

Meeting Minutes

Comprehensive Plan Community Committee
January 28, 2021, 3:00 p.m., Zoom Video Conference

Attendees: David Cary, Paul Barnes, Andrew Thierolf, Kellee Van Bruggen, Allan Zafft, Stacey Hageman and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Dept.; Deane Finnegan, Cindy Ryman Yost, Tracy Corr, Dick Campbell, Tom Beckius and Cristy Joy, Planning Commissioners; Grant Daily, Burdette Piening, DaNay Kalkowski, Bryan Seck, Meghan Sittler, Stephanie Fisher, Kieran Kissler and Marco Barker.

David Cary welcomed everyone. The Planning Dept. is excited to get into the PlanForward 2050 work effort. We are now going to get into more specifics. We have the Growth Scenario identified. Now we need to get into priority discussion topics. Staff will show the working list. We will discuss the parking minimums today. Staff will jump into developing the new plan over the summer. We are going to start developing the content.

Andrew Thierolf stated that staff has a conceptual, big picture schedule laid out. Today we will set the stage for the rest of the winter and into spring. Starting in February, we are going to start detailed discussions about specific topics. We are going to have general goals on each topic area. Within those, we will have our policies which are the heart of the plan. Within each of those policies will be action steps. Staff will share specific policies over the next couple of months. As we get closer to the summer, we will talk about other elements of the plan. As we draft sections, we will share those as well. Our road map for the next couple of months will be our Priority Topics. Most of those have been discussed with this group. It is a list of topics where we think need a little more discussion from this group. We will discuss the parking topic today, elimination of minimum parking requirements. The others are commercial design standards, and minimum density for redevelopment nodes and corridors. Gateway and Downtown would be a redevelopment node. We want to look at what different densities would look like. The next is increase housing affordability. We have some affordable housing policies. The next topic is complete neighborhoods. This would include a diverse mix of housing types and uses. We have been talking about this from day one. We have come up with some draft policies. The next is support for living wage jobs. Right now, the plan doesn't talk about specific jobs. We are working on a draft policy. The next is industrial hazard areas. We have an informal policy now, such as daycare shouldn't be next to industrial. We don't want people living next to high-pressure pipelines. Increased commitment to renewable energy generation and consumption and energy consumption is another area that staff is working on specific policies. Conservation design looks at many different things. Reduce detrimental impact to the natural environment and drought tolerant are some items in conservation. That is a big topic. We want a more direct policy relating to that. Local food production policies are being drafted. There is the topic of improved access to early childhood care and future subarea plan opportunities. In the past we have listed subarea opportunities we want to look into. Regarding recycling, we are working on a policy. Resiliency is talking about the Climate Action Plan. With regard to transportation, the Long Range Transportation Plan update is a parallel item. That will probably be the last major topic we touch on. We will send the list of topics out to everyone. He asked if there is an item that anyone feels needs to be added to the list.

Marco Barker was thinking about three things. Equity, resiliency and childcare. As he looks at the last, if equity moves into this, it isn't as clear. Access to childcare means access to whom? The categories still feel kind of raw and it isn't clear how equity will be considered. As we move ahead, he wants to make sure we aren't making assumptions. Thierolf stated that staff is also going through those concepts with the Equity Subcommittee. Most of the ideas and policies will have been discussed with the Equity Subcommittee when staff brings those to this committee. We always need to keep that aspect in mind. Barker just wants to make sure we are keeping resiliency as a piece.

Cary commented that one thing staff will work on, that will help define how we look at these topics, is that we will share how content will be in the new plan.

Thierolf noted that as we come back to this next month, staff will have some actual policy steps.

Paul Barnes stated that no matter who you are in the community, you probably already have an opinion on parking. This is an interesting topic. We want to kick off this part of the process and walk everyone through an example of what this will look like. Some people are probably familiar with the content. We are exploring making some potential changes to parking requirements that exist in Lincoln today. We talked about this a few months ago. We want to know what everyone's thoughts are regarding parking in Lincoln today. There are several parking garages downtown. We want everyone to think about their experiences with parking in Lincoln.

Grant Daily commented that it seems to him there are a lot of old and new parking lots that are still being constructed that seem oversized to him. Costco is an example. Aging shopping malls and strip malls are close to the minimum parking requirements but have parking lots that are essentially vacant most of the day. If there are ways to conserve the land more efficiently while still respecting the very real need that residents have for parking, it would be beneficial.

Dick Campbell echoed support for that comment. As he goes to different places, Edgewood seems to have way more parking than it needs to have. The only time he has seen them full is on a Christmas shopping day. He doesn't think those lots need to be as big as they presently are.

Tom Beckius stated that from a commercial development standpoint, he thinks he would be open to removing the vast majority, if not all parking requirements throughout Lincoln to allow for the user to define what kind of parking they decide that they need. A lot of the commercial parking lots or big box parking lots are overparked at the request of the retailer. He wouldn't want to see anything that would cap their ability to do parking as they deem necessary. It can get complicated to calculate parking requirements for some buildings and users.

Deane Finnegan thinks in general, Campbell and Beckius are correct, but she feels that both ends of the spectrum need to be considered. It can be difficult for seniors to find close parking. She thinks you have to take a look at what the use is and decide. In her experience, there are many times at the Piedmont shopping center where you can't find a parking spot. Campbell agreed. He thinks cross parking should be established so someone who doesn't use their spaces at night such as a medical office could have their

spaces used at night by perhaps a restaurant. Finnegan thinks that some parking garages are very under-utilized. That needs to be looked at and how to promote them.

Tracy Corr generally agrees with Campbell and Beckius, especially in those older developments. She would be interested in knowing, she has noticed problems at Hy-Vee midtown. She has a hard time finding parking there. There is also an orthopedist around 70th and A which has bad parking. She is wondering if these places have had a reduction. She would like to compare some of these. Some are too stringent and some don't have enough. She agrees with the comment about parking garages. Places such as Gateway, everyone wants to park in the front towards O Street, but there is always plenty of parking in the rear. Campbell feels that one consideration we might want to look at is if there is available on-street parking around the use. If the street doesn't allow on-street parking, he believes it sets a different standard. Corr also sees this as two different scenarios. There is the big box store, then there is the smaller neighborhood store.

Bryan Seck works a lot in downtown. If you are a State worker, you have to pay out of pocket to pay for parking in the State parking garage. Then you start looking at street parking. How do we protect our residents who live downtown and need a place to park? He wonders if we could have state workers park in an underutilized parking garage and bus them to their workplace.

Barnes pointed out there is a lot of different thoughts and opinions on parking in our community. As we look at downtown, there is not required parking in B-4. There is on-street parking and parking garages. Outside of there, we have requirements in all other districts. Single family districts require two spaces per dwelling. Most commercial spaces have one stall required per 300-600 square feet. Industrial parking is based on maximum persons per shift. Some uses have special parking requirements. In some instances, parking requirements can be waived or adjusted. This can all be challenging for redeveloping small existing commercial and residential sites. This adds to the cost. It can change the aesthetics. There are environmental impacts as well. What is the other opportunity to use that space? The parking requirements as they exist can be confusing for staff as well as developers. There are quite a few cases where staff has processed waivers. In some cases, there have been text amendments to change the parking requirements. Some of the possible challenges are that your customers will park somewhere else if there isn't parking available in your lot. In some cases, if parking minimums are removed, someone can still build whatever size of parking lot they desire. Lincoln is still highly dependent on personal automobiles. There are cities that have completely eliminated parking requirements or reduced them. Buffalo, New York was the first city to eliminate parking requirements citywide. Other cities since then include San Francisco, Hartford and South Bend. Minneapolis is also exploring the idea. Fayetteville, Arkansas is eliminating parking requirements for non-residential uses. They have also instituted parking maximums for non-residential uses. Seattle, Washington has eliminated parking requirements for affordable housing projects. Austin, Texas is looking at adjustments to their parking, based on density and adjusting the minimums. Omaha, Nebraska has reduced or eliminated parking minimums near bus rapid transit stations. Lexington, Kentucky eliminated parking requirements for multi-family housing in their primary commercial corridor. These statements in the Comprehensive Plan wouldn't be a policy in itself that would change parking requirements. It would align with the community's vision. The policy could be to evaluate the elimination or reduction of parking requirements throughout the city. It could involve developing a comprehensive review of parking requirements, it could eliminate or reduce minimum

parking requirements or include conditions that minimize the impact on neighboring property. It could also establish parking maximums. He asked for any thoughts on parking. This would be something that would involve an in depth study and likely a working group before it came before Planning Commission and City Council for any change. This would lay the groundwork.

Barnes stated the chat room had a question about the result after parking requirements were eliminated in some of these cities. Thierolf stated that Buffalo considers it a big success. Most of their downtown is parking lot space. A great point was brought up that South Bend is similar to Lincoln. He thinks their ordinance could potentially be a model. Staff will have to keep an eye on how that works for them. Barnes thinks the type of development has to be taken into consideration as well. He also thinks it will take some time for those cities to experience the impact of removing requirements. Grant Daily noted in the chat there are some smaller communities that have done this as well. Perhaps lower requirements could be instituted instead of completely eliminating them. Stephanie Fisher noted in the chat that eliminating minimums could be risky.

Kellee Van Bruggen wanted to talk about the plan layout. Staff is changing things up quite a bit. This will be a web based plan. We will be creating content in ArcGIS Experience Builder. Wyoming Tourism in an example. They have a really great website that we are using as a starting point for more of the visual aspect. It incorporates a lot of photography. The last time staff went out and took photos was during the last update in 2010, 2011. We are looking at hiring a photographer to help us give the new website a visual impact that can relate to the content. There will still be a PDF copy available for download. We are looking at reorganizing the information. It is all divided by topic now. As we go through the information, there is a lot of overlap with the topic areas. We are trying to reorganize the plan to be more policy based. She showed the Wyoming Tourism site. She believes it will be a lot easier to navigate the plan this way. She showed the Minneapolis 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Their plan is divided out into goals, topics, policies and implementation. She showed a preliminary of what the PlanForward 2050 site would look like. The introduction will include background information, vision statement, engagement process and growth framework. We are looking at ten to fifteen 2050 goals. We are looking at a way to tie in our Community Indicators and Transportation Performance Measures within the goals.

Bryan Seck wondered about the community indicators. Van Bruggen answered the Community Indicators are put together on an annual basis which come from a lot of different data points. We haven't finalized exactly how all the information will be shown. We want to utilize all the data that is being collected.

Van Bruggen continued that the 2050 Elements are the chapters from the current Comprehensive Plan. We are going to keep the data we have in the current plan. Digging into the hierarchy, the policies will be followed by action items. We want to tie the policies back to the specific topics and goals. The last part of the hierarchy is the implementation strategies. These will be links to supporting work items such as existing planning efforts and also taking a look at what the community is doing. She noted that Kissler wondered in the chat room about having the plan in multiple languages. Sometimes these documents can be very full of jargon. Staff is looking at how we can educate the community about what a Comprehensive Plan is without bogging them down. We will probably start with a Spanish translation and look at whatever languages are appropriate. We will most like start with an Executive Summary.

Allan Zafft gave an update on the LRTP (Long Range Transportation Plan – 2016 Update). Through the process, there are eight goals. Some minor tweaks have been made. The transportation equity goal is being added. There are 16 objectives and 40 performance measures. The performance measures are federal mandated. There are 137 action steps. We have over 200 action steps or strategies in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and LRTP. We have asked focus groups about goals and ways to accomplish those. There has been scenario planning. He showed a mapping of the transportation goals. We also use the transportation goals for the evaluation criteria. The Comprehensive Plan will have a transportation goal statement and action steps. There are 17 potential policies. The first 14 are directly related to transportation. The last three are more general policies. Each policy will have action steps. In the next few months, we will bring these to the Community Committee for their review. Community Engagement will start in March 2020. The website will be utilized as a single point of entry for participation. Social media will be used, along with YouTube videos. We will use Survey Monkey and hold focus groups. These will be blended groups so there will be good interaction around policies and action steps. For community preference projects, we will have a map on our website to review different projects in the City and County. There will be a YouTube video to demonstrate how to recommend projects. The website will have a link to download public outreach materials. There will be a survey and results.

Thierolf thanked everyone for attending. Cary thanked everyone as well. We will have quite a few of these meetings where we review a few topics at a time. The feedback helps staff develop the plan.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.