

## Meeting Notes

Plan Forward - Lincoln-Lancaster County 2050 Comprehensive Plan  
October 13, 2020, 5:30 p.m.  
Hickman Community Center, 115 Locust St., Hickman, Nebraska

**Attendees:** David Cary, Paul Barnes, Andrew Thierolf and Tom Cajka of the Planning Dept.; Deb Schorr, County Commissioner; Pam Dingman, Lancaster County Engineer; Cristy Joy, Planning Commissioner; and other interested parties.

David Cary opened the meeting and introduced Deb Schorr, Pam Dingman and Cristy Joy, along with Planning staff. He explained that staff wants to hit the right issues and notes with this update. He showed a PowerPoint presentation. He noted that a lot can happen in 30 years. This doesn't mean we can know what will happen in 2049, but we need to do our best to plan for it. We need to start thinking about what we want our community and county to be in the next thirty years. A big part of this is to use the Comprehensive Plan as a guide. It's been ten years since we've done a major update. This time around, we are open to more big ideas. This is a City and County plan. What it isn't, is the plan for all the smaller cities and villages. They have their own plans and jurisdictions, but we do coordinate. Lancaster County is projected to add another 100,000 people over the next thirty years. There have been a lot of changes. Generational needs have shifted. The housing stock has changed over the last ten years. Expectations are different. A lot of things are shifting. This new plan will continue to reflect the trends. We continue to use drainage basins for growth in the Lincoln area. We look at the topography and that is how the growth for the urban area is planned. We have about 320,000 people living in Lancaster County today. By 2050, there will be about 440,000 people. That will require over 40,000 additional dwelling units to plan for. We have a Community Committee that is representative of the City and County. They have been meeting monthly to get a lot of information and have some future policy discussions. There have been working groups. We will keep doing a level of effort to get out to the community. We've had surveys available online. Staff will continue this update process through 2021. We are still in the information gathering phase. Some rural trends are averaging about 58 new residential units a year. This does not include the small towns and villages. We have a final platted lot supply of about three years. We have a lot of land that is identified for residential use. We plan for the residential growth that everyone is seeing. He showed some maps of Lancaster County and the different jurisdictions. Staff is focusing on some demographic changes. We want to talk about technology, affordable housing and development in and preservation of rural and agricultural land.

Paul Barnes noted the LRTP, Long Range Transportation Plan. That is a parallel planning process on transportation and road improvements. That is a county plan as well. It is covered by the Metropolitan Planning Organization. A survey is available. [www.Planforward2050.com](http://www.Planforward2050.com) is the project website for the Comprehensive Plan update. We want to have a dialogue on some county specific topics. Staff is here to gather input on what topics or areas we should be prioritizing. Residential development is continuing to

happen in rural areas. There are various types of agriculture. There are different types of commercial uses. There has been a lot of discussion on wind and solar farms, along with road and bridge maintenance.

An audience member had a question regarding three acre type lots. He questioned if that was part of the twenty year supply. He wondered if any effort is being put into reducing urban sprawl to reduce the amount of people building just outside city limits. It can be tough to put a ring around development. If Lincoln and Hickman grow together, there is going to be a lot of acreages. Cary stated that we purposely are limiting the amount of that type of residential development from happening closer to Lincoln so we can preserve those growth areas so the city can grow more into the urban sense. We are purposely identifying some areas for the purpose of having acreages happen. The plan is saying it supports some of that to happen as long as demand is being met. We're also saying it's not appropriate to have that type of lower acreage development to use up prime farmland or areas that don't have good water sources. We want to meet the demand as it happens, but not let it happen everywhere. Barnes noted that the primary land use in the county is farming and farmland and there is a discussion to be had about do we want to continue preserving that for agricultural use or do we want to develop more residential or other types of uses. It is about gathering input for that vision moving forward. He thinks we have a lot of good tools already in place to balance that. We involve the County Engineer in these types of discussions. It can put strain on infrastructure. There is additional cost in that type of development in terms of maintenance and facilities.

Pam Dingman added that too much growth is unsustainable to the county. Other counties around us have a moratorium on too much development. The County Engineer doesn't receive a lot of money to maintain the road in front of new residences. She doesn't deny someone is paying a large tax bill, but there isn't a lot of money that comes to the County Engineer. It ends up being a larger and larger draw on County Engineer resources. We know that subdivisions are very maintenance intensive.

Deb Schorr stated that it is a broader policy decision on roads and bridges. It involves looking at the broader picture and making sure we make smart decisions. That is why these go in front of Planning Commission first, because they do a lot of research making sure the issues are researched.

An audience member asked about the 2050 plan and if tiny homes have been considered for something that could happen on the edges of town. Barnes noted that the Comprehensive Plan talks a lot about housing overall. Cristy Joy stated that from a density standpoint, we look at how that can play into what our county does. The challenge is if you want a home with lower square footage, there is a balance to create a community and create support for tiny homes. We have started to explore that and work on an ordinance that supports tiny homes, yet protects communities and still provides the land use.

An audience member asked about keeping more regulations for tiny homes, where it isn't like a mobile home park and more of a permanent structure. Joy responded that they are looking at many things with tiny homes such as putting them into a permanent setting and addressing the transient nature of tiny homes. One of the challenges is dealing with the square footage at a manageable level that they are recognized in this state as a home instead of a camper. Cary added the affordable housing topic is a huge part of what we are talking about. Tiny homes can play a role in that. The direction of that conversation is trying to widen the range of choices of housing that is available in the county, everything from home on

a single lot to eight-plex's and where it is all appropriate. Staff has also done a lot of work recently on accessory dwelling units. That is all part of the conversation.

An audience member talked about their property and remembers looking at the town of Old Cheney. Lincoln has grown so much. He compares this to Gretna, Ralston and Papillion. He is wondering how a long range plan incorporates the personality of a village like Hickman, but knows that sooner or later it will be part of Lincoln. Cary stated that the projection for growth for the City of Lincoln, even with the growth we will still have a pretty significant gap between Lincoln and Hickman. He can see at some point, maybe sixty to seventy years from now, we will start to hit a friction point. The plan right now does not envision enveloping those communities. He pointed out that College View and University Place used to be their own municipality. He thinks they still have some of their original feel. It happens in most cities that they still have their core neighborhood. He personally feels we want to maintain the neighborhood feel of those small towns as long as, and as much as possible. He supports the idea of maintaining the small towns and villages in the county. Barnes noted that part of updating the Comprehensive Plan is updating the growth scenarios. Lincoln and Lancaster County has had pretty concentric growth. There is development interest in all quadrants of the city.

Joy noted that is one of those things that Planning Commission wrestles with is dealing with those areas of density. Barnes stated that we work with the villages and towns in Lancaster County. We have a supply of lots in the rural area for about 24 years. Those numbers do not account for what is available in the villages. He believes the real question is if we want to open up more areas for acreage development. There is pressure that gets put on infrastructure and the cost to do that. We know there is space designated in the plan. 24 years' supply is a combination of platted lots and other areas based on a density calculation.

An audience member hears builders talk about not having the infrastructure to build east of Lincoln. Now the conversation seems to be west of Lincoln. She wondered how the plan accounts for those future needs. Barnes responded that we work with all utilities departments and they are very involved in these discussions. We need to know if there is enough capacity and if they can be served with sewer. It is very intertwined. Those utilities all have their own master plan efforts that feed into the Comprehensive Plan. We want to see growth happen in all quadrants. That is how we all work together. Cary added that we use the Comprehensive Plan to plan those infrastructure improvements. Roads are a bigger challenge to serve those areas. That is the point of this plan, to make sure we are coordinated. We don't want to plan for something we can't afford.

An audience member asked how the long terms plans factor in with the South Beltway. He thinks that Lincoln is not known for great traffic. The south part will be easier to get around. He thinks there will be a lot more expansion than what the map is showing. He knows the infrastructure needs to come from the east to the west. He thinks Hickman will see a lot more growth to the north from the bypass. Cary stated that the bypass is being built. Because of that, it will be a significant traffic mover and more efficient to go around Lincoln. We are already talking about significant land opening up to the south. Last time we updated the Comprehensive Plan, we didn't have a guarantee of the South Beltway. He is confident this plan will show some land for development south of the beltway. Having said that, it won't happen immediately. We are also going to show growth in Stevens Creek and to the northwest. That is

multidirectional growth that our plan supports. That will allow the market to be in different places. The South Beltway will be great for truck traffic. Initially, there won't be a lot of traffic on it. There won't be neighborhoods around the beltway for many years. He pointed to the Growth Tier Map. The current plan shows growth down to the South Beltway. There is a sewer line that needs to be built to get housing to that area. The sewer has to be built, along with streets and everything else.

An audience member asked if there is any talk of the East Beltway. Dingman stated that we are still planning. She worked hard to make sure it is in the plan. The corridor is laid out for the East Beltway. It is a much larger project area than the South Beltway. To date, there is no federal funding for the East Beltway.

Cary thanked everyone for attending. Staff will be doing this again at the County-City Building and at another meeting in Waverly. The survey is on the website.