



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

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

Thursday, June 22, 2023 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

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CALL TO ORDER

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

PRESENT

Councilmember Ward 2 Lauren Schueler
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman, Chair

ABSENT

Councilmember Ward 8 Matthew Peacock

OTHERS PRESENT:

Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Ms. Jane Hudson, Director of Planning and Community Development
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager
Mr. Tim Miles, Capital Projects Engineer
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. Jessie Rush, Assistant Director of Operations, EMBARK

AGENDA ITEMS

1. PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT

Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager, said the fixed route service transported 27,833 passengers in May 2023, compared to 20,501 in May 2022. The daily average ridership was 1,115 and there were 885 passengers with bicycles and 271 passengers with wheelchairs or other mobility devices transported in May. He said ridership is surpassing pre-pandemic levels.

The paratransit service transported 2,048 passengers in May 2023, compared to 1,952 in May 2022. Average daily ridership was 82, an increase of 5.13% compared to May 2022.

Saturday service totaled 2,603 in May 2023, a 33.90% increase over 1,944 in May 2022.

Mr. Johnson said Staff continues to work closely with the contractor regarding renovation of 320 East Comanche Street into a City Transit Center. He said asbestos inside the building has been removed so contractors are now working on the interior and outside exterior work is going well.

On December 13, 2022, Council approved a resolution to alter bus routes and transit bus services as recommended in the Go Norman Transit Plan to take effect in October 2023. Staff continues to work on implementing the newly approved changes, which includes changes to bus stops, signage, and advertising as well as operator training.

On April 12, 2023, Council approved a grant application to the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Bus and Bus Facilities and Low-or No-Emissions Grants to purchase six Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) cutaway buses for fleet replacement. Staff is researching project opportunities for the various Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) air quality grants that will be available over the next few months. Mr. Johnsons said Staff will continue to research eligible grants to support existing operations, vehicle needs, and future improvements.

The Request for Proposal's (RFPs) for turnkey microtransit services were received on May 5, 2023. The new service proposes to offer service Monday through Saturday from 6:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. or 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. as well as on Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The RFP selection committee reviewed the responses and are working to develop an agenda item, including the RFP process, and a proposed contract is being prepared for Council's consideration at the June 27, 2023, meeting. The selection committee recommended the City look at investing in a more robust software partnership with EMBARK to improve existing paratransit service.

Mr. Johnson said two new electric busses are now in service and the City is due to receive 13 more vehicles in July or August. He said the City has replaced 15 out of 27 aging vehicles and thanked Council for their support. Chairman Holman said Staff has done a tremendous job of obtaining grants for new busses.

Item 1, continued:

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 thanked Staff for the update.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated June 22, 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 May 2023

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2. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE WOODCREEK NEIGHBORHOOD TRAIL PROJECT.

Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said this was a special project requested by Councilmember Studley in FYE 2023 Budget discussions. He said the project would help pedestrian access from Woodcreek and Colonial Estates Additions to Classen Boulevard. Staff's initial cost estimate for the project was \$425,000; however, due to the complex nature of design, consulting services were requested and EST, Inc., was selected to help determine a route. The consulting service addressed project challenges that included route options; terrain; paving selection; creek crossing; retaining walls; cost estimate; and permitting. The total cost for the report received June 12, 2023, is \$21,000. The final report evaluated several options that consisted of two routes for the path, three paving alternatives, and two pedestrian bridge designs. He said the project costs have tripled from initial estimates and is a very complicated project that is well in excess of the budget.

Mr. Tim Miles, Capital Project Engineer, highlighted options for a connection between the neighborhoods and Classen Boulevard. He said Bishop Creek runs through the area and there are challenges associated with that and routes must be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. He said Route Option A would consist of an eight foot walkway that requires right-of-way (ROW) from four parcels (two City owned and two private); abuts the back of existing apartments; crosses tributary of Bishop Creek; requires a City Flood Plain Permit; and may require Federal 404 Permit (Clean Water Act) for stream crossing.

Route Option B would consist of an eight foot walkway; requires ROW from three parcels (one City owned and two private); closer to the creek, but further from the apartments; crosses tributary of Bishop Creek; requires a City Flood Plain Permit; and may require Federal 404 Permit for a stream crossing.

Item 2, continued:

Mr. Miles said paving alternatives included 1) Concrete – five inches thick with two inches of sand base, reinforced welded wire fabric, and is the most durable; 2) Asphalt – four inches thick, six inches of gravel base, less durable, and more labor intensive to install (not considered for cost estimating); 3) Decomposed Granite – six inches thick, six inches gravel base, less durable, and labor intensive to maintain.

The pedestrian bridge design calls for a 100 foot span over Bishop Creek that is ten feet wide with a prefabricated design, steel and placed on bridge abutments on both sides of the creek. A Connect Truss Bridge would cost \$550,500 for a single span over the creek and a Keystone Truss Bridge would cost \$600,500 and requires construction in the creek.

Mr. Miles said both routes were analyzed with assumptions for concrete and decomposed granite paving. The Connector Truss pedestrian bridge was selected to include pedestrian lighting, contingency and design, and ROW acquisition (estimated to be \$125,000 to \$300,000). Option A with concrete would cost \$1,455,700 or \$970 per linear foot; Option A with decomposed granite would cost \$1,442,700 or \$962 per linear foot; Option B with concrete would cost \$1,520,500 or \$981 per linear foot; and Option B with decomposed granite would cost \$1,507,500 or \$973 per linear foot.

Council's options include proceeding to design on Option A with concrete paving – this option will require up to \$1,051,700 for construction in additional Capital Funds and \$300,000 for ROW in additional Capital Funds. Council could opt to postpone or terminate the project and allocate Capital Funds for other sidewalk projects in Norman. This option would allow \$404,000 to be used for other sidewalk projects in Norman.

Chairman Holman suggested keeping the project with a \$50,000 budget and keep building on that for the future project, but he did not think Council would want to fund over \$1 million for this project. He said the remaining funds should be used for priority sidewalk projects.

Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager, said VisitNorman is anticipating investing in trails similar to Arkansas' investment in trails, which brings in visitors nationwide. He said looking at the overall picture, this project seems to be more of a trails project than a sidewalk project.

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said a Parks Master Plan is being planned and this area could be applied to the Master Plan as a future project.

Councilmember Schueler agreed with Chairman Holman about keeping the project in the pipeline and utilizing the balance of the funds for needed sidewalk projects. She said some outreach would be needed to these neighborhoods to garner their input.

Item 2, continued:

Mr. O'Leary said something Council needs to be aware that Oklahoma Statutes require any tax elections for trails must have a 60% majority vote to pass. He said at one time, Staff planned to roll the original Trails Master Plan, Parks Master Plan, and Stormwater Master Plan into one election, but after learning about this requirement Staff pulled trails off the ballot because they were not sure the City could get 60% of the votes. He said in 2005, Council held an election on a trails proposition that failed so this is something Council needs to be discussing.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "(Ward 1) Woodcreek Neighborhood Trail Project Update," Community Planning and Transportation Committee dated June 22, 2023

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:36 p.m.