



City wants ideas for improving master plan

By DEENA WINTER / Lincoln Journal Star | Posted: Monday, August 16, 2010 12:20 am

Got a great idea for improving the city, but don't know what to do with it?

Now you can take your idea to an online town hall meeting, so to speak, where it will be vetted and voted upon by other Lincolmites and possibly will make it into the 30-year city-county master plan, nicknamed LPlan 2040.

Since late July, the website has been accepting ideas on five topics ranging from "getting around" to "beautiful places."

The city is using an Omaha company's web application for free, as a beta test, to solicit public input through this "visionary brainstorming exercise," according to Nicole Fleck-Tooze, long-range planning manager.

"It was a way for us to ask people to tap into their creative ideas about Lincoln and Lancaster County about 30 years into the future," Fleck-Tooze said. "No idea is too big or too wild, and everything's on the table."

Voting has already closed for the first two topics, "beautiful places" and "getting around." Now ideas about "where we live" are being accepted.

Among the ideas submitted so far: replace the asphalt with brick throughout the Haymarket, start a citywide recycling program, and remove billboards from entrances to Lincoln.

The top vote-getter in the "beautiful places" category came from a fellow named "Chris B" who proposes expanding the prairie corridor linking Pioneers Park and Spring Creek Prairie. He wants to build a trail from Pioneers Park to Conestoga Lake and south along Haines Branch Creek to near Spring Creek Prairie.

"It could be the largest tall-grass prairie preserve convenient to tourists traveling the Interstate 80 corridor," he wrote, helpfully including a full-color map with his entry.

This particular idea from Chris B (as in Mayor Chris Beutler) just might go somewhere, considering the source.

Sara Hartzell, a long-range planner, said the site has had more than 6,000 hits so far and 1,500 unique visitors.

"We're very pleased with the quality of ideas," she said.

Submitting and voting on new ideas will continue through early October, when the ideas will be compiled and taken to an advisory committee for discussion. The top vote-getters will be recognized and considered for inclusion in the master plan.

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