

## Meeting Minutes

Comprehensive Plan Community Committee  
February 25, 2021, 3:00 p.m., Zoom Video Conference

**Attendees:** David Cary, Paul Barnes, Andrew Thierolf, Kellee Van Bruggen, Stacey Hageman and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Dept.; Deane Finnegan, Tracy Corr, Dick Campbell and Cristy Joy, Planning Commissioners; Burdette Piening, Stephanie Fisher, DaNay Kalkowski, Bryan Seck, Marilyn McNabb, Bryan Seck, Meghan Sittler, Grant Daily, Susan Rodenburg, Kieran Kissler, Dave Johnson and Marco Barker.

David Cary welcomed everyone. As we have entered the new calendar year, we are getting into the meat of what this plan will look like. Two things we will talk about today will shape the plan. These topics are Enhanced Nodes and Corridors, and Complete Neighborhoods. There will also be an update to the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update.

Paul Barnes stated that the kickoff for Phase 2 Public Engagement will be on March 5, 2021. It will run to April 5, 2021. The website is [www.LRTPLincolnMPO.com](http://www.LRTPLincolnMPO.com). There will be a virtual public meeting, along with a public survey via Survey Monkey. About 80 people participated in the last round of focus groups. This time around we are going to mix people up and have different interests in the groups. We will use social media posts and an eblast to encourage participation. The meeting will have PowerPoint slides. This will be integrated with closed captioning. The entire time takes about 12 minutes. The purpose is to affirm the transportation goals and the objectives. We want people to learn the project selection process and how the projects are weighted. We also want people to understand tradeoffs. There are limited funds and a long list of needs. We have had success with the online survey. We will be asking for community support on the projects. This will become one of the weights. We will also be looking at demographics. We are looking for input from all corners of the community. This is a key point in the process. Someone can look at the process and the maps. There will be five votes each on city roadway projects, county roadway projects and trail projects. The project maps will be available on the website. There will be a video on YouTube. The website will be the repository for all the information. The focus groups will begin meeting March 10-12, 2021. 137 participants have been invited. The format will be a summary of Phase 1 to share what we have heard and learned. We will discuss the action steps that are being developed, timing and funding of projects and policies as well.

Andrew Thierolf stated that this meeting will be focused on a few critical topics and policies related to those. Enhanced Nodes and Corridors was talked about a little at the May 2020 meeting. Nodes are mixed centers of five acres or more. They should have access to arterial streets, public transportation and proximity to community facilities. Corridors link nodes and other commercial centers. They are typically along major routes. Corridor redevelopment areas are roughly a half block in either direction. The recommended Growth Scenario, Lincoln needs to add 48,000 new households by 2050. 25% equals 12,000 new infill units. There is a concept of Mobility Oriented Development that is not explicitly talked about in the Comprehensive Plan today, but staff uses. The goal is to create pedestrian oriented mixed-use communities centered around high quality access to multiple modes of transportation. If we are successful

at creating several mixed use neighborhoods with high demand, we could exceed our infill goals. On the zoning side, there are development incentives such as increased density, site plan flexibility and high quality design. On the public investment side, one is enhanced transit, possibly including Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). In Lincoln, 'O' Street is the most likely candidate for BRT. This could also include trail connections and high quality pedestrian/bicycle network. There is the possibility of TIF (Tax Increment Financing). Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is brand new in Omaha, Nebraska named Omaha Rapid Bus Transit (ORBT). They just started implementing this last year. In anticipation to that, the Planning Dept. added to their Master Plan. They updated their zoning standards in October 2020. Omaha is trying to get more density around the bus rapid transit stops. They have nodes centered around their ORBT stations. There are sub-districts depending on the context of the surrounding area. An element of Omaha's TOD policy is pedestrian oriented design. In their most intense districts, they have minimum building heights. As you move to less dense districts, they move to a more traditional model of heights. Most of their districts have required bicycle parking. Elements of TOD/MOD provide a foundation for our Nodes and Corridors discussions. One primary benefit is we can redevelop underutilized sites, create new mixed use neighborhoods and support future transit enhancements. From a land use site, we need to help support ridership for transit. Transit will incentivize more people to move there. The final piece is capitalizing on existing public infrastructure investments. We are going to focus on a few items today. He shared a map of the location of Nodes and Corridors. It supports the idea of wanting infill and redevelopment. What we are looking to do with the 2050 Plan is to try and narrow that down and focus on a few major nodes and corridors. In general, we have many policies about redeveloping underutilized properties. On the east, it is the Gateway Mall area. In the north is the North 27<sup>th</sup> St. center. On the south is Edgewood. Today, we say we should strive for floor area ratios of at least 0.5. For residential density we should strive for at least 7 units per acre. He showed some examples of Nodes and Corridors density. Floor Area Ratio is a way to measure mass. In terms of design, we have some fairly strong language for design standards of nodes and corridors. This should help with better design within commercial centers and soften the edges with the neighborhoods. We want to enhance this discussion in the 2050 Plan. A new Nodes and Corridors policy will be created to give direction to the overall topic. We want to examine the creation of a new zoning district or overlay district that would address items such as density, site layout, parking, building scale and design standards. We will continue to utilize TIF and coordinate transit and other mobility enhancements. Our policy would be to implement expanded design standards that could be applied across various zoning districts. They should be clearly written and allow for an efficient, expeditious review process. For implementation, the work effort would include public input, a steering committee and peer city review. It would go before Planning Commission and City Council for review. Many of the potential nodes are already blighted and eligible for TIF. There would be a coordinated discussion of future transit enhancements with the Transit Development Plan. He asked for thoughts on the proposed policy language. The density recommendations for redevelopment nodes would be increased. He asked if they should be minimum requirements or just suggestions, and what regulatory elements are most important to creating high quality mobility-focused neighborhoods. He asked for any initial reactions to this proposed policy.

Tracy Corr likes the concepts. She thinks it's a little heavy on the jargon. She would like to see more common language. She wondered how this is working in Omaha. Thierolf believes it is too early to say. It has been just a few months. If we decide to include this in the plan, it won't be anything immediate. We

have time to look and see what Omaha has done. Almost every major metropolitan city does something similar to this. We would take a look at others.

There was a question in the Chat box about photos and images. Barnes has a link to some images. We could look at images from other cities. He likes the idea of showing some examples. There was a comment in the Chat about overutilization of TIF and the desire to see affordable housing as a requirement for accessing TIF. Barnes thinks there are a lot of approaches to get more affordable units. The Mayor has stated a goal of affordable housing units. The plan will talk about how to get there in ten years.

DaNay Kalkowski likes having recommendations versus specifics. She knows that sometimes the site will dictate what you can do. Sometimes the developer needs something to work from an economic standpoint. She would be interested in why there would need to be a new zoning district versus utilizing what is already there. Thierolf stated that a lot of the redevelopment projects are a Planned Unit Development (PUD). When you use that, you can amend or change the zoning to meet the needs of your specific site. They are intended to create a unique development. Planning staff works with the developer to provide some flexibility. He thinks the idea of having a new zoning district is to make it easier to develop some of these sites. He would think of it almost like pre-approved PUD standards. He knows that some people have concerns about the overuse of PUD's.

Thierolf continued with proposed Commercial Design Standards Policy. Commercial Design Standards have been a topic for many years. It is already in the plan today that we need to look at Nodes and Corridors. He asked for thoughts on Nodes and Corridors and perhaps looking at other commercial areas that don't fall under any design standards today.

Dick Campbell would be inclined to see what is being proposed. He thinks we don't want a cookie cutter approach with Nodes and Corridors. There needs to be flexibility with design. He would like to see the written standards and make sure they are broad enough to include some unique development to happen. Grant Daily agree with Campbell on that point. Having some sort of developed design standards outside of the areas we are used to, having flexible and open standards might be helpful as we plan future development. Campbell would be looking to see the design standards try to create better architectural appearances to the project. Either with using an architect. He thinks that is important. Dave Johnson echoed Campbell's comment. He thinks you need to leave it open for interpretation. He would hate to see this get too specific and restrictive. Leave it up to the creativity of the design professionals, with the caveat that we know things are done sometimes that aren't as appealing. Campbell believes we could encourage developers to put together their own design standards to be part of their PUD application that would allow them to give some guidance to what they wish to develop. Thierolf stated that has been done in some cases. A challenge when taken to the extreme is that it makes it hard for staff to review all the individual design standards. Some neighborhoods have had their own design standards and he believes it has been generally successful.

Corr thinks that sometimes she can see where design standards can stifle some ideas. She thinks you have to be creative and that can help. Johnson thinks that sometimes when the design standards are too specific, you have a certain element who will find the path of least resistance. He thinks the Urban Design

Committee process we have has been an effective process. He has been in front of them many times over the years and the process works well.

Daily asked in cases where design standards have resulted in major changes or what someone might consider a subpar design, he wondered if those standards have stopped disasters. Campbell stated that there were shopping centers in Kansas City and other cities. It was determined it had to have retail, office, living and civic use. They each chose an architectural style that may not have been from that area, but they were consistent throughout the entire shopping center. They all are still in existence. A couple have been redone. Kansas City has been very careful to maintain that appearance. Thierolf believes that in terms of averted disasters, design standards means that people are trying to meet them.

Stacey Hageman is involved in design review for the Planning Dept. She doesn't have any specifics. She noted there are a lot of different considerations. One deals with the newer commercial centers that are being built from scratch. Another deals with infill development. Is there a difference and what is the opinion on how different commercial areas should be treated? Campbell responded that renovation of various places such as Gateway Mall, they have pretty much outlived their architectural style at this point. There are many other small strip centers that would require tearing down some existing, or massive renovation of the existing. He thinks they are trying to do that at 72<sup>nd</sup> St. and Dodge in Omaha. It appears they are creating design standards for that.

Corr agrees that there needs to be different standards. In new areas, there is probably a lot of land amassed and not a lot of existing development around it. For infill, there might be some characteristics around it where they need to fit in. On the edge, they can set the tone. Campbell agreed with Corr.

Barnes is going to talk about Complete Neighborhoods. He wants everyone to think about the neighborhood where they live now. He asked if you are able to walk or bike to a shopping area, are you able to walk or bike to a park or trail, and if you live in proximity to a shopping area, park or trail, are you willing to walk or bike to them?

Campbell would say that is exactly what they are trying to develop. The trail extension would allow people in his neighborhood to bike and shop within his commercial area, but also hop on the trail and go anywhere in the city.

Susan Rodenburg noted that one of the reasons she chose to live in Bishop Heights area is the trail and shopping center. She chose to position herself in an area that offered these types of things. She can get on the trail and ride quite a way. They are important to connect every part of the community, for recreation and transportation.

Campbell suggested that if you make a sidewalk five feet wide, two people can ride side by side. If they are four feet wide, you have one person behind the other. In neighborhoods, he would like to see five foot wide sidewalks.

Kieran Kissler stated in the Chat that the Antelope Park neighborhood is very accessible.

Burdette Piening lives in the county. He wondered how many people would use a bike or would actually drive there.

Corr lives in the center of town and she can and does walk in nice weather. She drives 'O' Street a lot and quite frequently sees people walking with grocery bags.

Rodenburg believes the point is to make available a variety of transportation opportunities. She thinks the automobile needs to be accommodated, but all of these things make a community thrive.

Cary commented in the Chat that not every aspect of what makes a complete neighborhood either can or needs to be everywhere, but we want to work toward as many aspects as possible.

Barnes asked what is a complete neighborhood. It is where people have safe and convenient access to goods and services. There is a variety of housing options and grocery stores, along with places to work and shop. We are talking about this because we would like to support healthier lifestyles and convenience. It also creates stronger markets for neighborhood businesses. We aren't looking for another Gateway or South Pointe mall. We also look at efficient and equitable public investment. There is an ongoing Livable Neighborhoods Initiative. Another reason is energy efficiency and emissions reduction. If you aren't using your car as much, it could lower your household cost as well. There are some really good things going on in other cities related to this topic. Detroit put this in their plan in 2016. Anyone living in one of these areas should be able to bike or walk to their non-work errands in just 20 minutes for retail. Boulder added language in 2014. San Antonio has a lot of things they want to include in their neighborhoods. The current Comprehensive Plan has some good stuff already. We hit on some Complete Neighborhoods already. The plan includes some concepts, but they are not cohesive. The proposed new policy would streamline some of the review and bring those together. The proposed policy is to implement strategies to encourage elements of Complete Neighborhoods in existing and developing neighborhoods. There are some proposed action steps. For some new action steps, we are looking into a measurement tool. We want to develop and utilize a measurement tool to evaluate proposed projects in the existing city and in edge development to assess neighborhoods. We would also like to develop and propose zoning text amendments that will allow platted nonconforming lots to be buildable. We would like to review the Community Unit Plan (CUP) requirements and consider revisions to meet the intent of developing creative and unique residential developments. Staff has considered what that really means. We are proposing we use this to encourage other things, to get us toward a more complete neighborhood.

Daily wondered if CUP requirements would impact edge development. He wondered about when large lower density residential is created and then a large big box center comes in. Barnes thinks a lot of the CUP's are built on the edge. They are sometimes used in smaller infill projects. When we look at Complete Neighborhoods, there are already a lot of good things. Perhaps how we evaluate an existing neighborhood is different from a new one. We don't want to discredit what it planned.

Campbell believes one of the things that has always been a disagreement between Planning Commission and transportation is entry into a development. In some of the new neighborhoods where you have been granted a 1,000 foot waiver, allowing more entrances into does help. It splits up the traffic if there isn't one main entrance. Barnes thinks a lot of it is access management. The edge developments are

surrounded by arterials. They have a lot of access management points. From a safety standpoint, there is a lot to be said. He does understand what he is saying. He knows there are certain traffic calming techniques that are discussed in new neighborhoods. Drainageways and crossing of drainageways are another piece.

Barnes continued that another discussion is what are the important factors for a complete neighborhood. What does the community value? What do we all desire, what do certain areas lack? We need to understand that a neighborhood built in the past is different from a new neighborhood. We have some good policies, goals and benchmarks already. He showed a list of what staff is looking at and asked if anything is missing.

Campbell thinks a commercial service center needs to be better defined. Barnes responded we are trying to take a snapshot of our language. We also have a defining list of criteria of where these should be located and proximity to other centers. There is pages of information in the current Comprehensive Plan. Campbell thinks it should include office, as well as retail. He thinks there needs to be, as that is defined in the text, those things need to be brought that it is necessary to have a mix of all the element. Barnes stated there is a bonus incentive built in today. We get into the discussion if it is a requirement or an incentive. Campbell is always in favor of incentives.

Barnes noted that Kissler commented in the Chat that lack of proximity to general healthcare services is a complaint that he often has.

Barnes posed a question of the 15 minute neighborhood. The point is more to cultivate a community and to make sure that people can satisfy their daily needs locally as much as possible. You may still have to drive 30 minutes or more to get to your job. Is this a flaw in the Complete Neighborhoods approach?

Campbell is not sure there are that many jobs that would require 30 or more minutes to get to. He believes our community will still be pretty car dependent. He thinks ridership for StarTran has gone up, but we don't think in terms of other cities that have rail service.

Kissler noted in the Chat about having increased public transit options so folks who work at Kawasaki, Molex, etc can find that.

Cary noted that we don't want to say we want to live without getting in a car. It is about providing choices. Another part is that perhaps your job entails a car trip or a bus trip, but if we are developing our city in a way that allows for those types of trips to be even shorter, that is a good thing.

Rodenburg stated in the Chat that she doesn't think this is a flaw as long as we continue to build our multi-modal transportation infrastructure.

Corr stated that she likes the idea of multiple options. She thinks it would be wise to hit for the middle. Some people will want to live close to work, some will want to live closer to family and drive a little further to work.

Barnes thinks we could spend a lot of time on this question. Strong Towns is an advocacy group. One of their principles states 'know when to get out of the way'. Most 15 minute neighborhoods used to happen out of necessity. What more can cities do or not do to support this concept? Who does this impact positively and negatively?

Campbell stated they have created a block of live/work units where in many cases, the business are on the first floor and the owner residence is above or rented units above. They have proven to be very popular. Only one building is up and they have three other lots sold with people signed up. Their City approved regulations allow up to two non-resident employees. Barnes thinks that is a good example of something that is being done. He would consider that an edge development.

Daily thinks for existing neighborhoods, there are some cities that have started to allow certain commercial uses in residential neighborhoods. He thinks of smaller diner café restaurants within someone's home. He knows this sometimes creates opposition. Sometimes they occur without much disruption to the neighborhood. If they are done where they don't place undue burden on the homes around them, he thinks they are a good idea. He thinks we need to look for ways to be a little more flexible.

Campbell noted the ice cream store in one of his buildings. They have a location in the West Haymarket. The Village Gardens location that they opened last year is doing a lot more business than the one in West Haymarket.

Corr noted in the Chat that it depends on the type of business.

Thierolf stated that this was a great conversation. He said that staff is doing the tour of different policies, specifically looking at more significant changes that will happen. Staff will continue doing that for the next couple of months. He thanked everyone for participating.

Cary thanked everyone for their contribution. This helps staff solidify their thinking. He was thinking that he would like for all of us to continue to think about nodes and corridors. He can see some people are starting to work through the information. He would like to keep the conversation going. He encouraged people to contact staff if they have questions or comments.

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.