

CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE MINUTES

May 27, 2021

The City Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met at 4:02 p.m. in a virtual meeting in the Council Chambers on the 27th day of May, 2021, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted in the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and the Norman Public Library at 103 West Acres 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT: Councilmembers Hall, Nash, Peacock, Studley, and
Chairman Holman

ABSENT: Councilmember Petrone

OTHERS PRESENT: Mayor Brea Clark
Councilmember-elect Lauren Schueler, Ward Two
Ms. Cinthya Allen, Chief Diversity and Equity
Officer
Mr. Dave Boeck, Associate Professor of
Architecture at the University of Oklahoma (OU)
Mr. Greg Clark, Development Services Manager
Ms. Carrie Evenson, Stormwater Program Manager
Mr. James Gamez, Nelson/Nygaard Representative
Ms. Jane Hudson, Director of Planning and
Community Development
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Public Transit Coordinator
Ms. Beth Muckala, Assistant City Attorney
Mr. Shawn O’Leary, Director of Public Works
Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation
Ms. Heather Poole, Assistant City Attorney
Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager
Mr. Peter Soderberg, Nelson/Nygaard Representative
Mr. Scott Sturtz, City Engineer
Ms. Kathryn Walker, City Attorney
Ms. Brenda Wolf, Permit Services Supervisor
Ms. Syndi Runyon, Administrative Technician IV

Chairman Holman said Staff requested Item 4 be discussed first due to pending acclimate weather and the need for employees who live outside of Norman to get home safely.

Item 4, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE VISITABILITY ORDINANCE.

Mr. Greg Clark, Development Services Manager, said the purpose of the Norman Visitability Code (Visitability Code) is to establish minimum regulations for the design, installation, and construction of single-family homes or other dwellings with less than four units by providing reasonable criteria visitability of persons with disabilities or seniors aging in place. He said a visitable dwelling offers a few features making a home easier for mobility-impaired people to live in and visit while an accessible building allows a person with a physical disability to independently get to, enter, and use a site, facility, building, or element.

Mr. Clark highlighted visitability versus accessibility as follows:

Visitable Dwelling Unit	Accessible Dwelling Unit
No step and compliant entry path required	No step entry and compliant entry path required
Routes to be 36" wide typically doors to be 31.75" in the clear wide	Routes to be 36" wide typically doors to be 31.75" the clear wide
Bathroom: toilet/sink with backing and clearances at toilet required	Bathroom: toilet/sink/bathing with backing installed and proper clearances for all of them
Kitchen: which includes sink, cooking appliance, and refrigerator to have a path to these areas typically 40" wide	Kitchen: has property widths, reach ranges, counter heights, with clear spaces for the sink and all appliances
A living room or similar is to be on a compliant route that is at least 70 square feet in area	All the living space on the accessible floor level has to be compliant including sleeping, laundry rooms, game rooms, and similar
Receptacle outlets and lighting controls to be installed between 15" and 48" typically	Outlets, lighting controls, switches, environmental controls, electrical panel boards, security controls and similar to be installed at a compliant height and reach distance

The Citizen Ad Hoc Committee for Accessible Housing met, discussed and drafted the Norman Visibility Code. In May 2019, the Community Planning and Transportation Committee (CPTC) reviewed the draft of the Visibility Code and Council requested the document be compared to the current building codes and practices as well as other visibility codes. The document was discussed during the annual Council retreat in August 2020.

The proposed Norman Visitability Code appears to be an organic interpretation of the Fair Housing Act Design Manual, which was published in 1998. The manual is a 300-page design guide, but not a prescriptive code. While many of the concepts in the Fair Housing Act have been put forth in other building codes, it is not one Staff has adopted or utilizes as a current standard. The Visibility Code, as proposed, is a mix of accessibility standards and visibility standards.

Item 4, continued:

The Visibility Code would allow conditions not compliant as a minimum standard in the International Residential Code (IRC) (no landing requirement at doors, slopes in excess of what the IRC allows, no requirement for interior slopes). Other times, the Code is less restrictive than the currently adopted codes regarding a visitable dwelling (no minimum heights on switches/receptacles). The Visibility Code also includes sections notably above the minimum standards for accessibility/visitability of a dwelling unit (entry level operable windows, blocking in bedrooms, five-foot turning radius inside bathrooms, passageway widths in excess of code, doors sized in excess of codes).

Mr. Clark said in order to bring the Visibility Code in line with currently adopted codes and standards, Staff recommends that an incentive based pilot program be initiated for visitable units. The International Code Council (ICC), an organization responsible for the International Building Code (IBC) and the International Residential Code (IRC) is an existing proven standard. It works in conjunction with the currently adopted building codes and unlike an organically written code, it is unlikely to create conflicts, have omissions, or be silent on details and scenarios. The standard is updated regularly and reflects changes in other codes so maintaining it over time is simplified. With the standard having both visitable and accessible standards, the scope to accessibility would already be companion language to utilize in the future, if desired.

Staff recommends the pilot program be initiated for two years, which will allow time for builders to become educated about the incentive program and the details it would take to comply with the code. The proposed source of credit would be the Building Permit fee which is .14 cents per square foot of project area. For reference, a 2000 square foot home with a two car garage would have a building permit incentive fee of \$336 and a home enrolled in the program would either meet the standard and be eligible for the credit or it would not meet the standard and would not be eligible. The amount of the incentive of this fee could be anywhere from 1% to 100% and Staff is seeking further input on this topic. Another consideration that needs to be discussed is that current fee incentives for the Home Energy Rating System/Energy Rating Index (HERS/ERI) Program is also built into the building permit fee so with both programs drawing from the same fee source, program participation could be impacted.

Committee members requested Staff place this topic on a Study Session agenda for full Council discussion and input.

Items submitted for the record

1. Attachment: Exert from the International Construction Codes (ICC) A117.1-2009 – Accessible and usable Buildings and Facilities – 1005 Type C (Visitable) Units
2. Memorandum dated May 20, 2021, from Greg Clark, Development Services Manager, and Brenda Wolf, Permit Services Supervisor, to Community Planning and Transportation Committee Members
3. PowerPoint presentation entitled, “Visitability Pilot Program,” dated May 27, 2021

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Item 1, being:

PUBLIC TRANSIT RIDERSHIP REPORT.

Mr. Taylor Johnson, Public Transit Coordinator, said the fixed route service transported 15,143 passengers in April compared to 17,475 in March 2021. The daily average ridership was 582, a decrease of 10.01%. There were 471 passengers with bicycles and 315 passengers with wheelchairs or other mobility devices transported in April.

The paratransit service transported 1,512 passengers in April compared to 1,528 in March 2021, with an average daily ridership of 58, an increase of 2.76%.

Saturday service began August 15, 2020, and totaled 1,193 in April 2021, compared to 1,391 in March 2021, a decrease of 14.23%.

Mr. Johnson said work continues on the Fare Analysis, Transit Development Guide, and Transfer Station site. He said Staff continued to draw down on grants to reimburse the City for eligible public transit expenses that includes the annual Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant for general expenses as well as the CARES Act grant for the new maintenance operations facility.

Staff received a final Notice to Proceed from the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) to purchase the City's first battery electric vehicle, a 35' transit bus. An authorization to purchase the vehicle will be on Council's agenda for consideration on May 25th and once a purchase order is issued, Staff anticipates a 12 to 15-month timeframe for delivery. Staff submitted a grant application to FTA's 2021 Low- or No-Emission Vehicle Program for one battery electric bus and associated charger. On March 23rd, Council approved a resolution authorizing the application submittal and commitment to secure a local match and Staff is waiting for the announcement of awards from this competitive program.

Mr. Johnson said the Traffic Control Division began installing EMBARK Norman bus stop signs in February, which is now complete.

Progress continues to be made on the construction of the new Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility on North Base. The contractor has continued site grading; finalized installation of conduit for electric vehicle (EV) stations; continued metal panel and insulation installation; installed Oklahoma Gas and Electric (OG&E) primaries for transformers; painted Transit/Fleet buildings and began painting Park Maintenance Facility and shed; roughed-in mechanical, electrical, and plumbing to coincide with metal roof installation; and coordinated with owner-supplied equipment vendors.

The Fleet Maintenance Staff continues to ensure the transit fleet is in operational condition each morning despite the age of the vehicles. This maintenance includes mechanical maintenance, fueling, cleaning, and sanitizing each bus at the end of service each day. Mr. Johnson said 19 out of 27 busses have met their useful life and are eligible for retirement per FTA requirements. He said Staff continues to try to identify other avenues to purchase transit vehicles to modernize and standardize the fleet using existing funds available to the transit program.

Item 1, continued:

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated May 26, 2021, from Taylor Johnson, Public Transit Coordinator, through Shawn O’Leary, P.E., DFM, Director of Public Works, to Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee
2. Transit System Monthly Report for April 2021

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Item 2, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE TRANSIT LONG RANGE PLAN.

Mr. Johnson said Staff has been working with Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates, Inc., (Nelson/Nygaard) for a comprehensive evaluation of the existing transit service to identify opportunities to improve transit service for the community. The study will be a strategic plan to optimize and expand transit over the next 20 years. He said outreach activities included promotion of the project website to citizens and stakeholders, public meetings, and promotion of an online survey to obtain feedback on existing transit service and suggestions for potential improvements.

Mr. James Gamez with Nelson/Nygaard presented the draft Norman Transit Study and said the study overview included 1) Review of existing conditions – routes, schedules, ridership, destinations, paratransit trips, demographics, employment and travel patterns; 2) Engagement of the community - consisted of community meetings and surveys as well as discussions with bus drivers, mechanics, and stakeholders; and 3) Development of strategic plan – service optimization and expansion, future downtown transit center, and a fare policy.

Mr. Peter Soderberg with Nelson/Nygaard said the Transit Study reviewed existing routes as well as the transit market that includes families without a car, seniors who do not drive, employees without a car, students, and commuters to and from Oklahoma City. The Transit Study also reviewed major destinations such as University of Oklahoma; Sooner Mall; University Town Center; Walmart Supercenter stores; Community Services Building; and Robinson Crossing shopping center.

Mr. Gamez said community feedback regarding preferred service improvements included the need for later service on weekends; earlier morning service; more routes to more places; later evening service; more shelters at bus stops; more frequent service on weekdays; more frequent service on weekends; and other. Some of the comments included the need for busses to run every 30 minutes and Sunday service; busses to run seven days a week; a route to east Library; more service for the elderly to get to groceries, medicine, socializing, etc.; and circular routes making it difficult to travel to destinations and return home in a short time.

Item 2, continued:

Mr. Gamez said after reviewing existing routes Nelson/Nygaard found strengths to be extensive coverage areas; service ending at 10:00 p.m., and high ridership in east Norman. Challenges include limited resources, unserved destinations, and fleet age/reliability. Opportunities for improvement could include Sunday service, longer hours of service on Saturdays, more frequent service, service to new areas, and more direct routes.

Mr. Gamez said the recommended route network from Nelson/Nygaard provides the following:

- Improves access to key destinations
 - Norman Regional Hospital
 - Walmart Supercenter stores
 - Sooner Mall
 - University North Town
- Extends service to 12th Avenue N.E. and Garland Square
- Discontinue service along unproductive segment of 36th Avenue N.W.
- Provides framework for future expansion

Future expansions could consist of adding Sunday service; upgrading frequencies; adding two new routes (Classen Boulevard and East Alameda Street), and extending service to Moore-Norman Technology Center.

In searching for a Downtown Transit Center, Nelson/Nygaard looked at City owned parcels; proximity to Norman Depot; vacant or retro-fittable tracts; pedestrian access; adjacent land uses; and operational efficiency. Mr. Gamez highlighted location options as Option One - Gray Street parking lot with 8 bus bays, new transit building, and open space/park. He said the benefits to this site is parcel size, flexibility, and proximity to Main Street destinations while the challenge was the location being 1,300 feet to/from Norman Station and the need to remove 100 parking spaces. Option Two - Norman Station (Depot) with five to six bus bays. Benefits include connectivity with Legacy Trail, Amtrak Station, and proximity to Main Street destinations while the challenge would be the removal of the James Garner Statue. Option Three - City Hall property at James Garner Avenue with five bus bays. Benefits would be the proximity to civic buildings and potential to retrofit City buildings while the challenge is the location being 1,200 feet from Norman Station. He said Option Three checked all the boxes for pedestrian access, easy access to Norman Station, adjacent land use, operational efficiency, and proximity to Norman Station.

Nelson/Nygaard fare analysis review included:

- Peer Review
 - Fare Structure and policy best practices
- Fare Model
 - Ridership and fare box revenue impacts
- Cost-Benefit Analysis
 - Start-up and ongoing costs
 - Bottom line costs and revenue

Item 2, continued:

Peer Review best practices included generally low base fares - \$1.00; day a monthly pass options; agreements with OU for student fees, contract revenue, and funding partnerships. Missoula, Montana's transit service (fare free) began in 2015 as a partnership with 11 local businesses, has grown to 24 members, is attractive to new businesses, allows transit managers to focus on other sustainability efforts, and builds on community support.

Suggested fare scenarios include the following:

- Peer Agency Best Practices
 - \$1.00 base fare
 - \$0.50 reduced for youth, seniors, and persons with disabilities
 - Free for children
 - Free transfers
- Align with EMBARK OKC
 - \$1.75 base fare
 - \$0.75 reduced for youth, seniors, and persons with disabilities
 - Free for children
 - Full fare transfers
- OU Funding Partnership
 - Students do not pay to board
 - OU pays the cost of student trips

Fare policy recommendations include the following:

- Near-Term – Continue operating free fare
 - Allow ridership to recover from pandemic and adjust to route changes
 - Continuously re-evaluate potential for fare implementation
 - Begin discussions with OU regarding funding partnership and student pass
- Mid-Term – Implement a fare structure aligned with peer agency best practices
 - Lower base fares mitigate potential ridership loss
 - Continue discussion with OU regarding implementation of student pass
- Long-Term – Align fares with EMBARK OKC
 - Continue discussions with OU regarding implementation of student pass

Next steps include a final public hearing on June 1st, a draft Transit Plan proposed to be completed by June 7th, a Study Session to be held June 15th to present draft Transit Plan to Council, and final adoption of the Transit Plan is anticipated to take place June 22nd.

Committee members requested this item have full Council review and input.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, “EMBARK GO Norman Transit Study,” dated May 27, 2021

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Item 3, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING EDDINGTON STREET, MCCULLOUGH STREET, AND ALLEYS EAST OF MONNET AVENUE.

Ms. Carrie Evenson, Stormwater Program Manager, said there have been numerous complaints regarding inadequate drainage issues on Eddington Street and McCullough Street over the years as well as pavement condition issues on McCullough Street. She said McCullough Street was identified as a project location for the FYE 2022 Street Maintenance Bond package in 2021. She said there are also drainage and surface condition issues in alleys in that area (used for parking). She said Eddington and McCullough Streets are located within the Center City Form Based Code (CCFBC) area and the CCFBC was created to provide guidance and regulations for future development and redevelopment to include infrastructure improvements. The CCFBC incorporated specific street configurations that includes “neighborhood middle frontage” to support one, two- or three dwelling structures, small front and rear yards, and tree lined streets.

Ms. Evenson said the City needs to address drainage and paving condition issues, meet CCFBC requirements where possible, and find available funding, such as Stormwater Capital Improvements Plan, FYE 2021 Bond, Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District, or other. She said the CCFBC allows off-street parking, parallel parking, tree specifications with sidewalk connections, and greenspace connections with alleyways. She said Staff is in the middle of project design for both streets and some of the considerations for the project design is addressing drainage and paving condition issues while meeting CCFBC requirements.

Options for Eddington Street is a hammerhead turnaround at the end of street to allow turn around for sanitation trucks/traffic or an extension of the alley with rear parking access, which would eliminate front street access on two properties. There is a potential for a connection to the alley to the south and reconnect/reconstruct that alley to allow better access and maintenance. She said the same options apply to McCullough Street, but it is too early in the design stage to be sure about connections for the street. Ms. Evenson said Staff would like to try some green infrastructure in these projects that would include rain gardens, permeable pavers, impervious pavement, etc. She said there are also interesting green infrastructure practices for tree wells (with underdrains so water flows to greenspace instead of onto the street) that would contribute to the vision of tree lined streets envisioned through CCFBC.

Ms. Evenson said project budget estimates are as follows:

- Eddington Street - \$415,500
- Eddington/McCullough Alley - \$212,500
- McCullough Street - \$377,250
- McCullough/Boyd Alley - \$228,250
- East Alley (optional if connection made between alleys and streets) - \$371,500

Item 3, continued:

Ms. Evenson said Staff would like to use Eddington Street as a pilot project to test some green infrastructure, test permeable or impervious pavement endurance and maintenance, see how well the design can meet CCFBC requirements, and be an example for future projects.

Committee members liked the ideas proposed by Staff and requested Staff move forward with Eddington Street. Chairman Holman said Council will need to discuss funding options for the projects so the projects can be done completely, not one piece at a time. He said there needs to be some type of recoument of costs because the City is redeveloping and building infrastructure.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Eddington St., McCullough St., and Alleys East of Monnett Ave." dated May 27, 2021

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Item 5, being:

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS.

None

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The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor