



CITY OF NORMAN, OK CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Municipal Building, Executive Conference Room, 201 West Gray, Norman,
OK 73069

Thursday, February 22, 2024 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

The Community Planning and Transportation Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma met in Regular Session in the Executive Conference Room of the Norman Municipal Building, on the 22nd day of February, 2024 at 4:00 p.m., and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Holman called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman, Chair
Councilmember Ward 5 Michael Nash
Councilmember Ward 8 Matthew Peacock
Councilmember Ward 2 Lauren Schueler
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant

ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mr. Darryl Pyle, City Manager
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager
Mr. David Riesland, Transportation Engineer
Mr. Scott Sturtz, City Engineer, Interim Public Works Director
Mr. James Briggs, Park Development Manager
Ms. Michele Loudonback, Environmental & Sustainability Manager
Ms. Amy Shephard, Management Analyst, Public Works
Ms. Beth Muckala, Assistant City Attorney III
Ms. Kathryn Walker, City Attorney
Ms. Lora Hoggatt, Planning Services Manager
Dr. Marilyn Dillon, EMBARK Mobility Manager

AGENDA ITEMS

ITEM 1: PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT.

Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager, provided the transit report to Council.

All five of the paratransit vehicles to replace the older units have been received. A few had to be sent back to remedy some issues and they should be returned soon.

Route changeover is going pretty well and not hearing any complaints. Increased frequency on the two hour long routes, 112 has had a huge increase in ridership while 110 has gone down. The development of the North Park area will increase the numbers.

The next priority of the Go Norman Transit Plan is the Sunday Service, that is currently on-demand, and staff will be discussing it more in depth next Tuesday.

Should hear next Thursday if the Public Transit Conversion Grants applied for will be awarded for the public fleet conversion and pantograph chargers to keep the buses charged while in service. These will be installed at the transit center in the two bays under the awning and provides a five to ten minute very high intensity charge to get quickly back on the road again.

Mr. Johnson wants to keep the Micro Transit Program on every bodies radar and staff will discuss it more in depth next month.

Chairman Holman asked why such an increase in ridership? Mr. Johnson said the increase is due to more opportunity to ride the bus with the route changes and further ridership area.

Mr. Johnson, said the total ridership for EMBARK Norman in January 2024 was 30,295 compared to 27,245 in January 2023, with the average daily ridership being 1,165. Total ridership 233,793 year to date, which is a 31.49% increase system wide.

The fixed route service transported 28,544 passengers in January 2024, compared to 24,477 in January 2023. Passengers with bicycles totaled 608 and we transported 378 passengers with wheelchairs or other mobility devices in January 2024.

Saturday service totaled 2,499 in January 2024, compared to 1,325 in January 2023, a 88.60% increase, averaging 14.19 riders on each route per service hour.

Norman On-Demand completed 2,481 rides in January 2024, with 13 wheelchair accessible vehicle requests for a total of 13,251 riders since August 2022. There are currently 745 active accounts that have completed more than five rides each.

Chairman Holman asked why there has been such an increase in service to people with mobility devices? Dr. Marilyn Dillion, EMBARK Mobility Manager, said that these may be people who are fairly ambulatory and are having a bad day causing them to use mobility equipment.

ITEM 1: (continued) PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT

Chairman Holman asked, where are new riders coming from and why are they using the bus now? Mr. Johnson said that he believes it is because we are serving routes better, with more destinations on expanded routes because the buses can go more places in the same amount of time.

Mr. Johnson stated that EMBARK does an annual market survey that asks basic information in a customer survey, but it was not done in 2023.

Chairman Holman asked for an update on Transit Center issues mentioned at the last meeting regarding safety, benches for shelter, Faculty Heights stop, etc. He said there are people in vests walking around the center grounds more often. Johnson stated this is EMBARK showing a presence to help reduce issues and determine needs for security. He also stated that he asked EMBARK to look at what the cost for security would be based on their Oklahoma City agreement.

City Manager Pyle stated policies and procedures are already in place in Oklahoma City and Norman would be able to use as a template for an agreement with EMBARK.

Councilmember Holman said everyone has put a lot staff time and money to provide the Transit Program and wants everyone to feel safe. He also wanted to mention the stop at Faculty Heights Park for a bench/shelter as he sees multiple people standing there every day.

Johnson said they are working on this location and are also looking at a bench and shelter bus stop at Reed Street by Food and Shelter.

Chairman Holman thanked staff for the report.

Items submitted for the record

1. EMBARK Norman Performance Report for January 2024

ITEM 2: DISCUSSION REGARDING PARKING SPACE MAXIMUMS, PARKING LOT DESIGN, AND LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS.

Chairman Holman said this item came out of previous discussions on parking minimums. While on vacation last summer, he visited Hanford, California and went into a Walmart that had an interesting parking lot. It was nicely landscaped and set up in a way where people could walk through without being exposed to the heat. City Manager Pyle was asked to get some information on the parking lot and the ordinance regulating the parking lot layout.

Ms. Hoggatt, Planning Services Manager, spoke to the committee regarding the current City of Norman parking regulations, design and landscaping ordinance for zoning districts. Districts "O", "OI" and Commercial Mixed Use Industrial Districts require not less than 5% of the interior square footage be landscaped, (1 tree for every 4 lineal parking spaces).

ITEM 2: (continued) DISCUSSION REGARDING PARKING SPACE MAXIMUMS, PARKING LOT DESIGN, AND LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS.

City Manager Pyle stated that from the picture sent to him by Chairman Holman, the parking lot is basically a canopy of trees.

Ms. Hoggatt went over Norman's ordinance with the committee further. Streets require One (1) tree for every 40 foot. Parking spacing is approximately 8 ½ feet wide so a tree is required every 20 feet. Ordinance was updated to "recommended" minimums from "required".

Chairman Holman asked if Norman only had exterior landscaping requirements? Ms. Hoggatt said that there is a requirement for interior landscaping in the ordinance as well. City Manager Pyle asked when was the last time the ordinance was updated, to which Lora stated 2023.

Councilmember Peacock said that he would like to embrace one (1) tree for every four (4) spaces, diamond design and drainage inlets. This puts the shade trees where they are needed. He would like to see the City have an incentive program to encourage installation of tree islands in existing parking lots.

City Manager Pyle said that he would like to see staff recommended trees that would succeed in the environment where they are to be planted. He also stated that the City is given trees every so often and this would be something that could benefit the residents and business as part of meeting the landscape vision and plan for Norman.

Councilmember Peacock said maybe the City could buy the trees and instruct the recipient on how to plant and care for the tree.

Councilmember Grant wondered about the compacted soil in the parking lots to be retrofitted. Councilmember Grant also stated she supports Councilmember Peacock's comments on the one (1) tree for every four (4) spaces, diamond design with drainage inlets and a proposed incentive program to encourage retrofitting existing parking lots with tree islands. Also asked about this being a requirement on future projects, with the City possibly offering to provide trees that will do good in the area.

City Manager Pyle said staff could do some research on upcoming projects and see what would fall into this category and asked if Ms. Michele Loudonback, Environmental & Sustainability Manager, has any ideas on the proposed tree requirement.

Ms. Loudonback spoke about this being a great opportunity to implement some water quality features in projects. Possibly design in a way to control storm water and use it for irrigation of the trees on the property or for a storm water basin on the property.

Councilmember Peacock said replicating the curb drainage design done on James Garner that allows the water to pass through the curb so it goes into the grass would be nice. City Manager Pyle said that the design would have to accommodate 40 inches of rainfall in Oklahoma versus the nine (9) inches of rainfall that Hanford, CA has to deal with.

ITEM 2: (continued) DISCUSSION REGARDING PARKING SPACE MAXIMUMS, PARKING LOT DESIGN, AND LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS.

Chairman Holman said he would like to see Norman replicate a simplified Hanford policy, (landscape buffer of ten feet), keep the street trees and use the best suited hardy trees.

Ms. Hoggatt asked for some clarifications on the policy recommendations for a simplified code, interior areas for 30 parking spaces, would you like to see it in lots with eight (8) spaces. The consensus was yes.

Ms. Hoggatt asked if the committee wants to keep street buffer requirements. Normans is currently 10-foot buffer with landscape required. Committee members said keep the 10-foot buffer. Ms. Hoggatt asked the members if they want an updated tree list that grows best in Norman and they stated yes. Ms. Hoggatt was asked if the City has a list of a prohibited trees and she stated yes.

Ms. Hoggatt asked if the landscape has to be trees or can it be shrubs? Committee members stated they preferred trees.

City Manager said they will do their research and bring it back to the committee at the next meeting.

Councilmember Peacock wanted to put his support in for a parking maximum requirement.

Items submitted for the record

1. Parking Ratios, Parking Lot Design & Landscaping Requirements dated February 22, 2024

ITEM 3: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE CITY OF NORMAN SIDEWALK PROGRAM.

City Manager Pyle stated that with all the council submittals for capital budget consideration, sidewalks were the leading category of requests.

Mr. Scott Sturtz, Interim Director of Public Works, spoke to the committee regarding the West Boyd Street Sidewalk Project from Berry Road to approximately Flood Avenue, sidewalk work stopped when the funding ran out. The project was included in this years' budget, but cannot be completed until school is out for the summer.

Phase II of the project was to extend the project on West Boyd Street from the Phase I stopping point on Berry Road where Phase I left off so that there would be a continuous sidewalk, but ran into a complete road block on this project. This project goes through Imhoff Creek, and through the floodway, causing the requirement for a hydraulic study

ITEM 3: (continued) PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE CITY OF NORMAN
SIDEWALK PROGRAM

and adding additional cost for the project. Staff knew this was going to be an issue, but did not anticipate it to be to the extent it has gotten. The cost of the project may have doubled or tripled.

City Manager Pyle asked if this is going to require a new bridge to expand the floodway, to which Mr. Sturtz said he does not believe so. But nothing can be comfortably determined until the hydraulic study has been completed.

The flood way is about four (4) foot above ground level at Imhoff Creek and if it has to be raised two (2) feet to prevent impact on the floodway, the bridge would be elevated to 6' – 7' above ground elevation and stairs cannot be used to access it and meet ADA requirements and standards.

Chairman Holman asked if there is an existing sidewalk on the north. Mr. Sturtz said yes, but does not go all the way through to Berry Road, goes as far as Merrywood Lane. Staff did consider moving the sidewalk to the North, but the City does not have adequate right of way to move the project there.

Mr. Sturtz said this is a very important project and Staff would like to postpone the Boyd Street Phase I and II Project for further review and design for funding in FYE 2026 or 2027 in order to access potential federal funding. Staff will be bringing the project back at a later date for the committee to revisit.

An alternative project is Mimosa Drive, running between Stubbeman and Peters just south of Norman North, which has no sidewalk to the school nearby. Mimosa Drive is the number one (1) ranked project on the large scale sidewalk project list, because there is currently no sidewalk access to the school and students are walking in the street to get to school. Staff had proposed to do Phase I of this project in FY 2025, but would like to take the Phase I and II Boyd Street funds and do Phase I of Mimosa Drive in FY 24, with Phase II being done in FY 25 and knock this project out fairly quickly.

Councilmember Grant echoed that road is very busy. City Manager Pyle said that in bad weather, the storm water is right beside the pavement and the kids are either walking on people's doorsteps or in the middle of the street to stay dry.

Chairman Holman asked how far east would the Boyd Street sidewalk, under the current proposed plan, go on the south side? Mr. Sturtz said it is estimated to cost between \$500,000 - \$700,000 for the sidewalk and bridge. In addition, Rights of Way will have to be secured in order to properly do the project. Staff will be able to get a better feel of the total costs once the plan is reevaluated and designs and full details are pulled together.

Chairman Holman asked if the review of the project would include the installation of sidewalks on both the north and south sides of Boyd Street.

ITEM 3: (continued) PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE CITY OF NORMAN
SIDEWALK PROGRAM

Councilmember Grant asked if it would be feasible to think about a Sidewalk Maintenance Bond. Mr. Sturtz said that this would require a 60% voter approval to pass. Chairman Holman said he believes that this went to a vote sometime in the early 2000's, failed and was never attempted again.

Chairman Holman asked if an update can be provided on sidewalk projects funded in the last budget at the next meeting? Mr. Sturtz stated that all, except Boyd Street are done.

Brooks Street crossing on one side of the road from Pickard Avenue to Wiley Road is another \$1 million project with 80/20 funding. The railroad will have to redo the entire railroad crossing for Brooks Street. This is the only crossing in the urban area that does not have a sidewalk to cross the railroad tracks. Mr. Sturtz is working with railroad as they have to redo the entire crossing for the project.

Then, there are the \$216,000 in sidewalk projects that are on College Avenue, George Avenue, Classen Boulevard, out to bid and will be awarded on the 27th with work starting on the projects immediately after.

Also, have approximately \$1 million in sidewalks on the Lindsey East project between 12th & 24th Avenue SE that are under design and will be bid by Oklahoma Department of Transportation because federal funds are being used to bring these sidewalks into ADA compliance. This is the last section of sidewalks that are in the ADA Transition Update Plan to be completed.

Chairman Holman stated that Brandywine to 24th Avenue SE was widened to five (5) lanes 10 years ago and asked if they meet ADA requirements. Mr. Sturtz said there have been changes in ADA requirements since that time and Staff has completed an assessment on what needs to be done. Some have too steep of a slope, concrete separations, and some are in need of tactile warnings.

Staff is currently working on the design for the 10-foot wide path along 12th Avenue NE between Robinson Street and Rock Creek Road, along Griffin Park & Sutton Wilderness, and then a little section on the east side at the north end of the section, as well as the north side of Brooks Street from Pickard Avenue to Wiley Road. The cost for this set of projects is another \$1,000,000, with 80/20 funds.

There is a lot of sidewalk work to be done and a lot of time and effort will be going in to that over the next 12 – 16 months.

Chairman Holman asked for an update on the Brooks Street railroad crossing project. Mr. Sturtz said staff is trying to complete this project, and have reached out to our counterparts at BNSF. He said in order to facilitate the project, BNSF will have to redo the entire road crossing. An agreement has been sent for this project and is under

*ITEM 3: (continued) PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE CITY OF NORMAN
SIDEWALK PROGRAM*

review by the Legal Department and staff is working with them to resolve some contract items. The cost for the crossing project will be approximately \$60,000 to the City for associated road work and the City has agreed to share in some of the work.

Chairman Holman said that this is the only railroad crossing in the urban area of the city that does not have a formal pedestrian sidewalk across the tracks. Mr. Sturtz said a project was done about five years ago, but the City was not able to go on the right-of-way to complete the crossing.

Councilmember Schueler asked about the sidewalk gap on Boyd Street just east of Rotary Park. Mr. Sturtz said it is on the sidewalk list for Council to consider.

Items submitted for the record

1. Sidewalk Program dated February 22, 2024

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor