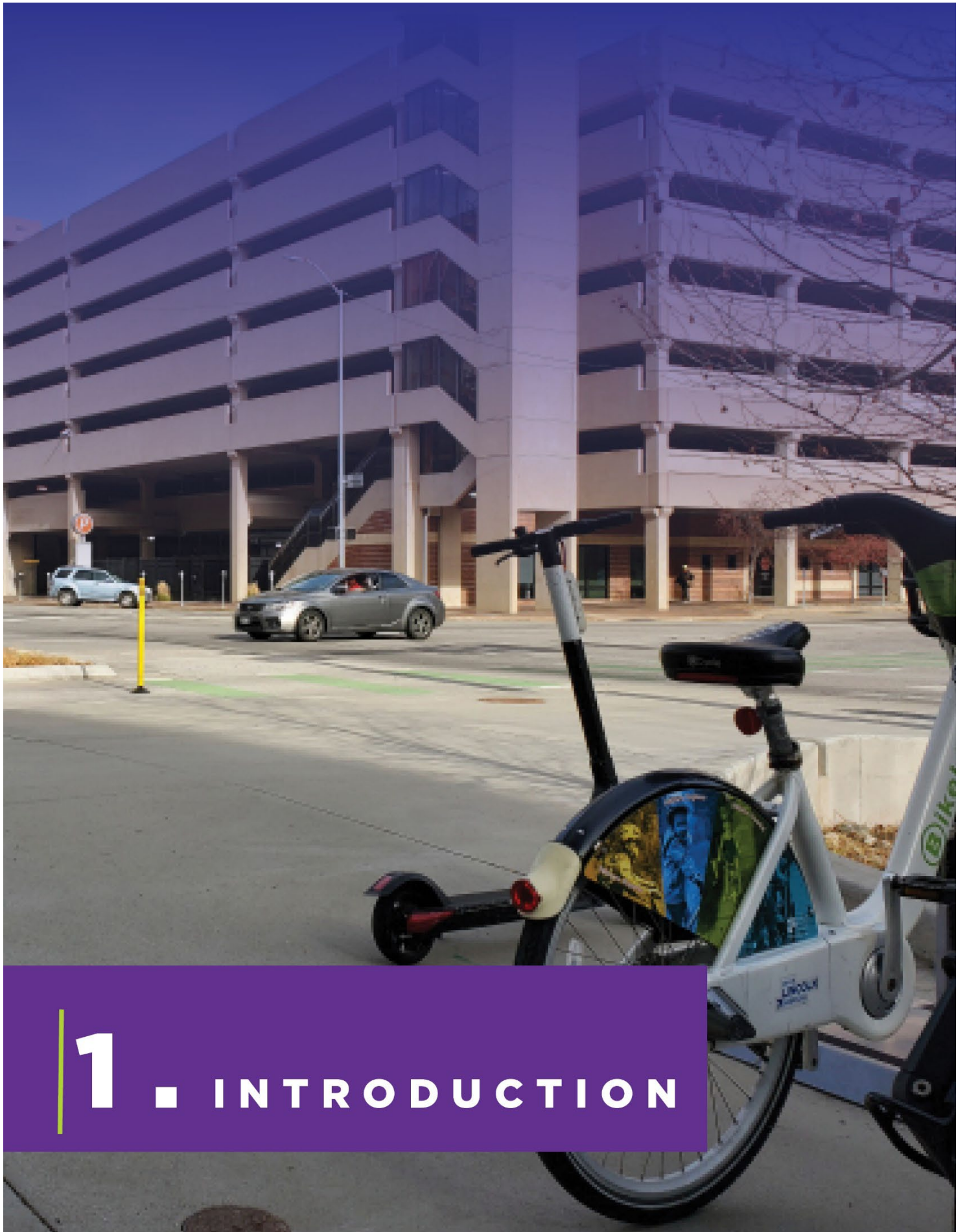




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■ INTRODUCTION



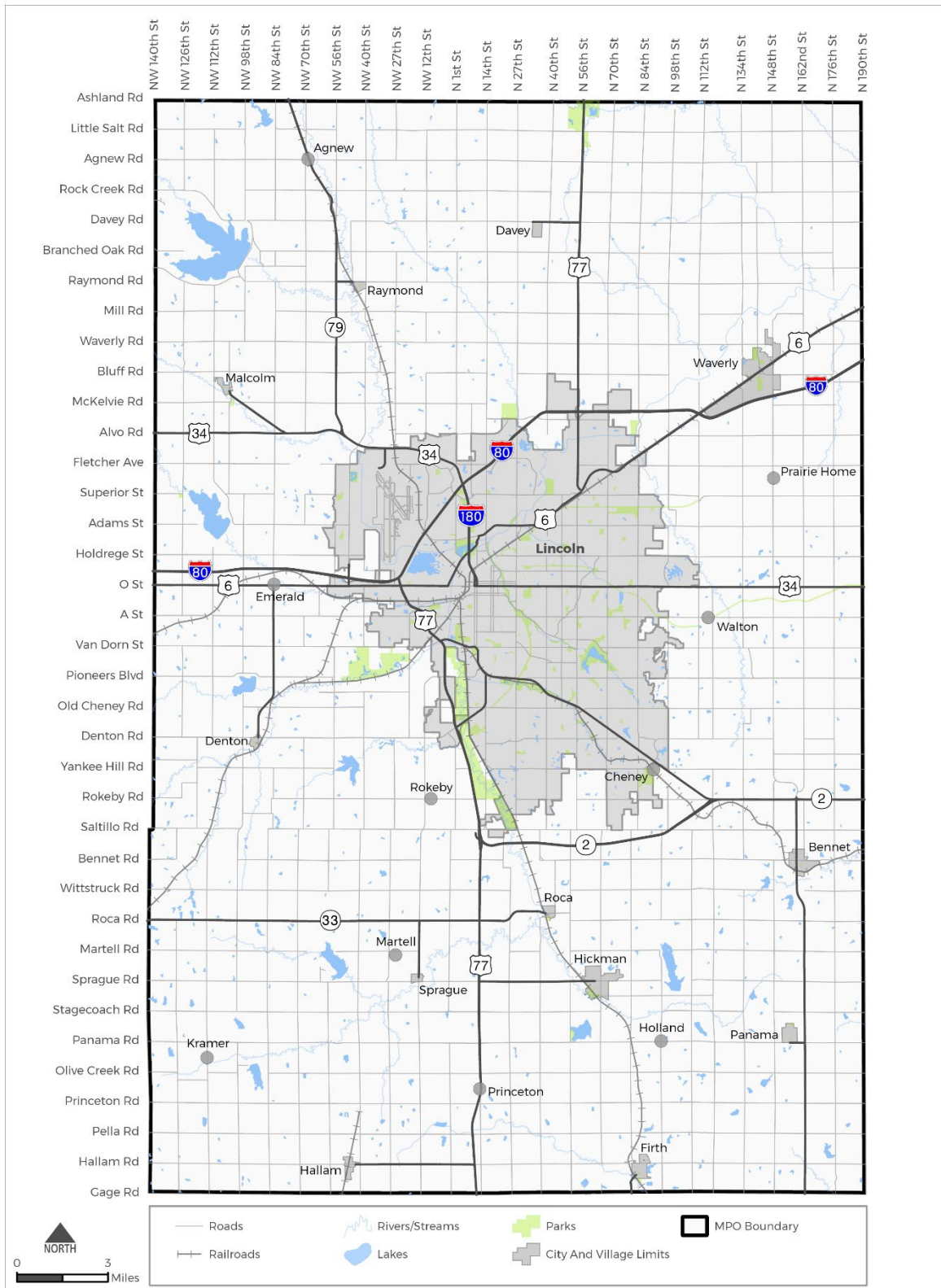
1. INTRODUCTION

The 2050 Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization Long Range Transportation Plan (Lincoln MPO LRTP) establishes the vision, priorities, and investment strategy for the region's multimodal transportation system through 2050. The plan was developed through a collaborative partnership among the City of Lincoln; Lancaster County and the Cities of Lancaster County outside Lincoln; Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT); and other local, state, and federal agencies. The plan combines technical analysis, public input, and agency collaboration to identify transportation priorities, investment strategies, and implementation recommendations for the Lincoln metropolitan area.

The LRTP meets all federal planning requirements and establishes the goals, objectives, and investment strategies to meet the community's vision for the system. Federal regulations require MPOs to update their LRTPs at least every five years, providing an opportunity to reflect changing conditions, coordinate with other planning efforts, reassess community priorities, and respond to evolving travel patterns, development trends, and transportation needs. This update ensures that the plan remains relevant, fiscally constrained, and aligned with in the region's vision for the future.

The LRTP covers the transportation systems of the jurisdictions located within the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), shown on **Figure 1**, which encompasses all of Lancaster County, Nebraska. The LRTP considers the interdependent nature of the metropolitan area's multimodal transportation systems by addressing the region's roadway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian modes in a combined effort. According to U.S. Census estimates, Lincoln's population reached 294,856 in 2024—reflecting a 3.9 percent increase since the 2019 figure used in the Lincoln MPO's 2050 LRTP adopted in 2021. Meanwhile, Lancaster County experienced a growth of approximately 4.3 percent, bringing its estimated population to 326,696.

Figure 1. Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Area



Metropolitan Planning Organization

The Lincoln MPO is responsible for transportation planning in Lincoln and Lancaster County. The MPO is a policy-making board of local government and transportation authority representatives who review transportation issues and develop transportation plans and programs for the metropolitan area. The MPO works to ensure that the directives of federal regulations are incorporated into transportation planning and operations in the County. This organization provides the forum for cooperative decision-making and involvement of principal City and County elected officials. Although these individuals come to the table with multiple, and sometimes competing perspectives, they work together to establish local and regional priorities for the transportation improvements eligible to use state and federal funds. To support the decision-making process, the MPO Officials Committee relies on other committees and staff, such as the MPO Technical Committee, as well as active participation from interested community members, concerned business representatives, interest groups and other voices in the community. The MPO is also responsible for preparing the [Transportation Improvement Program](#) (TIP) and the [Unified Planning Work Program](#) (UPWP). These two documents are short-term coordination and communication resources that help implement LRTP goals.

Reason for Planning

The Lincoln MPO Region will see many changes between now and 2050. Shifting demographics, employment patterns, and technologies will create challenges in providing transportation services and facilities. The coordinated planning effort between the LRTP and PlanForward strengthens the connection between land use and transportation decisions. Lincoln and Lancaster County continue to face significant financial challenges in the construction of new transportation facilities and the care and maintenance of an expanding and aging system. Technology changes and increasing demands for alternative transportation options present new challenges and opportunities to ensure that the transportation system serves the needs of all people.

PlanForward anticipates a community of complete neighborhoods with housing options in various settings and walkable, bikeable and transit access to commercial centers and entertainment. This approach supports improved access for all transportation modes in existing neighborhoods, safer connections for all users, and development of new neighborhoods with Complete Streets and accessible amenities. As Lincoln and Lancaster County continue to grow over the coming decades, demand for new and expanded transportation infrastructure will increase alongside the need to maintain and modernize the existing system.

Meeting these needs will become increasingly challenging as infrastructure ages and construction costs continue to rise. Traditional transportation funding sources are not keeping pace with the cost of maintaining, replacing, and expanding the transportation network. Factors contributing to this funding gap include increased vehicle fuel efficiency, gas-tax revenues that have not kept pace with inflation and evolving vehicle technologies, rising project costs, and limited growth in available federal and state resources. This LRTP Update responds to these challenges by making the most of existing infrastructure; strategically investing in transportation improvements that support community growth; and expanding safe and reliable options for walking, biking, rolling, transit, and other forms of active transportation. These strategies can help Lincoln and Lancaster County maximize available resources while building a more connected, accessible, and resilient transportation network.

Compliance with Federal Regulations

The 2026 Lincoln MPO LRTP has been prepared under the direction of the MPO in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local transportation planning requirements and policies. The LRTP addresses the long-term transportation needs of the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County, while fulfilling federal requirements for metropolitan transportation planning.

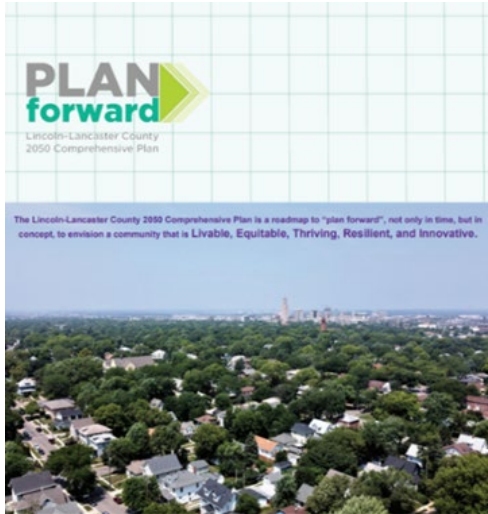
The update was completed within the federal planning framework established under Title 23 of the United States Code and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Enacted in 2021, the IIJA continued and expanded on the metropolitan transportation planning requirements established through previous federal transportation legislation, including the FAST Act, MAP-21, SAFETEA-LU, TEA-21, and ISTEA. Federal transportation policy emphasizes a cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive approach to transportation planning that considers the movement of people and goods across all modes. Within this framework, metropolitan transportation planning addresses priorities such as safety, system performance and reliability, accessibility and mobility, freight movement, economic vitality, environmental considerations, system resilience, and connections between transportation investments and planned growth.

This LRTP Update carries these principles forward by establishing a long-term, multimodal framework for transportation investment in Lincoln and Lancaster County. The Update identifies strategies and investments to maintain and improve the existing transportation system, respond to anticipated growth and changing travel needs, improve safety and connectivity, and make the most effective use of available transportation resources.

Planning Context

The LRTP builds on a strong foundation of adopted plans, policies, and programs that guide transportation, land use, redevelopment, safety, and public investment across the community. This plan was developed concurrently with updates to the Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan and the Lincoln Mobility Plan to create an integrated approach to land use, transportation, and mobility planning. The Comprehensive Plan established the long-range vision, growth strategy, and population and employment forecasts that informed the LRTP's travel demand analysis, while the Lincoln Mobility Plan identified multimodal mobility needs and strategies. Together, these planning efforts provide a coordinated framework for guiding future transportation investments, mobility improvements, and land use decisions across Lincoln and Lancaster County.

PlanForward – 2050 Lincoln Comprehensive Plan



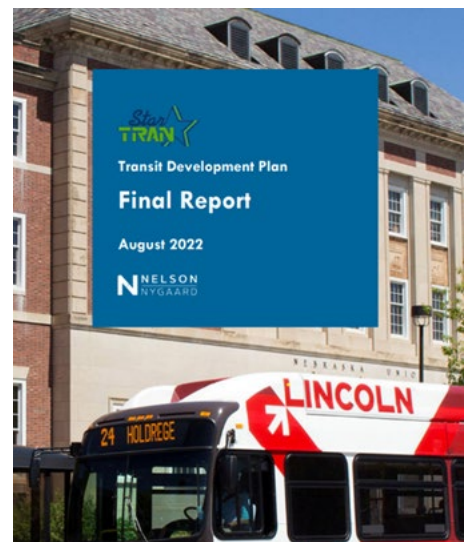
Lincoln's long-range comprehensive plan guides growth and development across land use, transportation, housing, utilities, parks, and community facilities. It emphasizes compact, connected growth patterns, complete transportation networks, and the integration of transportation and land use to support livable, walkable neighborhoods. It also establishes policies that encourage multimodal access to jobs and other community destinations.

Informed by **Plan Forward 2050**, the LRTP Update aligns transportation investments with planned growth areas and policy-driven development patterns. Incorporating these land use principles helps to ensure that regional transportation investments support sustainable community growth, create more connected and accessible places, and maximize the long-term efficiency and effectiveness of the transportation system.

StarTran Transit Development Plan (2022)

The **StarTran Transit Development Plan (TDP)** provides a roadmap for enhancing Lincoln's public transit system. It evaluates existing services, identifies unmet needs, and recommends strategies to improve service coverage, frequency, reliability, and rider experience. The TDP also addresses long-term transit investments and operational considerations.

The LRTP Update relies on the TDP to guide transit-related needs, projects, and policy considerations. The TDP informs transit capital investments, service assumptions, and multimodal connectivity strategies incorporated into the LRTP's funding strategy and performance measures.



Lincoln On-Street Bike Plan (2019)

The **Lincoln On-Street Bike Plan** provides a comprehensive set of infrastructure recommendations for enhancing the comfort and convenience of the on-street bicycle system for all bicyclists, including new designated facilities, intersection improvements, and wayfinding. The Lincoln On-Street Bike Plan built upon the 2013 Bicycle and Pedestrian Capital Plan, which was developed as a strategic objective from the City and County's then recently completed planning process. The plan uses transportation and land use data to inform considerations that could improve both connectivity and safety, as well as expand the active transportation network. The plan represents trails, sidepaths, crossings, and rural routes with paved shoulders.

Lincoln Mobility Plan (2026)

The LRTP Update uses the **Lincoln Mobility Plan** to inform regional bicycle network needs and investment priorities. Building on the City's previous bicycle planning efforts, the Lincoln Mobility Plan outlines a connected network of on-street and off-street facilities designed to improve mobility, safety, and access for bicyclists of all ages and abilities. The plan also establishes implementation priorities and investment strategies to guide future project development. Incorporating the Mobility Plan into the LRTP helps to ensure that bicycle infrastructure is integrated into multimodal transportation planning and long-range regional investment decisions.

Safe Streets Lincoln and Lincoln Vision Zero Action Plan (2026)

A local initiative, **Safe Streets Lincoln**, is part of the national Vision Zero campaign to eliminate traffic fatalities and reduce serious injuries. The Safe Streets Lincoln initiative and national Vision Zero concept prioritize traffic safety and consider it a public health issue. The Vision Zero strategy acknowledges that many factors contribute to safe mobility—including street design, speeds, behaviors, technology, and policies—and that traffic safety is a shared responsibility. A community-driven initiative committed to greater traffic safety, Safe Streets Lincoln uses a comprehensive approach to identify strategies and projects to keep all road users safe. The **Vision Zero Action Plan** project began in 2025 to create a comprehensive document with a safety goal of eliminating all roadway fatalities and reducing serious injury crashes by 60 percent by 2045 on all locally maintained streets. City Council approved the plan on March 16, 2026.

The LRTP Update supports Vision Zero by embedding safety as a primary evaluation criterion during project prioritization. Safety considerations are incorporated throughout the plan's recommendations and reinforce Lincoln's commitment to a transportation system where serious injuries and fatalities are not an acceptable outcome.

Other Plans

Lincoln Area Redevelopment Plans

A redevelopment plan analyzes existing conditions in a designated area, including land use, zoning, recreational facilities and trails, transportation, public utilities, and historic significance. The City of Lincoln has adopted 31 area redevelopment plans, which provide more detailed guidance for redevelopment within specific areas of the community and are developed in coordination with the Comprehensive Plan. The City also uses these redevelopment plans to apply a policy for designating areas of blight and substandard condition. These terms are defined within Community Development Law so that financing methods, such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), can be used to support redevelopment and associated infrastructure needs.

For the LRTP Update, the **Lincoln Area Redevelopment Plans** help identify areas where transportation improvements can advance both mobility and economic development goals. Integrating redevelopment priorities into the LRTP supports strategic investment decisions and ensures that regional funding complements local revitalization efforts.

Lincoln School Zone Standards

The **Lincoln School Zone Standards** establish design and operational guidance to improve safety and accessibility around schools. These standards address traffic calming, signage, crossings, sidewalks, and other treatments that reduce conflicts between vehicles and students walking or biking to school. These standards inform the LRTP Update by reinforcing priorities for vulnerable users and highlighting areas where transportation investments can support safer routes to school. Incorporating school access considerations not only strengthens the safety of the recommendations but also enhances overall mobility for all users.

These standards also inform the management of Lincoln's **Safe Routes to School (SRTS)** program. SRTS is a multi-year initiative to enhance safety at more than 80 Lincoln schools by improving the safety and function of school zones and walking routes to and from schools.

Plan Big: UNL's Campus and Landscape Master Plan (2013)

University of Nebraska-Lincoln's (UNL's) 2013 Master Plan, **Plan Big**, provides a framework for growth to ensure the creation of the highest quality campus learning and research environments to help the university achieve its goals and mission. It guides physical development, circulation, and open spaces across the university's campuses. It also prioritizes walkability, bikeability, transit connectivity, and campus-community integration. The LRTP recognizes UNL as a major activity center and travel generator. Coordination with the campus master plan helps to ensure seamless bicycle, pedestrian, and transit connectivity between the university and its surrounding neighborhoods.

Lincoln Parks and Recreation 10-Year Facilities Plan

Updated in 2023, the **10-Year Facilities Plan** guides the preparation of the Parks & Recreation Department's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). It prioritizes needs and organizes projects by four quadrants with estimates of new infrastructure, as well as continuous need to repair/replace/renew existing facilities. The plan identifies projects that involve a capital fundraising campaign in partnership with the Lincoln Parks Foundation and summarizes estimated costs by district and priority ranking.

The LRTP Update acknowledges the role of shared-use trails and park connections within the regional transportation system. Aligning trail planning with transportation investment supports multimodal travel, health outcomes, and system connectivity.

Lincoln Bicycle Facility Design Manual

The **Lincoln On-Street Bike Plan** was produced in 2019 with a bike facility design guide to support facility selection, parameters, and considerations for intersections and conflict zone treatments. In 2024, Lincoln Transportation and Utilities (LTU) began reviewing the bike facility design guidance to improve how bike facility design standards are organized and to make them easier for developers and City forces to implement. The review was intended to improve how bicycle facilities are addressed with existing procedures for roadway design, right-

of-way, and traffic operations. The review included interdepartmental discussions about wayfinding and the interconnected nature of park trails, off-street trails, and trails co-located within street right-of-way.

Lincoln Climate Action Plan

The **Lincoln Climate Action Plan** establishes a framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions while strengthening the community's resilience to changing climate conditions. The plan identifies flooding, drought, extreme heat, severe precipitation, and other climate-related risks that may affect Lincoln's residents, economy, and infrastructure. Transportation is an important component of this effort, with strategies focused on reducing transportation-related emissions, expanding mobility choices, supporting compact development, and increasing the resilience of transportation infrastructure. The LRTP supports these goals by considering how long-range transportation investments can reduce environmental impacts and improve the transportation system's ability to withstand and recover from disruptions. Coordination with the Climate Action Plan also reinforces investments in multimodal transportation, efficient land use and infrastructure, and a transportation network that is prepared for changing environmental conditions.

Lincoln: An Age-Friendly Community Action Plan

The **Lincoln: An Age-Friendly Community Three-Year Action Plan** provides a roadmap for making Lincoln more accessible, connected, and supportive for older adults, while improving livability for residents of all ages. Developed as part of Lincoln's participation in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities, the plan focuses on priorities including transportation, accessible housing, and opportunities for social connection that support independence and quality of life. The LRTP considers transportation needs when planning for accessibility, mobility choice, and connections to essential destinations.

Subarea and Downtown Plans

Lincoln's subarea plans provide more detailed guidance for the future of individual neighborhoods and districts, translating the broader goals of the Comprehensive Plan into area-specific recommendations for land use, housing, transportation, economic development, infrastructure, and placemaking. Recent plans include the **Belmont and University Place Subarea Plans**, along with the **North 33rd and Cornhusker Subarea Plan**, **South Haymarket Neighborhood Plan**, and **Downtown Master Plan**. Adopted subarea plans become part of the Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan and provide greater detail about the intended future of these areas.

The **Downtown Master Plan** provides more focused guidance for Lincoln's urban core, building on significant public and private investment in Downtown and the Haymarket. The plan addresses transportation and mobility alongside development, public spaces, streetscapes, and the distinct character of Downtown's neighborhoods and activity areas.

The LRTP incorporates transportation needs and planned improvements identified through these area-specific planning efforts. Doing so helps ensure that regional transportation investments respond to local conditions and support planned development and redevelopment.

Purpose and Approach

The L RTP and this update look ahead to the year 2050. Shifts in demographics, employment patterns, and emerging technologies will provide both challenges and opportunities for delivering transportation facilities and services. By aligning the L RTP with the Lincoln-Lancaster Comprehensive Plan 2026 Update, the Safe Streets Lincoln Vision Zero Action Plan, and other strategic planning efforts, this undertaking helps strengthen the critical link between transportation and land use decisions.

The City of Lincoln and Lancaster County face significant financial challenges in maintaining and expanding the transportation system. Meeting the growing demand for alternative transportation options will require innovative solutions to ensure that the network serves all users.

As the population grows, demand for transportation infrastructure will rise. Aging facilities, escalating construction costs, and the need for sustainable, resilient systems strain available funding. To address these challenges, the L RTP focuses on maximizing the efficiency of the current system while prioritizing strategic investments to foster a transportation network that emphasizes active mobility, accessibility, and reliable commuting options. Continued community dialogue and regular updates to this plan will be essential to meet the community's long-term transportation goals.

By aligning this L RTP Update with other planning efforts, the City has established a cohesive vision for safety, accessibility, and resiliency. Completing this planning in tandem amplifies the shared objectives and ensures consistency in performance measures, public involvement strategies, and prioritized next steps.

Project Governance

The L RTP Update was guided by a structured governance framework designed to ensure collaboration and accountability across the plan's focus areas. At the core was the **Coordination Team**, which included project consultants and MPO staff. This team served as the central hub for coordination among other stakeholders. The **MPO Officials Committee** and **MPO Technical Committee** provided general oversight and comments throughout the planning process. The project team also engaged with key stakeholders through the **Planning Commission**, as well as through conversations with **Focus Groups**.

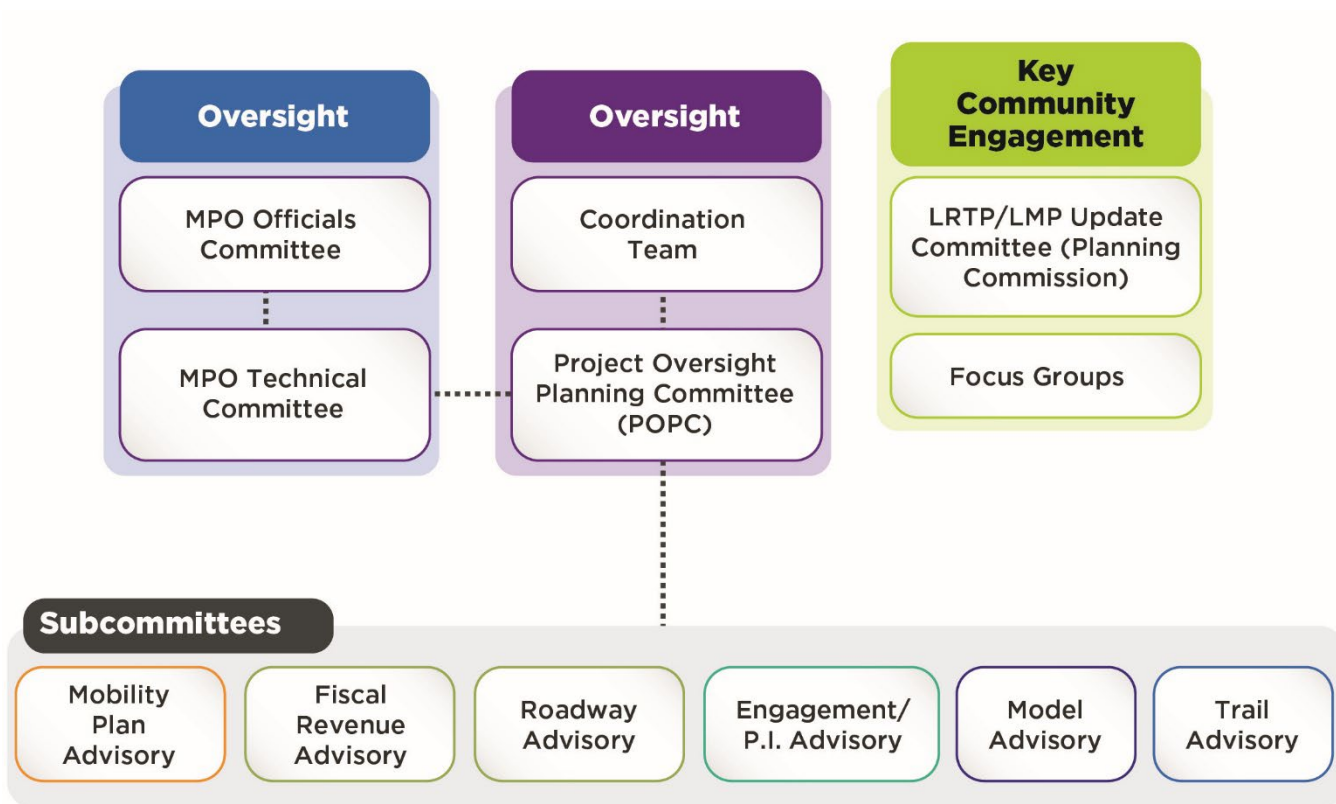
Helping to support the strategic direction of the planning efforts was the **Project Oversight Planning Committee (POPC)**, which convened throughout the process to review the project's progress, provide overarching policy guidance, and validate key decisions along the way. The POPC was informed by a collection of advisory subcommittees—**Mobility Plan Advisory Subcommittee**, **Funding Advisory Subcommittee**, **Model Advisory Subcommittee**, **Community Engagement Advisory Subcommittee**, **Roadway Advisory Subcommittee**, and **Trail Advisory Subcommittee**. These groups helped ensure that the final recommendations of the L RTP Update reflected the priorities of the community, were technically feasible, and were aligned with fiscal realities.

This update refreshes the content and analysis, while keeping the 2050 planning horizon. Generally, L RTPs are updated every five years. This document builds on the strong foundation of past planning and refines the goals to meet the needs of today and the next generation. The fundamental objectives of this update include:

- Clarifying what has changed since the last plan update
- Reinforcing the priorities that remain important to the community
- Incorporating community voices and lived experiences into how and where we invest

Figure 2 shows the committee structure for the LRTP, together with key community engagement and collaboration.

Figure 2. LRTP Committee Structure



Public Engagement

The public agency and stakeholder input process began in the fall of 2025 with a project kickoff meeting to confirm project goals and objectives and to identify critical concerns.

In addition to the public outreach described in **Chapter 3**, the LRTP Update process was completed in coordination with the following entities:

- Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning and Development Services Department
- Lincoln Transportation and Utilities (LTU): Transportation, StarTran
- Lancaster County Engineer's Office
- Lincoln Parks & Recreation Department
- Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department
- Lincoln Urban Development Department
- Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Lincoln MPO Technical and Officials Committees
- Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (LPS-NRD)
- Cities and other communities of Lancaster County (outside City of Lincoln):
 - Bennet
 - Davey
 - Denton
 - Firth
 - Hallam
 - Hickman
 - Malcolm
 - Panama
 - Raymond
 - Roca
 - Sprague
 - Waverly

Three Phases of Public Engagement

- **Listening and Discovery (Fall 2025):** To understand how people currently travel, identify barriers and needs, and raise awareness of the planning effort
- **Priorities and Tradeoffs (Winter 2025 - Spring 2026):** To share draft goals and strategies; to gather input on priorities for investment and tradeoffs across the transportation system
- **Draft Plan Review (Fall 2026):** To share draft plan recommendations, report back on community input, and gather feedback from the community and stakeholders before adoption