

Letter to the Editor Is it the big picture or is it the little picture?

Going back to 2006's, Logan County created a "Comprehensive Plan" called, Acres of Opportunity. Then in 2009 the "Master Plan" came along. And, in May, 2012, up sprang the "Downtown Revitalization Plan" and several years ago, the City developed their "2020 Strategic Plan". Was there a problem with any of these plans? Without nit picking, it could boil down to who devised the "picture."

The Logan County Comprehensive Plan was, in my thinking, developed to look at the big picture. Just to side track a little, some background information may be needed to clarify and explain my perspective on this. I do not think that education is the end all but it definitely has its advantages. My Bachelor's degree was in Business Education/Administration, my Masters in Counseling, and my advanced certification in Educational Administration. All of these areas stress the significance of some kind of "major" plan depending on the end result (or intentions) of your desired investment of time and money. The county's plan took in every aspect of Logan County from topography to employment, from culture structure to education, from rural living to city living, etc. Within my first month of working at Main Street Lincoln, I went through the Comprehensive Plan and pulled out what pertained to a smaller picture called the Lincoln Courthouse Historic District and, in relationship to the bigger picture, the other communities in Logan County. This was a guide, as all plans should be, for enhancement and improvement of your demographic area or targeted subject area.

The Master Plan became tedious. It utilized ten year old data. Previous statistic classes sent up red flags and road blocks for me. The main concern with this plan was it seemed to look at only the "little" picture for certain entities; it was narrow in scope with distinct benefits for some. Many people were involved in the initial intake with meetings and feedback. Then it fell in the hands of a select few who already had in their minds the end results and guided the Master Plan in that direction. The firm hired to develop the plan used their basic template. This template used within various communities changed slightly to personalize that community's Master Plan. Lincoln's data was inserted when needed. Does this kind of maneuvering lead to resistance? Outside firms cost a lot of money especially when they use old data.

The Downtown Revitalization Plan was wonderful because it targeted an area that has a distinct nomenclature. It covered all the necessary aspects need to make downtown Lincoln "the place to be." What, then, was the problem? The People! Again, a few people, the same people, who seemed to do their planning behind closed doors. Then the TIF District appeared with only one person getting the major benefit of the TIF funding. People were left out. Next, there was the destruction of programs and events by those people who planned things behind closed doors. This particular plan started to negatively impact people from downtown, to the entire city, to the entire county and beyond.

Big picture versus small picture, the track record is not very good. But, is there a bigger concern or question here? Citizens have been looking very seriously at the direction of Lincoln's City Council. Spending and mandating are big problems. Lacking transparency without the presence of the Committee Structure and along with a Consent Agenda leaves people to wonder if things are still going on behind closed doors. There are no committees (WHY?) to help with the day to day operation of the City's needed business but it is necessary to establish a committee using two aldermen to develop a Strategic Plan? Are we missing something, people? We can't get streets done, we can't get the 5th Street Road work done, we can't get the garbage issue straightened out or a forensic audit done, and we have a sewer issue facing us. Yet, the City is considering another major project involving all kinds of resources. People are saying they want these little pictures taken care of first. Can we please focus?

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