

Meeting Minutes

Comprehensive Plan Community Committee
October 8, 2020, 3:00 p.m., Zoom Video Conference

Attendees: David Cary, Paul Barnes, Andrew Thierolf, Collin Christopher, Kellee Van Bruggen, Allan Zafft, Stacey Hageman and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Dept.; Cristy Joy, Tracy Corr, Deane Finnegan, Tom Beckius, Cindy Ryman Yost and Tracy Edgerton, Planning Commissioners; Sheila Dorsey Vinton, Todd Ogden, Stephanie Fisher, DaNay Kalkowski, Susan Rodenburg, Bryan Seck, Marilyn McNabb and Marco Barker,

David Cary welcomed everyone. Today's topic is placemaking. We feel we have some new information to provide. This is the topic where we talk about creating a type of community that is inviting and retain our members of the community for the long term. This makes our community more livable and enjoyable. We will also give an update on the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). There will not be a Community Committee meeting on Oct. 29, 2020.

Allan Zafft stated that Phase 1 was kicked off for public engagement of the LRTP. This goes through October 19, 2020. This includes a virtual public meeting and a public survey. This is all available on <http://www.LRTPLincolnMPO.com>. Some focus groups were already held. They included various members from the public. We received some good input. We have also been doing social media and email blasts to encourage participation. The virtual public meeting is posted on the website. It includes a number of videos and audio. It can be closed captioned with other languages. The online survey covers questions regarding transportation goals, transportation modes, and issues and challenges. We are looking for input from everyone throughout the community. We are in Phase 1 outreach. The next outreach event will most likely be in February 2021. This will most likely be another virtual event. Hopefully Phase 2 can be held in person, depending on the Covid conditions.

Collin Christopher wanted to discuss placemaking and what it is. He asked a group question about everyone's favorite place in Lincoln and what makes it special. Susan Rodenburg stated her favorite place is Pioneers Park. She especially likes parks. Marilyn McNabb stated that for her, placemaking is about the natural world. David Cary loves the trails and thinks they are a great asset to our community. Cristy Joy likes Holmes Lake. Tom Beckius likes Haymarket on a summer night.

Christopher provided a definition for placemaking. It basically strengthens the connection between people and the places they share. The Comprehensive Plan touches on urban design and its impact. It speaks to a truly sustainable community that recognizes and builds on its heritage by fostering good urban design. He provided committee members with some documents yesterday. Staff tried to define the characteristics for placemaking. They were grouped into categories. Connected, responsive, equitable and sustainable are essential. Inviting, interactive, vibrant and comfortable, he views as aspirational characteristics. Adaptable and programmable touch on a streetscapes ability to evolve.

Regarding connected, we want to ensure that all modes of transportation are being accommodated in a safe way. We want to make sure that interactions between different users are safe.

For responsive, we want to respond to the surrounding architecture. Capitol Environs District is a good example. We want to make sure that everything around the Capitol compliments the Capitol building.

Third is equitable. We want to make sure that this is inclusive and equitable in the planning and design process.

The fourth is sustainable. This can mean selecting materials that are eco-friendly. It can also focus on life cycle considerations for a streetscape. This can include long term maintenance considerations.

Fifth is inviting. This is about making a welcoming and good first impression through the streetscape.

Sixth is interactive. We probably don't do a lot of interactive, but he would like to see more. This is the incorporation of design elements that encourage public participation.

Seven is vibrant. This is about injecting light and color into our streetscape.

Eight is comfortable. This is very important. We define it as attracting and retaining people through shade and comfort for users of a space.

Nine is adaptable. This can involve movable and replaceable equipment.

Ten is programmable. This is about using outdoor spaces.

He wanted to touch on how we as the City, regulate or implement good placemaking. We have a number of good design standards such as landscape screening and parking. Neighborhood design standards focus on the older neighborhoods. We have our district specific standards which try to achieve a higher level of design that is specific to that district. There are also a number of design review boards. The Planning Dept. is responsible for Urban Design Committee, Historic Preservation Commission and Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission. There is also the Parks and Rec Advisory Board and Pedestrian Bicycle Advisory Committee. Public Art Lincoln is a good piece as well.

There are also master plans and subarea plans such as the Downtown Master Plan, the West 'O' Enhancement Plan, the N. 33rd and Cornhusker Subarea Plan and the Haymarket South Plan. These give us a vision for how to achieve placemaking within a specific district.

There are also design framework documents that we create internally as staff to guide our decision making. The first one is Public Ways and Placemaking playbook. There is the Downtown Streetscapes Master Plan. This is an extension of the Downtown Master Plan. There are focus areas that he would call categories. Corridors and entryways have been a point of emphasis in making our entryways offer a good impression of Lincoln and identify who we are as a community. Those strategies have gone so far as to call out specific corridors. We recently went through a master plan effort for West 'O' Street. This started

with a recommendation from the Comprehensive Plan. We received a grant for work on this. A TIF (Tax Increment Financing) district was established for West 'O' Street. Over fifteen years, we will be able to capture the increment to use and spend solely on improvements to West 'O' Street. He showed some images that the consultant produced. The district extends from Harris Overpass to NW. 56th Street. This fall, we will plant numerous street trees. There are branding elements to be installed. Some public art has been proposed around the overpass. A median in the middle of the street is a long-term consideration. There is the possibility for some kind of civic space around Sun Valley Blvd. Some of these changes are starting to be implemented. Cornhusker Hwy. is another corridor we continue to work on. He believes improvements will continue in the next ten years to make this friendlier.

Two examples of commercial districts we have invested in over the last ten to fifteen years are N. 27th Street and University Place. We hope this encourages and incentivizes investment in these areas. The downtown area is the place where we can make the most impact. It has the most people. 'P' Street was a project that changed the area. Canopy Street is a great example of how collaborative placemaking can transform a district. We continue to look for opportunities to make this same impact in other parts of downtown. Community placemaking is an important element. It is non-profits and residents who are interested in placemaking and taking responsibility for making their neighborhoods better. South of Downtown has been leading the charge to improve the quality of their neighborhood. Murals are a good example of something that can make a big impact.

Everyone broke up into discussion groups.

Christopher shared that his group looked at downtown 'O' Street and their vision statement is that 'O' Street should be a vibrant introduction to an innovative and welcoming environment that attracts our community to enjoy life together. Everyone listed their priorities and they were averaged out. The Façade Enhancement Program was number one. Pedestrian Connectivity was number two, followed by Street Trees and Landscaping. Four was Targeted Redevelopment. Five was Public Art. Six was Pedestrian Amenities. Seven was Gateways, Wayfinding and Branded Streetscape Elements. Eight was Bike Facilities. Nine was Lane Reconfiguration. Ten was Public Transit Access and Accommodating Bus Stops.

Stacey Hageman stated that they looked at N. 48th Street and University Place. Their vision statement was "North 48th Street should be accommodating for all modes of transportation and for all ages, enhancing walkability, connectivity and the main street feel." They grouped their priorities together. The first was Pedestrian Connectivity and Pedestrian Amenities, so it is important that we have both sidewalks that connect and that there are amenities along those for activity and vibrancy. Second was Bike Facilities, Public Transit Access and Lane Reconfiguration. There is not a lot of space there, but there is a lot of vehicular traffic with narrow sidewalks. Street Trees and Landscaping are number three. Number four was Targeted Redevelopment and they added to that Preservation of existing building stock. Five was the Façade Enhancement Program. Lastly, Public Art and Gateways.

Christopher believes the goal of the exercise was to see how we prioritize these kinds of improvements and hopefully that will form strategies and recommendations. He believes we will come around and discuss those at a later date.

Andrew Thierolf stated that now we are in the education phase. There will be two more meetings. The next one is November to look at energy and utilities. On December 10, we will talk about transportation

and the LRTP. In 2021, we will jump into specific policies and goals that are relevant to the topics we have been discussing here. Staff is discussing all this information. We will bring those topics to this group in 2021. There will be a virtual event that starts around the end of October. People will be able to review the content and leave comments.

Cary thanked everyone again. He thinks we can all think of places in our community and why they are beneficial to our community, and how we want the comprehensive plan to guide us.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.