

Meeting Minutes

Comprehensive Plan Community Committee
February 27, 2020, 3:00 p.m., Conference Room 303

Attendees: Paul Barnes, Andrew Thierolf, Allan Zafft, Stacey Hageman, Kellee Van Bruggen and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Dept.; Donna Garden from Lincoln Transportation & Utilities; Meghan Ourada; Marilyn McNabb; DaNay Kalkowski; Dennis Scheer; Burdette Piening; Tracy Edgerton; Silas Clarke; Vish Reddi; Anna Eickholt; Grant Daily; Marco Barker; Jose Lemus; Cristy Joy; Deane Finnegan; Dick Campbell; Meghan Sittler; Stephanie Fisher; Tom Beckius, Brian Seck; and Pam Wakeman.

Paul Barnes opened the meeting and thanked everyone in attendance. The public event was held at Pinnacle Bank Arena. There were about 150 people who attended. There is a virtual meeting on the website:

<https://lincolnne.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=5d053c7155ce4c52b4c6f661d19dcda9>

There were many responses at the public event. All this will be compiled into a public input document around late March 2020. One question was 'What do you like?' The responses varied from diversity, trails and parks, amongst others. Another questions was 'What needs improvement?' Responses included housing, transit, bike, library and neighborhoods, amongst others. The third question was 'What do want to see in 2050?' Housing is a hot topic these days. Energy and affordable were other responses. The last question was 'What do you envision for transportation in 2050?' Bike, rail, transit, convenient and efficient traffic system were some responses.

Andrew Thierolf stated that today's exercise is to work on developing growth scenarios. Citywide permits are up. A lot was driven by a pretty big year for multi-family. Ten year totals are about 15,000 units built. That is about 1,500 per year. The housing mix is 39% single family 15% townhouse and duplex and 45% multi-family. LPlan 2040 assumes 40% multi-family. What might be contributing to the increase in multi-family? Housing costs, influx of young single tech people coming to Lincoln, boomers downsizing, the rise in private student housing, people not wanting to deal with yard work and other details, were some of the answers.

There are new growth areas around the edge. In these areas, we have had over 6,400 units over the last five years. Infill has been over 1,900 units over five years. Looking at established areas over the last five years, we expect this trend to continue. Greater Downtown area has had 670 units built over the last five years. We have been exceeding our assumptions from LPlan 2040. Traditional housing and student housing for the greater downtown area has been around 50/50. Looking at distribution of where the growth has been, about 75 percent has been in new growth areas. New growth area density has been about 3.5 – 4.0 units per acre. Another discussion question is looking at infill versus edge growth. We are about 22 percent infill growth. What are the existing impacts? Roads, greater access to public transit and services were some answers.

There was a request to define infill. Thierolf responded that almost all of the infill is on commercial sites. Looking at assumptions going into the future, including the changing nature of retail, we can expect more commercial sites to be available for redevelopment. Overall, the City growth has exceeded assumptions. There was a larger percentage of multi-family, infill and edge density.

Donna Garden is going to talk about guiding principles and Lincoln's utilities. Where we grow is limited to where the utilities exist. She needs to know where we are going to spend rate payer money to put pipes in the ground. A brand new trunk sewer was just installed on the east side of town. Wastewater rules. Where we grow is defined by where we can put in gravity sewer. Wastewater collection is generally gravity. Temporary pump stations are allowed, if they meet certain conditions. We also have to check that the receiving sewer has the capacity. Everything has to meet the City standards for construction and once done, the City operates it. Lincoln Water System serves almost 300,000 customers. Lincoln Water System is currently updating their master plan. Solid Waste operations are another aspect. We do not allow any out of county waste. Water, wastewater and solid waste are all solely supported by user rates. Watershed Management is very important, along with green spaces. Watershed Management does some of this floodplain protection. Two of the basic premises of that watershed management for are 'no adverse impacts to neighbors' and 'new growth will be outside of the floodplain and floodway'.

Garden was asked about the differences between Omaha and Lincoln. Omaha does not own its water or wastewater system. They allow sanitary improvement districts. They have no control over the standards of the infrastructure. This causes a lot of problems. The Nebraska Department of Environment Quality (NDEQ) dealt with a lot of treatment systems that failed. Omaha also has a combined system for water and wastewater. Lincoln has separate pipes. Barnes added that we do not provide services to anyone outside City limits.

Thierolf talked about growth principles. Annexation is tied to city services, compact and multi-directional growth. Lincoln Public School boundaries are tied to annexation, gravity flow sewer and efficient and orderly growth. We use drainage basins to create our urban growth tiers. That map is tied to public infrastructure investments. That provides predictability. Tier IA already has approvals. Tier IB is the next step which takes us to the year 2026. Tier IC are areas that will develop after 2026. Beyond that is Tier II, 2040-2060 and Tier III is beyond 2060. The new growth areas consist of 16,141 approved un-built units. There is almost a twelve year supply. Looking at single family, we have 2,365 final platted single family lots. LPlan 2040 assumed a population of 412,000 by 2040. The newest projections show 400,000 by 2040 and 440,000 by 2050.

There was a five minute break.

Thierolf explained the game, Plan It Yourself, along with all of the assumptions. Envelopes were provided with game pieces. There is a calculation sheet to be used when all the pieces have been placed on the map. The second part of the game involves adding roads. The room broke into groups and played the game.

Barnes wanted each group to talk about their design and share numbers. One group looked at the locations of the new high schools. They would like to see Airpark expand and more infill following the current bus lines. Another group looked at growing into Tier II areas. They also looked at new schools and the Steven's Creek area. A third group followed the guidelines stated by the previous groups. They looked at Interstate areas, growth to the southeast and around the new high schools. Infill was around old shopping centers. A fourth group map is not dramatically different from previous groups. The new high schools were taken into account as well. A fifth group had a lot of the same ideas. They clustered on the east side with increased density. They had some planning around the South Beltway. One of the things they focused on was redevelopment of the shopping centers as well.

Thierolf believes group two was the lowest in terms of cost. Clustering of development creates the most efficiencies and infill saves money on costs.

He continued that we should add about ten square miles of residential over the next 30 years, using comprehensive plan assumptions from LPlan 2040. Recent trends reduced that amount to about 8.5 square miles of residential. This doesn't include commercial or floodplain.

Kellee Van Bruggen stated that the overall 30-year budget from the last Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) was \$1.9 billion, allocated for urban roads program funds. \$450 million are projected transit funds to 2040. The trails program projects \$36 million to 2040. These are based on past funding trends. What we did in the LRTP update was look at actual cost of projects. The inflation rate on roadway projects is 5% annually. Right now, we are seeing about a 7% inflation rate. There is also flooding that happened which had an impact on costs. If we are talking about the standard 5% inflation, we are talking about \$30 million for a roadway widening in 2040. A new transit route is about \$60,000 per mile. Trails are about \$300,000 per mile. Lincoln Transportation and Utilities (LTU) also had recently undergone an 'On The Move' project. Through that process, they realized we are operating at a \$33 million a year deficit. As part of that, there was a sales tax initiative. The gap has been reduced to \$21 million a year with approval of the ¼ cent sales tax. Transit has an exponentially higher cost. There is the possible addition of Sunday bus service. StarTran is currently in the process of looking at a multi-modal center in the downtown area.

Thierolf stated there are a lot of actual costs that aren't represented in the game such as sewer, water parks and emergency services. You get a sense of transportation costs in the game, but there are a lot of other costs.

Barnes pointed out that hopefully, the game got everyone thinking about the costs involved with development

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.