

Meeting Minutes

Comprehensive Plan Community Committee
November 19, 2020, 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.; Tracy Corr, Deane Finnegan, Dick Campbell, Tom Beckius, Cindy Ryman Yost and Lorenzo Ball, Planning Commissioners; Stephanie Fisher, DaNay Kalkowski, Meghan Sittler, Marilyn McNabb, Susan Rodenburg, Grant Daily, Marco Barker, Burdette Piening and Miki Esposito.

David Cary welcomed everyone. He believes it is important for staff to convey the information in the Comprehensive Plan, so we have an understanding of what is in it. This will take a few months yet. We will also get an update today on the Long Range Transportation Plan and the Equity Subcommittee.

Kellee Van Bruggen stated that the Equity Subcommittee has met twice. There will be facilitated discussions between November 2020 and February 2021. There will be a lot of work done in those sessions. November 23 will focus on Environmental Resources and Parks, Recreation & Open Space. December will focus on Business & Economy and Transportation. January will focus on Housing & Neighborhoods, Mixed Use Redevelopment and Placemaking. The equity definition was developed with the subcommittee, and different types of identities were identified. Madison, Wisconsin was used as an example to set up our equity lens. We wanted to look at what we had in the definition. We asked four questions while we were looking at our policies. We have four different 'who' type questions. We also asked how. We are posing questions to our Equity Subcommittee. Data is being collected by staff for all these different topic areas. We have worked with Inclusive Communities in helping us facilitate those discussions. Policy changes will be made in the Comprehensive Plan. The work being done with the subcommittee will be reported to this committee. There will be additional meetings in 2021.

Allan Zafft stated that Phase 1 of public engagement is done. There was a virtual public meeting and survey, along with community presentations and a website: www.LRTPLincolnMPO.com. There were ten focus groups with 80 participants. We received about 235 responses from the public survey. He showed a map that identified different areas of town that the participants were from. We asked about ease of travel. Perception has improved for bike and car modes but declined for pedestrians the most. Transit continues to be perceived as the most difficult. We also asked about the challenges. Aging and deterioration of infrastructure was the top answer. He showed the ranking of the transportation goals. With regard to focus groups, we asked about transportation goals. Overall, there were 230 strategies given. The schedule and next steps are development of the project list in December 2020, along with Community Committee input on the project prioritization evaluation criteria. Revenue forecasting will be done in January 2021 along with objectives and performance measures. February 2021 will be Phase 2 of public engagement. We want to get input from the community on the list of projects.

Miki Esposito thanked everyone. She is excited to be back at the City of Lincoln and engaging everyone on the Resilient Lincoln Initiative. We have a draft climate action plan for review. We are currently taking

feedback. Keyword 'resilient' gets you to the plan at www.lincoln.ne.gov. You can leave comments under feedback. Defining resilience is "The capacity of social, economic, and environmental systems to cope with a hazardous event, trend, or disturbance, responding or reorganizing in ways that maintain systems' essential function, identity, and structure while also maintaining the capacity for adaption, learning, and transformation". This is a very broad term. We are learning a lot about ourselves and our resilience due to the pandemic we are in. We are also learning a lot about how to maintain systems we currently have. It is also interesting how we innovate in this space. We all have Zoom for meetings. It has saved a lot of people with working remotely and keeping the economy going. Sometimes during a crisis, we find ways to innovate. There is a Draft Climate Action Plan and a vision for what things will look like in 30 years. This is about an understanding that we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect our way of life. It looks over the next 30 years. This plan is Lincoln specific with risks and actions. It is also backed by science and data. She showed the top risks that we need to be focusing in on such as flooding and drought, single water source, public health, assessing vulnerable populations, financial and workforce resources, city politics, transportation system, fossil fuel reliance, food supply, natural resources and public awareness. There are some risks and metrics we need to get in front of. Lincoln has had a lot of success with including programs in our CIP (Capital Improvement Program) and other documents. Our Mayor would like to keep building on this community's success. She has placed a vision to reduce net greenhouse gases 80% by 2050. Our electricity provider has worked hard to move to an increase in renewable energy. Secondly, Lincoln will be resilient to climate hazards. It is important for the City to model the behavior that it wants. There are eight climate action areas. These are the realms of influence where the City can draw on certain projects or programs. One is transitioning to low carbon energy, build a decarbonized and efficient transportation system, align economic development goals with climate realities, improve protections for and with Lincoln residents, build a resilient local food system, maximize natural climate solutions, reduce waste and engage residents. Transitioning to low carbon energy involves adopting the 2018 IECC (International Energy Conservation Code). We can study carbon sequestration strategies. We need to analyze emissions reduction strategies. We can analyze landfill gas alternatives. With respect to building a decarbonized and efficient transportation system, we can adopt a City teleworking policy. It would help to keep cars off the road. We can strengthen our public transit system, continue to expand the bike trail network and continue investing in alternative fuel vehicles. To align economic development goals with climate realities, we need to invest in renewable energy. We can invest in the use of climate resilient bonds. To improve protections for and with Lincoln residents, a second source of water supply is on our minds. We need to complete the Salt Creek Resiliency Study and ensure vulnerable neighborhoods are prioritized in emergency management plans. To build a resilient local food system, the City is conducting 128a Brownfield Site Assessments for urban agriculture on vacant lots. We need to continue support of community gardens and promote expansion of pollinator habitat. To maximize natural climate solutions, we need to continue to support prairie restoration and natural resources. We need to continue the 2 for Trees program and continue supporting native plantings. To reduce waste, we need to update the 2040 Solid Waste Plan and continue conducting periodic waste characterization studies. We need to encourage reduction of single use plastics. Engaging residents in co-creating a climate smart future is very important. We need to incorporate climate considerations in the Comprehensive Plan and engage residents and businesses most impacted by climate related risks. We need to prioritize key initiatives. Along with that, we have some community engagement we will be doing. There is some technical research that needs to be done. This is a plan that we want City Council adoption to get started with some key initiatives. We will be pushing forward to implement the plan.

Thierolf stated that everyone will break up into discussion groups. The following are the discussion questions and responses from all groups.

Water and Stormwater

Salt Creek Resiliency Study:

Salt Creek is the receiving stream for all precipitation runoff within the City of Lincoln, and most of that within Lancaster County. Throughout the city, provisionally certified levees provide significant protection from floods in the stream reach between Calvert Street at the upstream end, to Superior Street at the downstream end. However, the 1 percent annual chance flood, or 100-year flood event as it is commonly called, will overtop the levees and cause widespread flooding to properties on the landward side. The goal of this study is to find a mix of potential nonstructural and structural measures to effectively reduce flooding impacts to local businesses and residences. These measures should be resilient enough to stand the test of time and still provide the intended flood risk reduction under future design conditions.

- Will this project help make Lincoln a more resilient community?
- What challenges exist for support of this project?
 - Selective buyout program. Can we select those that are more vulnerable?
 - Our issues with flooding are only going to increase in future years.
 - Funding.
 - Working with a built-out environment.
- Do these projects help vulnerable populations? How?
- What projects would you add (under their respective breakout category)?

Ensure vulnerable neighborhoods are prioritized in emergency management plans:

The City of Lincoln is interested in engaging underserved populations and vulnerable neighborhoods to understand local risks and challenges from climate impacts from their point of view. One initiative could be to update Lincoln/Lancaster County emergency management plans to specifically develop response plans for these neighborhoods.

- Will this project help make Lincoln a more resilient community?
- What challenges exist for support of this project?
 - Encourage frequent and varied communication attempts.
 - Notices on doors, tips for when events occur. Offer notices in multiple languages.
 - Mailings may get lost. Door hangers are more impactful.
 - Neighborhoods may be transient.
 - How much more will the floodplain change in the future?
- Do these projects help vulnerable populations? How?
- What projects would you add (under their respective breakout category)?

Waste ReductionUpdate the 2040 Solid Waste Plan:

The 2040 Solid Waste Plan for Lincoln and Lancaster County is a guidance document, communication tool, and a resource for policy decisions regarding solid waste management systems, facilities and programs. This plan led to successfully adopting universal curbside recycling as well as a cardboard ban from the landfill. The plan is currently being updated and discussions have been centered around the capacity of the Bluff Road Landfill out to 2035. Areas of consideration include, Residential and Curbside Recycling Rates, Waste Reduction and Reuse, Yard Waste and Organics, and Food Waste and Composting.

- Plan should address how old tires will be handled for recycling, reuse, and proper disposal
- Should not silo interrelated topics and the plan should look for opportunities to address other community needs
 - How local food waste can be composted and tie this effort to community gardening efforts that can then assist vulnerable populations to provide fresh produce and healthy food options
- Recycling companies are losing their markets and are charging higher rates for their services
 - This creates a loss of convenience and participation
 - Also create an equity imbalance for lower wealth populations
 - Need more “green” purchasing to occur
 - This can be an economic development/jobs focus in the plan

Encourage reduction of single-use plastics:

Adopt a community relations campaign that encourages reduction of plastics like grocery bags, straws, to-go cups, ziplock bags, cutlery, and other items.

- Grocery bags are certainly an issue and we need to encourage use of reusable bags, or at least use paper bags
 - Have to make this the easy choice
 - Need to make it cost-effective for businesses too; need to build partnerships with the grocery stores to limit use of plastic bags
- Need a PR campaign and public education effort to get the word out and explain how people can get off use of plastic
- The pandemic is not helping with this at this time due to emphasis on single use plastic items
- This should be considered a low hanging fruit item for the Climate Action Plan.

Energy (Renewable Sources)Landfill Gas Alternatives Analysis:

The Landfill Gas Collection and Control System at Lincoln's Bluff Road Municipal Solid Waste Landfill began in October 2010. This was a multi-phased project that began collecting generated gas from 61 acres of the landfill. The gas consists of about 50% methane and 45% carbon dioxide and other gases resulting from biological decomposition of materials in the waste. Methane emissions are approximately 21 times more potent than carbon dioxide emissions. Recent gas generation modeling estimated that destruction of methane gas from the landfill would be equivalent to a reduction in annual carbon dioxide equivalent emissions of approximately 158,200 metric tonnes per year. This is the equivalent of removing 30,780 passenger vehicles from the road. As production of landfill gas increases over time, further analysis is needed to determine if the gas can be converted for use in vehicle fleet or for other energy production.

- Will this project help make Lincoln a more resilient community?
 - Yes, but we are limited by how it could be used.
- What challenges exist for support of this project?
 - Fleet vehicles would be consistent users. Building heating would only be a seasonal use.
 - Transporting the methane from Bluff Road to a final user could be costly and logistically difficult.
- Do these projects help vulnerable populations? How?
- What projects would you add (under their respective breakout category)?
 - What can we do to reduce the materials going into the landfill that cause methane? Composting? Methane is mostly caused by food decomposition.

Continue to Increase Renewable Sources of Energy Portfolio:

The Lincoln Electric System Board is currently reviewing a decarbonization goal of 95-100 percent by 2040-2045. The hope is to increase investments in renewable sources of energy such as wind and solar. This will in turn reduce their net carbon dioxide (a greenhouse gas) output. LES has been increasing the amount of power generated from sustainable sources – between 2008 and 2019, energy production from renewables grew from 8% to 46% today.

- Will this project help make Lincoln a more resilient community?
 - This particularly helps with economic resiliency. Wind and solar are local resources that we can utilize.
- What challenges exist for support of this project?
 - Local ordinances are very restrictive towards wind and solar.
- Do these projects help vulnerable populations? How?
 - Global warming as a whole will have a big impact on all of us. The strategy, if implemented on a global level, could prevent catastrophe.
 - Could this result in rate increases?
- What projects would you add (under their respective breakout category)?

* Breakout groups ended

Thierolf stated that the third virtual event is now available at <https://lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/forward/>. Updated growth scenarios are available, along with the draft 2050 Growth Tiers Map and the 2050 Land Use Map. You can see the different changes being proposed. This is a first step to get input on the draft. We are taking comments through end of this year. Staff will be meeting with different groups. The next draft will be available the summer of 2021. That will be the official proposals that will be taken forward through the approval process. Feel free to email staff with any with questions. The next meeting for this committee is December 10, 2020 to talk about transportation and the Long Range Transportation Plan.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.