examples:

Small Compact Sedan - \$7,429 per year \$20.35 per day \$0.3715 per mile	Small SUV (4WD) - \$8,923 per year \$24.45 per day \$0.4462 per mile
Medium Sedan - \$9,424 per year \$25.82 per day \$0.4712 per mile	Minivan - \$10,543 per year \$28.88 per day \$0.5272 per mile
Large Sedan - \$10,879 per year \$29.81 per day \$0.5440 per mile	1/2 Ton Pickup (4WD) - Crew Cab \$11,835 per year \$32.42 per day \$0.5918 per mile

NOTE: Above costs do not include parking fees which differ widely and could not be measured.

HERE'S THE SECRET. SELL YOUR VEHICLE AND RIDE STARTRAN, THE LINCOLN BUS SYSTEM.

For only \$17.00 per month you can travel with a 31 day consecutive day pass with unlimited rides on any StarTran bus route. If you are 62 or over or low income, a monthly pass will cost you only \$8.00 per month.

