

Infrastructure Task Force Lancaster County

*Thursday, May 3, 2018 2:00 PM
Lancaster County Engineering – Waverly Shop
13959 Old Field Street, Waverly*

Draft Agenda

Introductions / Sign-In

Review Goals and Objectives

Update on Peer County Review

Budget Discussion

Review Draft Deliverables

- **Baseline Operations and Standards**
- **Existing Infrastructure Assessment**

Field Trip Post-Meeting

- **Reminder to dress appropriately with close-toed shoes and pants**

MINUTES
Lancaster County Board of Commissioners
Infrastructure Task Force Meeting
Thursday, May 3, 2018 – 2:00 p.m.
Waverly Engineering Shop, 13959 Old Field Street, Waverly, NE

Task Force Members Present: Roma Amundson, Lancaster County Commissioner; Jess Baker, Wilderness Construction; Joe Bolubasz, Midwest Bank; Nathan Boone, JEO Consulting Group; Debby Brehm, Lincoln Independent Business Association (LIBA); Jennifer Brinkman, Lancaster County Commissioner; Lonnie Burklund, City of Lincoln, Public Works & Utilities; Jeffrey Butterfield, RBC Wealth Management; Silas Clarke, City of Hickman Administrator; Glynnis Collins, Director, Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center; Nick Cusick, Bison, Inc.; Craig Gana, Gana Trucking; Pam Dingman, Lancaster County Engineer; Brian Maschmann, Norris Public School District; Jeff McKerrow, Olsson Associates; Russell Miller, Nebraska Recycling Center (retired); Miranda Watson, Woods Bros.; Michael Werner, City of Waverly Mayor

Task Force Members Absent: Doug Hanson, City of Hickman Mayor; Rod Hollman, Agriculture Representative; DaNay Kalkowski, Attorney; Ray Stevens, Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (LPSNRD)

Others Present: Jason K. Babcock, Lancaster County Resident; Nicole Barrett, County Clerk's Office; Ron Bohaty, Road Maintenance Superintendent, Lancaster County Engineering; Mike Bundy, Waverly Resident; William Bundy, Waverly Resident; David Cary, Director, Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Department; Kerry Eagan, Lancaster County Chief Administrative Officer; Stephanie Fisher, Waverly City Administrator; Leroy Geistlinger, Assistant Road Maintenance Superintendent, Lancaster County Engineering; Robin L. Hoffman, Business Manager, Waverly Public Schools; Larry Legg, Roadway Design Engineer, Lancaster County Engineering; John McGill, Rural Waverly Resident; Scott McGill, Waverly Resident; Dennis Meyer, Lancaster County Budget & Fiscal Officer; Phyllis Schwab, Nebraska Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP); Rick Vest, Candidate for Lancaster County Board of Commissioners; Nick Weander, Olsson Associates; Calvin Weeks, Waverly Resident; Joyce Weeks, Waverly Resident

Advance public notice of the Infrastructure Task Force meeting was posted on the County-City Building bulletin board and the Lancaster County, Nebraska, website.

Jeff McKerrow, Olsson Associates, opened the meeting at 2:00 p.m. Pam Dingman, Lancaster County Engineer, welcomed the group and introductions were made.

McKerrow distributed copies of his presentation which were also provided in advance with the meeting agenda (see agenda packet). He indicated that they would be postponing discussion of best practices to a future meeting stating that Olsson

Associates is doing some peer county reviews and that effort is not yet complete. He explained that they are reaching out to counties with similar sized cities, as well as neighboring states with similar counties for information.

McKerrow outlined today's presentation as talking about the purpose of the study, goals and money. Nick Weander, Olsson Associates, also reminded the group that all goals must be realistic and measurable. The County's goals also need to fit into the higher-level regional goals.

General discussion followed on such topics as fossil fuel consumption and the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). It was noted that as fleet vehicles turn over they are replaced with more fuel efficient models. Additionally, it was pointed out that the LRTP does not extend beyond Lancaster County.

Dingman said she has taken much heat for the bats in Waverly, but indicated that per the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers a tree cannot be removed from June 1st through July 30th if there is any evidence of bats in it. This can be problematic to the permitting process and has delayed the reconstruction of an area bridge by a year. Dingman added that her team has to be very careful around saltwort plants, tiger beetle habitats and saline wetlands.

McKerrow reviewed the study goals which include maintenance, mobility and system reliability, livability and travel choice, safety and resiliency, economic vitality, environmental sustainability and funding and cost effectiveness. He asked for a head nod from the Committee as a sign of agreement. Hearing no objections, he treated that as an endorsement of the goals. McKerrow also indicated that performance measures and specific targets for the goals will be developed moving forward.

Numerous questions related to funding were asked by those in attendance. Weander provided a breakdown and brief explanation of the County's General Fund budget which is available to the public in the [Lancaster County Proposed Budget Information FY2017-18](#) (page eight), or the 2016-17 data provided in the previous meeting's [minutes](#) (page 60; slide 53).

With regard to a "use it or lose it" funding scenario, Dennis Meyer, Lancaster County Budget & Fiscal Officer, said that this is a possibility within the General Fund, although, this fund does not include much funding for infrastructure projects. With regard to the Bridge/Road Fund, Meyer said the answer is no. He explained that these funds are designated for new construction and the Highway Fund is exclusively for maintenance. Dingman then elaborated on the sinking fund line items, as well as the nuances of the bridge and highway buy-back funding. Meyer stated that he has tried to make the budget of expenditures more realistic by holding money in reserves until projects commence at which time they can go back to the Board who can amend the budget if necessary.

In reference to the length of the permit process, Dingman said it can actually take much longer than one year due to environmental factors. For example, one specific bridge in the county took four years to gain the Federal permits. McKerrow added that some things are within the County's control, but others unfortunately are not.

A question arose about whether there is a "wish list" for projects. Meyer said the One and Six-Year Road and Bridge Improvement Plan is kind of that list but it is different than the proposed Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Dingman explained that the One and Six is constrained by state statute to the money available for construction and she provided examples of how funding for it works logistically. She also explained the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). McKerrow summarized the proposal and nuances by stating the One and Six is a plan that is required by the State for counties to submit in order to get federal funding and the proposed CIP is a list the County would put together on how it really wants to move forward. Brinkman added that the County is taking steps to put together a CIP for road and bridge projects but also for facility needs (including, but also beyond, the Engineering Department). The County Board has engaged the Public Building Commission and the Property Management Department to conduct a study so the list can be compiled and prioritized.

McKerrow emphasized that the CIP is planning and budgeting for what you know needs to happen. The other recommended component is an emergency fund for unanticipated needs such as flood damage.

Meyer explained how the proposed emergency fund differs from the reserve funds. He stated that the General Fund is designated for projects, but the County Board could decide to reallocate those dollars if necessary following an unexpected event. Dingman provided an example from 2015 when there was over \$4,000,000 in flood damage and the Board made the decision not to reallocate the reserve funds. She said she had to cancel her construction program in order to fix the damaged infrastructure and then request reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) program. McKerrow reiterated that the CIP and emergency fund are simply preliminary recommendations at this time.

When discussing revenue sources, McKerrow elaborated on bonding which is doing a project and paying it off over time. It was noted there is a public perspective about taking on additional debt. He explained, however, that the cost of construction is increasing faster than interest rates so bonding isn't necessarily a bad financing option.

With regard to the County's property tax levy cap, Meyer said the County can go up to \$0.45 (per \$100 of valuation) on its own or \$0.50 with a community partnership, but the partner would receive \$0.15 of this amount. The County is at approximately \$0.265 and has existing interlocal agreements; therefore, could increase property tax by up to \$0.09 before reaching the lid. However, that would equal roughly a 30% tax increase.

A question arose about the County's budget authority to spend funds if the levy was maxed out. Meyer indicated that the County does have the authority but he also pointed out that road and bridge projects are an exception to the lid. McKerrow emphasized that this is just an informal discussion and he is not proposing a property tax increase at this time.

Commissioner Brinkman asked if funds can be used for the entire county when there is a wheel tax partnership with a community. Kerry Eagan, County Chief Administrative Officer, said the tax would apply to the unincorporated areas of the county and within the city limits of the partner community. It was noted a Joint Public Agency (JPA) would need to be formed for this purpose and other communities could participate by joining the JPA.

A short dialog followed on the City of Lincoln Citizens' Transportation Coalition as related to the goals of this Task Force. The latter is focused on the county, which has different and unique issues/needs, and Dingman's goal of bringing the discussion out to the rural areas. Brinkman recommended the following resources for participants interested in the City Coalition's findings:

- [City of Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler's News Conference: Transportation Coalition Recommendations](#)
- [Lincoln Transportation Strategy Recommendations and Report, January 11, 2018](#)
- [Olsson Association PowerPoint Presentations from the Coalition's meetings](#)

McKerrow also invited attendees to a presentation he is giving on the Lincoln Transportation Strategy Recommendations and Report on May 4, 2018.

The next Lancaster County Infrastructure Task Force meeting will be on Tuesday, June 12, 2018 from 2-3:30 p.m. at Norris Public Schools, 25211 S. 68th, Firth, NE. The main topic will be best management practice recommendations with a tour following. McKerrow noted a total of five meetings may be necessary to complete the Committee's discussions.

Dingman invited attendees to join the optional tour following the meeting and/or join her for a two-hour tour she is giving to a local Rotary Club on Saturday, May 19, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. Interested parties planning to attend on May 19th were asked to leave their name with Brinkman or to send RSVPs to jbrinkman@lancaster.ne.gov.

Discussion concluded at 3:25 p.m., and was followed by the tour.

Tour Attendees: Pam Dingman, Lancaster County Engineer; Ron Bohaty, Road Maintenance Superintendent, Lancaster County Engineering; Joe Bolubasz, Midwest Bank; Nathan Boone, JEO Consulting Group; Silas Clarke, City of Hickman Administrator; Nick Cusick, Bison, Inc.; Russell Miller, Nebraska Recycling Center (retired); Michael Werner, City of Waverly Mayor; Nicole Barrett, County Clerk's Office.

Pam Dingman, Lancaster County Engineer, and Ron Bohaty, Road Maintenance Superintendent, Lancaster County Engineering, provided a tour within the northeast corner of Lancaster County outside of Waverly. A map (Exhibit A) was provided of the County bridges.

Dingman and Bohaty provided information and moderated discussion on the condition of roads and bridges along the tour, visible creek erosion, the Camp Creek drainage basin, and the saline wetlands, as well as current projects and challenges for the Engineering Department. The single stop on the tour was at Bridge H-120, the oldest bridge in the county. It is fracture critical, scour critical, functionally obsolete and structurally deficient, definitions of which can be found in the April 5 meeting [minutes](#) (pages 38-39). Dingman had hoped to also stop at Bridges A-58 and A-59, unfortunately it was too muddy.

A brief discussion about the Rural to Urban Transitions for Streets (RUTS) Program ensued. Dingman noted that the program with Lincoln is for the three miles surrounding the city limits, but to date only one road has been paved under the program (98th Street from Old Cheney to A Street). Michael Werner, City of Waverly Mayor, asked if Waverly could do a similar partnership with the County. Dingman replied yes and stated that she would be interested in discussing it with him further.

There being no further business, the meeting/tour concluded at 4:55 p.m.

Submitted by,

Nicole Barrett
Lancaster County Clerk's Office

PAMELA L DINGMAN
COUNTY ENGINEER

LANCASTER COUNTY BRIDGES

KENNETH D SCHROEDER
DEPUTY COUNTY SURVEYOR

