

LINCOLN/ LANCASTER COUNTY STAFF REPORT

Lincoln-Lancaster County 2040 Comprehensive Plan – Draft of July 8, 2011

- DATE:** August 3, 2011
- PROPOSAL:** **Adoption of the July 8, 2011 draft of “LPlan 2040,” the new Lincoln City-Lancaster County 2040 Comprehensive Plan, with amendments.**
- RELATED ITEMS:** Draft Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).
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The July 8, 2011 draft of LPlan 2040 was developed through a broad-based community input process and is the result of over one year of intensive public outreach and involvement. This included the work of the LPlan Advisory Committee (LPAC), a 20-person citizen group (which included the nine members of the Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Commission) appointed by the Mayor representing a broad range of interests in the City and County, who met bi-weekly to provide guidance on the development of the Plan. The draft LPlan 2040 is submitted by the Director of Planning and is recommended for adoption to replace the 2030 Comprehensive Plan for Lincoln and Lancaster County. LPlan 2040 is proposed to be adopted with amendments noted in the “*Changes to July 8, 2011 Draft LPlan 2040*” document, which is a log of revisions dated August 3, 2011 that were discussed with the Planning Commission at their workshop in July. It is anticipated that this change document may be updated with additional revisions based upon the public hearings held by the Planning Commission.

LPlan 2040 Major Assumptions

The 2030 Comprehensive Plan served as the starting point for LPlan 2040, which retains many of the same visions, goals and strategies based on the foundation that Lincoln and Lancaster County comprise one community. Some fundamental assumptions of LPlan 2040 include:

- By 2040, the population of Lancaster County will increase by 126,000 to over 412,000.
- 90% of the population is projected to be within the City of Lincoln, 6% in the rural areas of the county and 4% in small towns.
- The Tier I growth area for Lincoln includes 34 square miles in multiple directions, but with an emphasis on growth to the east and south; the city is expected to grow from about 91 square miles to about 125 square miles by the year 2040.
- 47,500 additional residential units are projected within the Lincoln area by 2040, with an additional 4,500 in the balance of the county.
- The City of Lincoln will continue to implement policies of growth based upon drainage basins with gravity-flow sewer and new development that is contiguous to the existing City limits.

New or Enhanced Concepts in Lplan 2040

- **Mixed Use Redevelopment.** LPlan 2040 identifies the potential for 8,000 new dwelling units to be located within the existing built-out portion of the City by 2040. Infill and redevelopment is encouraged in a new chapter called “Mixed Use Redevelopment,” which focuses on redevelopment of underutilized commercial and industrial areas in “nodes and corridors.” These “nodes” are commercial centers that are encouraged to be redeveloped into walkable residential mixed use centers, and “corridors,” which represent areas to encourage mixed use redevelopment of commercial strips, connections between nodes, and priorities for future public transportation enhancements.
- **Transportation.** The transportation chapter of LPlan 2040 is also reflected in a separate document known as the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), which is a related item noted at the top of this staff report. The LRTP is required for the City and County to receive federal transportation funds, and it must be adopted by the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), a separate agency with representation from the City, County and State.

LPlan 2040 and the LRTP look at all modes of transportation: walking, bicycling, driving and transit. Considerable additional detail was required with this update to consider expected funding and develop a “Financially Constrained” transportation plan. The plan also include “Illustrative” or unfunded projects that represent transportation needs for future consideration.

- **Placemaking.** A new chapter called “Placemaking” combines urban design and historic preservation as tools to preserve and enhance the community’s unique character - its sense of place. The chapter carries forward historic and cultural resource considerations from the 2030 Plan, identifies key entryways for protection, and includes strategies for improving urban design standards.
- **Energy Element.** A new section in LPlan 2040 in the Energy & Utilities chapter addresses energy as an important consideration in planning the future of Lincoln and Lancaster County. A new state statute mandates all comprehensive plans now include an energy element. This new section includes an assessment of energy use, evaluates the utilization of renewable energy sources, and describes efforts to conserve energy in the community.
- **Other Elements.** LPlan 2040 carries forward, clarifies and enhances the many sustainability elements found in the 2030 Plan, including encouraging compact growth, infill and redevelopment, and local food production. Additional strategies encourage the implementation of the Salt Valley Greenway with new emphasis on the prairie corridor extending from Pioneers Park to Audubon Spring Creek Prairie.

Public Outreach and Involvement

As noted above, an extensive and inclusive public process was carried out throughout the development of the draft LPlan 2040. This process is described in detail beginning on page 10.21 of the Transportation chapter. Over the past year, thousands of comments that were gathered and shared with the LPlan Advisory Committee (LPAC) helped to shape the development of the Plan. The links below include written comments from individuals on three online comment boards available during various periods over the past year, and four staff reports provided to LPAC that summarize written comments from the public received on specific sets of issues discussed during the process:

Draft LPlan 2040 & LRTP Comment Board
http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/lplan2040/comment_draft.htm

General Comment Board
http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/lplan2040/comment_gen.htm

Growth Scenario Comment Board
http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/lplan2040/comment_gs.htm

Transportation Preferences Survey Report
<http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/lplan2040/survey/transrpt.pdf>

Transportation Goals Survey Report
<http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/lplan2040/committee/110223/survey.pdf>

Growth Scenario Public Input Report
http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/lplan2040/committee/101117/pi_rpt.pdf

Bright Ideas Report
<http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/lplan2040/committee/101103/BrightIdeas.pdf>

Three public hearings have been scheduled and advertized before the Planning Commission to encourage the public to continue to offer input and suggested changes to the Plan. The public hearings will be held in the Council Chambers in the County City Building, at 555 S. 10th St.:

- Wednesday, August 17th from 5 – 7 pm
- Wednesday, August 24th during the regular meeting, which begins at 1 pm
- Wednesday, September 7th during the regular meeting, which begins at 1 pm

As of the date of preparation of this staff report, the July 8, 2011 draft LPlan 2040 is recommended for approval with the revisions identified on the attached change document. However, it is noted that the purpose of these hearings is to seek additional public input, and that further changes may be recommended based upon this input.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed LPlan 2040 provides new direction for Lincoln and Lancaster County, while continuing many key policies of the past that have served the community well. The proposed Comprehensive Plan represents a careful balance between many values and goals for the community relating to future growth and development, quality of life in urban and rural areas, economic opportunity, environmental stewardship and sustainability. LPlan 2040 includes some important strategies for implementation and a process for regular updates. The Plan is recommended for adoption with changes as noted below.

RECOMMENDATION: **Approval**, with the revisions noted on the attached change document called “Changes to July 8, 2011 Draft LPlan 2040,” dated August 3, 2011. (Additional revisions may be recommended as a result of the public hearings before the Planning Commission).

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Director of Planning

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