

CITY COUNCIL  
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION  
COMMITTEE MINUTES

May 26, 2022

The City Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met at 4:00 p.m. in the Conference Room on the 26th day of May, 2022, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted in the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT: Councilmember Hall, Studley, and Chairman Holman

ABSENT: Councilmember Peacock and Schueler

OTHERS PRESENT: Ms. Cynthia Allen, Chief Diversity and Equity Officer (Americans with Disabilities Coordinator)  
Dr. Marilyn Dillon, Ph.D., Mobility Management Administrator/American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator for Embark  
Ms. Brenda Hall, City Clerk  
Ms. Jane Hudson, Director of Planning and Community Development  
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager  
Ms. Beth Muckala, Assistant City Attorney  
Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works  
Mr. Jason Olson, Director of Parks and Recreation  
Ms. Syndi Runyon, Administrative Technician IV

Item 1, being:

**PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT.**

Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager, said the fixed route service transported 22,690 passengers in April 2022, compared to 16,059 in February 2022. The daily average ridership was 873. There were 1,014 passengers with bicycles and 254 passengers with wheelchairs or other mobility devices transported in April.

The paratransit service transported 2,124 passengers in April 2022, compared to 2,119 in March 2022. Average daily ridership was 82, an increase of 5.13% compared to March 2022.

Saturday service totaled 2,173 in April 2022, a 22.84% increase over 1,769 in March 2022.

Item 1, continued:

On October 1, 2021, the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) announced the grant cycle was open for the Air Quality Small Grant Program. This program seeks to improve air quality in Central Oklahoma by reducing reliance on single-occupancy vehicle trips. Small transportation infrastructure projects and transit improvements as well as projects focused on congestion relief efforts are all eligible. He said ACOG approved a grant to install 80 new bus stops associated with the recommended route change in the Go Norman Transit Plan.

Mr. Johnson said a kick-off meeting was held May 12, 2022, for renovating the Comanche Street site for the Transit Center. He said Staff worked with Nelson/Nygaard, the consultant for Go Norman Transit Plan, on an amendment to their contract to make minor changes to reflect using 318-320 East Comanche Street as a Transit Center rather than the Norman Depot. Staff is now working with McKinney Partnership Architects on the architectural design for the renovation of the new Transit Center. He said this will be a functional Transit Center with restrooms and a water bottle fill station and hopes to present the proposed design to the Committee soon.

Mr. Johnson said Nelson/Nygaard has also been working on a new, efficient bus route system and Staff will hold a public meeting on the proposed route system before finalizing and moving forward with changes.

Staff is awaiting news on a few grant applications that include a RAISE Grant to purchase and install two pantograph chargers providing for in service charging for the new electric busses as well as grant applications to replace two Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) 35 foot fixed route busses and four paratransit vans.

Mr. Johnson said the management of e-scooters has been transferred to the Transit and Parking Division and Staff is working on the details. Staff has created a [transit@normanok.gov](mailto:transit@normanok.gov) email for citizens wanting to report problems or concerns.

The City of Norman hosted the Oklahoma State Transit Association conference this past week and part of the discussions included human trafficking, which is a huge problem on public transit. He said 41% of human trafficking events occur on public transit, either rail or bus, in this country. He said an EMBARK bus driver recently saved someone from human trafficking and the City and EMBARK will continue to train drivers on human trafficking. Drivers are trained to "say something if they see something." Mr. Johnson said there are three certified human trafficking agencies in the State and he would like to find an agency in Norman willing to obtain that certification so Norman could have a safe place for victims. The certificate training is both skill and knowledge-based, and focuses on how to respond to youth experiencing trafficking in appropriate and trauma-informed environments.

Mr. Johnson said during the conference, Mayor Clark won Transit Champion of the Year for her work on public transit over the last three years.

Chairman Holman asked if the public has been surveyed on the reason(s) they ride the bus, such as gas prices, etc., and Mr. Johnson said EMBARK performs an annual survey in the Fall and those results will be provided to Council.

Item 1, continued:

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated May 26, 2022, 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 April 2022

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Item 2, being:

UPDATE ON AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) IMPROVEMENTS AT THE NORMAN CENTRAL LIBRARY AS WELL AS A CURRENT STATUS REPORT ON BUILDING CONDITION.

Ms. Cinthya Allen, Chief Diversity and Equity Officer (Americans with Disabilities Coordinator), said the Central Library is supposed to be Americans with Disabilities (ADA) compliant, but the reality is that Staff must continuously work with library partners and make sure the City is being responsible. She said ADA focus of this discussion will include clarifying the City of Norman ADA Compliance and Commitment, an update on library ADA status, describing remediation steps, and explaining the continued partnership approach to ADA measures.

In 2015, Norman voters passed NORMAN FORWARD, which included a new Central Library. The Central Library construction was completed in 2019, and in 2020, ADA deficiencies were identified by the City of Norman who engaged the contractor to begin remediation. In 2021, the ADA Coordinator was transitioned to the project and remediation continued through a strategic approach of prioritization and budgeting. She said since the library opened, the City has continued with ADA improvements and identifying the City's approach to correcting deficiencies.

Ms. Allen said the City falls under ADA Title II for State and local governments that protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination based on disability in services, programs, and activities provided by State and local government entities.

Ms. Allen said there are over 200 line items on the Central Library ADA deficiency list, which is a lot to work through with the priority being acceptable entrances, including building entrances and exits, restroom entrances/exits, etc. She said, for instance, ADA Staff measured restroom soap dispenser lengths and heights, ensured there are places people can place personal items, measured sink height, measured hand rails on stairs, etc. She said the process can be very time consuming, but Staff is dedicated to make sure every piece is remediated. She said Facility Maintenance is doing their best to take care of the library as well as the many other City facilities they are responsible for so it is a partnership of timing. She said the Pioneer Library System (PLS) also does their part in ensuring compliance is met.

Item 2, continued:

Ms. Allen said a hearing loop installed in the Central Library's Oklahoma Redbud Room was reported as not functioning and not being ADA compliant. She said ADA Staff determined the hearing loop was ADA compliant; however, it did not meet capacity of the room so not everyone in the room could hear speakers or videos. The City of Norman initiated support to reconstruct the hearing loop to ensure usability, which is complete.

Entrance access to the building has not been remediated, but ADA Staff is working with PLS Staff to remediate. Ms. Allen said the security scanners inside library at the front entrance doors are in the way of the accessible push button for the door. She said the first thought was to move the scanners; however, they are grounded to the concrete floor so that is not an option without destroying the floor and the security scanners. She said PLS Staff said they would work to remediate the entrance door issue and the City recently followed up with PLS Staff who are actively reviewing options.

Chairman Holman said the old library doors automatically slid open and asked if that is an option to eliminate the need for the ADA button and Ms. Brenda Hall, City Clerk, said that it would be difficult to retrofit because the doors do not have much space on each side to slide into the wall. Ms. Allen said that is a design piece the City should keep in mind for future facility projects.

Ms. Allen said "leading beyond compliance" is a phrase the City has adopted because the City wants to make sure it is addressing items not in compliance, but at the same time going above and beyond compliance. She said the City is working towards more educational programming to engage residents.

The City recently held a contractors informational session to remind and provide the City's approach of its value of ADA compliance. Ms. Allen said contractors should already be aware of ADA regulations, but contractors need to understand this is an important issue for the City and the City wants open communication with project managers. She said there was a wonderful turnout of contractors who gave positive feedback.

Councilmember Hall said she loves the proactive steps taken and hopes the contractor's information sessions will be ongoing to draw in new contractors.

Councilmember Studley said Westwood Aquatic Center does not have ADA accessibility into the lazy river and asked if that is something that could be added. Mr. Jason Olson, Director of Parks and Recreation, said there is accessibility into the lazy river via a platform where a person in a wheelchair can transition onto a step into the lazy river. There is no ADA chair for the lazy river because of safety issues with swimmers in the lazy river being pushed by jets, but Staff is open to other options.

Chairman Holman asked if Council could help in any way and Ms. Allen said time is always a piece in understanding that these things do take time and some tasks can be time consuming prior to remediation. She said the City is very diligent in utilizing available funds, but added resources are valuable.

Item 2, continued:

Ms. Allen said the City has an ADA complaint/concern number (405) 366-5424 as well as email contact, <https://www.norman.gov/about-norman/accessibility>, and an online fillable complaint/concern form.

Mr. Olsen said the Parks and Recreation Department inherited Facility Maintenance previously under the City Clerk's Office. He said Facility Maintenance employees a supervisor, two electricians, two plumbers, and two heat and air service technicians and maintains approximately 100 City facilities and that number continues to grow with NORMAN FORWARD Projects. He said the Central Library is a "unicorn" and is challenging due to technology and sophisticated, specialized equipment. He said maintenance at the library includes roof leaks; elevator operation; heat and air system (HVAC); electrical system; and complex hardware/software. He said the systems, while highly efficient are complex to maintain and Facility Maintenance Staff is not licensed to do some of the specialized work that is needed. He said the roof leaks have been remediated.

Councilmembers said Council needs to discuss Facility Maintenance staffing issues because the Central Library is one of most used utilized buildings in Norman and needs to be maintained along with other City facilities. Chairman Holman agreed and said he would like to see more information on Facility Maintenance staffing, workload, number of facilities, etc.

Mr. O'Leary said, per Council's direction, this building is also Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified Elite Silver meaning it is highly energy efficient, high tech, etc., and the City has not had experience with this type of building. He said when you do new things you have new problems.

Mr. Olsen said PLS recently took over maintenance of the lawn and landscaping at the Central Library so this is another example of the great partnership between PLS and the City.

Councilmember Hall asked if the developer is being held accountable and Ms. Hall said yes, they completed a punch list including non-ADA issues and the larger concerns are being addressed. She said PLS is also working on correcting small issues, such as moving furniture around to clear a path, etc.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "ADA and the Norman Public Library Central," dated May 26, 2022

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The meeting adjourned at 5:16 p.m.