

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: OFFICIALS COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: July 15, 2016, 2:00 p.m., Mayor's Conference Room, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, NE

MEMBERS AND OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Roma Amundson, Leirion Gaylor Baird, Mayor Chris Beutler and Noel Salac; (Roy Christensen and Todd Wiltgen absent). David Cary, Mike Brienzo and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Dept.; Miki Esposito and Thomas Shafer of Public Works and Utilities; Jon Carlson of the Mayor's Office; Pam Dingman, County Engineer; Rick Haden and Jenny Young from Felsburg Holt & Ullevig.

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

Amundson then requested a motion approving the minutes of the meeting held June 16, 2016. Motion for approval made by Gaylor Baird, seconded by Amundson and carried 4-0: Amundson, Gaylor Baird, Mayor Beutler and Salac voting 'yes'; Christensen and Wiltgen absent.

BRIEFING ON THE LINCOLN MPO 2040 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP) UPDATE:

David Cary stated that today is a briefing regarding the LRTP Update. We are at an important part in the process where we are identifying the main parts of the preferred alternative. This will be taken to the public in the fall. The consultants and staff have done a lot of work to this point. We have been meeting monthly with Planning Commission. Work started in September 2015. We plan on going to the public for comment in September of this year. We met with the Technical Committee this morning and had a good conversation. We are proposing a recalibration of our Long Range Transportation Plan, which looks to focus more on keeping what we have, multi-modal and become as efficient as possible, maximize what we have and do the most critical projects we can afford to do and improve efficiencies along the way.

Jenny Young stated that in addition to the meetings that Cary mentioned, there has been an LRTP Oversight Committee, focus groups and community input. We have a fairly robust community input system. The first phase was the transportation needs. There was also an online survey. In the second phase, the main theme was understanding priorities. We went out to the public again and did another public survey. For the two public meetings, the turnout was not overwhelming. We have been very successful through the online survey. There were over 820 responses. The third phase is validating the vision. This is the next step of taking the draft out to the public. We feel good that we will be able to get a good online response. We are also looking for suggestions and opportunities to reach out to as many people as possible.

At the last meeting of Officials Committee, we discussed the performance measures. This is a Federal requirement for the LRTP to be a performance based plan. We have goals in seven different categories. There is a benefit to this. It is a nice way to track the system. Many of the measures are consistent with the Taking Charge Initiative. These are used when we evaluated the projects.

The LRTP covers all modes of transportation and all activities associated with the transportation system such as maintenance, operation and the technology. There are four main groups of Maintenance Activities, Alternative Modes, Roadway Construction Activities and Other, such as technology and IS. Over the life of the plan, we can reasonably estimate there will be 2.4 billion dollars of revenue in the next 24 years. This assumes overall annual revenue growth of 2.5 percent. There is a consistent revenue stream coming into the system, but we know this is not enough to cover all the needs of the system. The cost of construction projects is going up at a much faster pace at about a 5 percent annual inflation rate. About one third of the revenue is either restricted or committed. The remaining two thirds of the fund is flexible. We need to plan these investments wisely.

Mayor Beutler would like revenue clarified. He assumes the figure has taken current rates and appropriations into consideration, and extended those over time at some presumed rate of increase. Young stated he was exactly right. Mayor Beutler posed that if he were of a different opinion that revenue sources should be increased with regard to funding on a specific project, it would change the whole calculation. Young replied he was correct. Mayor Beutler stated that with respect to projects and program categories, not all these funding sources can be applied to all these categories. Bridge repair might be a more significant problem in one area more than another. Is there any effort in choosing a hybrid scenario and which revenue sources might apply to which category of expenditure? Young stated that they went through a very detailed process of grading all projects, and which projects could be funded and when.

Young continued that at the second public meeting, we asked the public how they would spend their budget money. The highest rated priority was given 824 responses. Maintaining the existing system was the highest priority for the community. We also heard a lot about the need for expanding the transit system. She believes the overall message was there is a need to have a balanced approach. We have developed a strategy that is a little different from previous transportation plans. The strategy focuses on maintaining the existing system, maximizing the capacity, addressing key bottlenecks and constructing the most needed projects. This means that instead of automatically looking to widen major corridors, we look at what else could be done.

Different scenarios were examined. The Status Quo scenario uses the same approach as the current LRTP. It would be a continuation of the same level of funding. You fund the 17 program categories and what remains goes to the Capital Roadway Project Program. Hybrid Scenario A and B are more in line with an alternative investment strategy where we focus more on investing in technology and rehabilitation.

Mayor Beutler stated that in terms of roadways, specifically the category of maintaining existing streets, he looks at it in terms of safety, speed and efficiency. That was the highest category that had the greatest response. He questioned why safety is rated so low and

maintaining existing streets is rated so high. Young also found it is interesting that safety was rated so low. It just isn't discussed a lot. She believes there is a perception that it is a given and an expectation that the roads will be safe. Rick Haden added that a lot of the ITS Technology is directed toward safety. Cary agreed. He believes that there is some implication that safety is addressed in the other categories.

Amundson just had a presentation on the South Beltway happening in years 2020 through 2027. She wondered when work will begin on the East Beltway. She noticed that the East Beltway is shown in the Other category. The county is very much interested in the preservation of the corridor. Cary stated it is addressed in the current plan and will be in the proposed plan. The actual project is identified as a project that needs to be in the plan, but not affordable until state and/or federal funding were to be available. Amundson believes we still have to preserve the corridor. She questioned when staff anticipates the actual project. Cary will hand that question off to the state. There is the beginnings of an ongoing discussion about what we do with the Build Nebraska Act. Noel Salac stated there is an outreach of the Dept. of Roads to the public. The Build Nebraska Act is our outreach to find out what the public wants to do with the money. The East Beltway is on the priority list and is being considered. We want to get to where we can show a list of projects and their priority for funding. Right now, we are still in the process of gathering information. It is being considered.

Pam Dingman stated that the city and county agreed to set aside money for the East Beltway and she wanted to remind everyone that the city has 2.5 million dollars and the county is short.

Haden stated that the East Beltway received a lot of support from the public.

Young continued with the different scenarios for funding. She believes the next logical question is what the benefits would be to the system, from each scenario. She wants to focus on the four categories that are variable depending on the scenario. The first category is ITS and Technology. Status Quo would be a continuation of existing programs and address critical intersection safety improvements. Hybrid A or B would allow implementation of Green Light Lincoln and construct an intersection project per year, in addition to critical safety improvements.

Gaylor Baird inquired about the cost of full implementation of Green Light Lincoln. Young replied it starts at 5 million dollars annually. Gaylor Baird noted that the proposed budget has ½ million dollars for Green Light Lincoln. Implementation is considerably larger.

Young explained that the different scenarios have different allocations for road and bridge rehabilitation. The final category is the roadway capital projects. Projects were scored from a scoring system. We asked the public what six projects were most important to them. WE gathered a list from the prioritization process. Highway 2 was one of the top rated projects. We have identified the need to do a corridor study for Highway 2. She provided a list of projects based upon the three different funding scenarios. We also went through a prioritization process for the trails. Several trail projects will be constructed as part of other roadway projects. The plan will take an opportunistic approach to trails funding. County projects or rural road improvements are those that will be paved or widened in the future, depending on traffic demand. Funding is separate and outside the 2.4 billion dollars.

The Status Quo is intended to be a baseline, a continuation of the current plan. We don't see this as a viable option. It is inconsistent with what we have been hearing. We feel that Hybrid A or B aligns better with the proposed investment strategy. We are hoping to get some initial reactions if the direction we are headed is meeting expectations. It is our desire to take just one resource allocation to the public.

Amundson questioned when looking at the City of Lincoln, was any of the expanded growth into Lancaster County taken into consideration. Cary replied we have an urban area. The traffic model is based on that area. The future service limit for the land use plan roughly allows us to model it slightly different.

There was a discussion of the different categories and funding aspects. Mayor Beutler wondered if among these categories, the proportion spent for trails and transit as opposed to roads is proportioned the same. Young replied it is the same in all three scenarios.

Mayor Beutler understands that what is being suggested is the number of projects that are done to 2040, in terms on periphery of city and new growth, is roughly reduced in half by Hybrid A and less than half by Hybrid B. Developers who are now suggesting that something needs to be done, we ignore half of them. Cary believes the plan suggests we don't have the amount of funds to do everything that needs to be done. He would suggest we need to continue to talk about revenue streams in the future. Public and staff is telling us we need to maintain streets to a certain level that we haven't been able to do. If we do that, there is a shortfall in other areas. Mayor Beutler posed that perhaps the answer is to decrease the vision instead of increasing revenue. Cary believes that the plan will say that if we are going to have a certain amount of money, it needs to be spent in a certain way. We can talk about putting more money into transit or other categories if more money were to be available. We are going to keep doing what we are doing, but we can't do a significantly higher investment. Mayor Beutler asked if one were inclined to advocate for a growth policy, do you think a growth policy could be sustained by reallocating resources in such a way that interior urban growth is encouraged over growth around the edge? Cary believes you can gain efficiencies if you get it to happen more in the interior where there is existing infrastructure. The Comprehensive Plan update is increasing the amount of percentage of infill compared to the current plan. Moving forward, the plan is to have conversations how the city might get more infill to happen. This takes pressure off the edges. That is a more efficient way to do development.

Pam Dingman stated that there was talk this morning about adding some language to the plan that we need to go back and take another look at the RUTS program. She doesn't think anyone would debate it is a great concept, but it has gotten to be very expensive. It says the County needs to grade and pave a two lane section in Tier 1 development zones. We need to look at something when we are tight on resources. There is a second component that talked about the County would have a wheel tax to pay for the RUTS program. The County approved the Inter-Local Agreement for the RUTS program, but not the wheel tax. To some extent, the Commissioners gave her an unfunded mandate. There is language that says the Public Works Director and the County Engineer can negotiate improvements, but the County Engineer has the final say. We need to find some form of compromise to maintain growth and development around the fringe of the City. An example was the work on 84th Street. We took some traffic

counts on 98th street and found 1,000 cars a day. These roads aren't maintainable at 300 a day. We want to continue to look at ways for both entities to work together. Miki Esposito agreed. She believes it is time to take another look at the RUTS program, especially in light of what the LRTP could be recommending.

Cary stated that staff would prefer to go to the public with a single scenario. We would like direction and comments.

Mayor Beutler would like to see the public have more input and then decide.

Gaylor Baird stated that it is frustrating to have costs doubling. Do we typically contract one project at a time, or are there firms that could handle multiple projects? She questioned if we can team with Omaha. Can we think more regionally to get the costs down? Esposito is open to the thought. One of our biggest impediments to competitive pricing is trades people working hard to win bids. Prior to the recession, a lot of people have a lot of staff to go around. Now you are seeing kids going to college and not interested in trades. Across the nation, there is a trades deficit. We see this with construction companies, but are also seeing it in our staff turnover. We are recruiting tradespeople who come to work for us. In Lincoln, we hear they want a stable source for infrastructure. She is hopeful Lincoln can recruit and attract other construction companies. We have seen a little of that happening. There just hasn't been the level of competition that we need. Salac would agree. From personal experience, going through the recession in 2008, there was a downturn in available projects. Companies dried up or got out of the business. There is an obvious capacity. The Fast Act was a big step overall for the nation. One of our big issues is the unstable funding issue. On top of that, our legislature helped us out with bills. We have addressed some of our needs. He thinks contractors see that some funding streams are becoming available, but it takes time. Salac added that the State made a policy years ago for system preservation. This is part of the reason for the Build Nebraska Act. We have been successful in obtaining new funding streams. Our needs are still huge. Dingman thinks sometimes, we don't give ourselves credit for working together. The City and the County could work on more Inter-Local agreements. We need more contractors in town and there is a shortage in trades. We need to take more of an active role in recruiting.

Gaylor Baird wondered about more of a regional approach. These numbers tell a bleak story and suggest we need to find a new way to do business. Dingman believes the bigger we make those bids, the less we encourage small business. Esposito thinks we send an important message when we commit to financing infrastructure. People come in who invest in materials, supplies and people.

Cary stated that we heard from the public process and the Planning Commission that they are supportive of the hybrid versions. The LRTP can have language about trying to address the issue of increasing costs.

Mayor Beutler takes issue with underlying assumptions that he doesn't agree with. This doesn't lead him down the path of Scenario A or B. He is reluctant on the basis of the information that he has now, and knowledge about how the pressures of the community work, that he doesn't want to admit that we are unable to better address the overall funding, rather than admitting that there is some permanent reduction in revenue, that we have to reorder our priorities in such a way as to meet the current level of revenues, rather than fighting for what is an appropriate level of revenue.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.