



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

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

Thursday, November 30, 2023 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

It is the policy of the City of Norman that no person or groups of persons shall on the grounds of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, place of birth, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, marital status, including marriage to a person of the same sex, disability, relation, or genetic information, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination in employment activities or in all programs, services, or activities administered by the City, its recipients, sub-recipients, and contractors. In the event of any comments, complaints, modifications, accommodations, alternative formats, and auxiliary aids and services regarding accessibility or inclusion, please contact the ADA Technician at 405-366-5446, Relay Service: 711. To better serve you, five (5) business days' advance notice is preferred.

CALL TO ORDER

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

PRESENT

Councilmember Ward 2 Lauren Schueler
Councilmember Ward 5 Michael Nash
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman, Chair

ABSENT

Councilmember Ward 8 Matthew Peacock

OTHERS PRESENT:

Councilmember Ward 1 Austin Ball
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Dr. Marilyn Dillon, Ph.D., Mobility Management Administrator/American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator for Embark
Mr. Jason Huff, Transit Planner and Grants Specialist
Mr. David Riesland, City Engineer
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager
Mr. David Riesland, Transportation Engineer
Mr. Scott Sturtz, City Engineer
Ms. Kathryn Walker, City Attorney

AGENDA ITEMS

1. PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT.

Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager, said the fixed route service transported 33,952 passengers in October 2023, compared to 25,881 in October 2022. The daily average ridership was 1,251 and there were 884 passengers with bicycles and 465 passengers with wheelchairs or other mobility devices transported in September.

The paratransit service transported 2,079 passengers in October 2023, compared to 999 October 2022. Average daily ridership was 80 in October 2023, which is the same as October 2022.

Saturday service totaled 2,553 in October 2023, compared to 1,813 in October 2022, a 40.82% increase.

Mr. Johnson said Norman On-Demand is a pilot microtransit service provided in Core Norman by TransitTech provider Via Transportation, complements existing public transit service by extending service into the late night hours and during the day on Sundays for a small fee (\$2 first passenger, \$1 each additional passenger, and OU SafeRide is free). Since inception of the service on August 21, 2023, 2,023 individual people have created accounts, which is a direct result of marketing efforts for the new program. Norman On-Demand completed 2,546 rides in October 2023, with 19 wheelchair accessible vehicle requests.

The Go Norman Transit Plan was adopted by Council on June 22, 2021, following an eleven month process of collecting data and receiving feedback from stakeholders, City Staff, City Council, and the public. Mr. Johnson said projecting ten years into the future, the Go Norman Transit Plan identified many recommendations for transit improvements in Norman that included additional frequency, Sunday service, and expanded hours on weekdays and Saturdays. On September 27, 2022, Council approved and acknowledged the Public Participation Process for service changes as identified in the Go Norman Transit Plan.

The new Transit Center includes exterior bus bays; ADA compliant site circulation, benches, trashcans, and shelters. The interior will include public and Staff restrooms, waiting area with vending machines, water fountain/water bottle filling station, and Staff breakroom. Work on the project in October includes final Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing (MEP) System inspection; flooring installation completion; three inch line boring (for landscaping irrigation); window sills, countertops, and stairway ledge installation; doors and hardware; landscaping; Convergent Technology/camera installation; final clean, inspection, and final punch item list; and furniture and vending machine installation.

Item 1, continued:

Mr. Johnson said by the end of 2024, he anticipates all busses will have been replaced and the City will have purchased 27 busses/paratransit vans with the help of grant money, Council support, and community support. Staff is researching project opportunities for the various Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) air quality grants available over the next few months and Staff will continue to research eligible grants to support existing operations, vehicle needs, and future improvements.

On April 12, 2023, Council approved a grant application to FTA's Bus and Bus Facilities and Low-or-No-Emissions Grant to purchase six Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) cutaway busses for fleet replacement. On June 26, 2023, The FTA awarded the grant to the City. Staff will begin the process to request Council's acceptance of the grant and procurement of the vehicles.

Mr. Johnson said the Fleet Maintenance Division continues to ensure the transit fleet is in operational condition each morning, despite the age of the vehicles. The maintenance includes fueling, cleaning, and sanitizing each transit vehicle daily.

Chairman Holman asked Staff for information on expanding a bus route to include Ed Noble Parkway. Mr. Johnson said Council has indicated they would like to expand the On-Demand Service west to encompass Ed Noble Parkway so Staff has begun conversations with Via Transportation to see what that service would look like as well as costs. Chairman Holman said the On-Demand Service was supposed to provide rides to the nearest bus stop to fill gaps in transit services. He said the City needs an efficient transportation system that will get people to places they need to go in the quickest way possible whether that is through On-Demand Services or additional bus stops.

Councilmembers thanked Staff for the update.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated November 30, 2023, from Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager, through Shawn O'Leary, P.E., CFM, Director of Public Works, to Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee
2. EMBARK Norman Performance Report for October 2023

* * * * *

2. UPDATE AND DISCUSSION OF THE LINDSEY STREET AT ELM AVENUE PROJECT.

Mr. David Riesland, Transportation Engineer, said the north and south Elm Avenue approaches to Lindsey Street are both single lane approaches with the left and right turn movements made from the single lane. For years, the north and south movements operated with a green ball meaning that all north and south movements occurred at the same time and any significant volume of traffic on either northbound or southbound left turns would be stuck with no gaps to turn and might have to sit through multiple signal cycles. There was a similar intersection just to the west of Lindsey Street at Chautauqua Avenue and split phasing was introduced whereby the north and south approaches got green indications separate from one another allowing the left turn to clear in a single phase of the traffic signal.

Mr. Riesland said Staff received a request to evaluate implementing the same solution for Lindsey Street at Elm Avenue. If implemented, the north and south approaches of Elm Avenue to Lindsey Street would receive green indications separate from one another. The change would allow the left turns to clear, most likely, in a single phase of the traffic signal.

Mr. Riesland said traffic volumes were collected with all schools, including OU and Norman Public Schools (NPS) in session. Staff already had a model of the Lindsey Street Corridor from past signal timing efforts so the newly collected traffic volumes were entered into the model. Scenario comparisons were run with and without the introduction of split phasing on the two Elm Avenue approaches. He said there are two basic items that need to be checked when considering the change to split phasing at an intersection, 1) the City needs to measure the change on the level-of-service (LOS) that will be experienced at the intersection and on the impacted approaches and 2) there is a term called the "bandwidth", which is the amount of time available for traffic on the coordinated street to be able to make it through the intersection without stopping.

The change to split phasing on Elm Avenue will impact the amount of green time available to move traffic on Lindsey Street, but the LOS stayed the same or improved during each of the three peak periods. Mr. Riesland said there will be some delay reductions during the two worst peak times because those north and south vehicles will now be able to clear in a single traffic signal phase.

When Traffic Engineers talk about the ability of a motorist to get from one end of a coordinate system to the other minimal number or no stops, they use the term bandwidth. A change like split phasing of the two Elm Avenue approaches can have a negative impact on the bandwidth because the time needed for the additional side street phases will have to come from green time previously allocated to Lindsey Street.

Item 2, continued:

Mr. Riesland said one of the things that causes tremendous bottlenecks on Lindsey Street through the OU Campus are the three separate pedestrian signals at Van Vleet Oval. One of the issues is that the three signals all turn red and/or green at the same time when a pedestrian pushes the pushbutton at only one of the crosswalks. The 2019 Transportation Bond Program includes a "Special Corridor" project on Lindsey Street between Elm Avenue and Jenkins Avenue, which will address this issue. He said since the traffic control was implemented, he has not received negative feedback from anyone.

Councilmembers thanked Staff for the update.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Lindsey Street at Elm Avenue Project Update," dated November 30, 2023

* * * * *

3. UPDATE AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE RECENT INTERSECTION TRAFFIC CONTROL CHANGES.

Mr. Riesland said the City is notified about requested changes through citizen contact directly to the City; citizens reaching out to the Action Center who then notifies the Traffic Division; citizens reaching out to their Councilmember who sends a request to Staff; or citizens reaching out to another City employee they know. He said an engineering study is prepared for each request received to determine if a change in control is warranted.

The Manual Traffic Control Devices is adopted by the City of Norman in the City's Traffic Code Ordinance effectively becoming the City's Traffic Code. For conversion of two-way stops, the Traffic Code considers minimum traffic volumes through the intersection; collision history (five correctable collisions in a 12 month period justifies a change in control); and sight distance limitations can be justification for a change in control, if traffic on the side street cannot safely enter an intersection without the traffic on the major street also stopping.

Mr. Riesland highlighted change requests received over the past six months that include 48th avenue N.W. at Franklin Road (Fire Chief); 48th Avenue N.W. at Rock Creek Road (Council); Pickard Avenue at Timberdell Road (citizen); Acres Street at Jones Avenue (citizen and City employee); Chautauqua Avenue at Timberdell Road (Council); Park Drive at Eufaula Street (citizen); Main Street at Findlay Avenue (citizen); Ponca Avenue at Comanche Street (Council); Boyd Street at Garrison Drive (citizen); and 36th Avenue S.W. at Western View Drive/Willowbend Road (citizen).

Item 3, continued:

Mr. Riesland said recommended changes in controls include 48th Avenue N.W. at Franklin Road (sight distance issues); 48th Avenue N.E. at Rock Creek Road (rising number of collisions and sight distance issues); Pickard Avenue at Timberdell Road (sight distance issues); Acres Street at Jones Avenue (potential for eastbound vehicles to back up onto the railroad tracks); Chautauqua Avenue at Timberdell Road (traffic volume criteria met); Main Street at Findlay Avenue (collision requirements met plus preference of school related traffic); Park Drive at Eufaula Street (no issues found to merit change in control because of on-street parking issues); Ponca Avenue at Comanche Street (no issues found to merit change in control, but report shared with Parking Enforcement Officers because of on-street parking issue); Boyd Street at Garrison Drive (no issues found to merit change in control); and 36th Avenue S.W. at Western View Drive/Willowbend Road (no issues found to merit change in control).

Councilmember Schueler asked about signalization at the intersection of Wylie Road and Main Street and Mr. Reisland said there is no funding at this time for that intersection, but there is a need for traffic signalization.

Mr. Scott Sturtz, City Engineer, said signalization at that intersection would cost \$800,000.

Councilmembers thanked Staff for the presentation and agreed with the recommendations.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "An Update on Recent Intersection Traffic Control Changes," dated November 30, 2023

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:19 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor