



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

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

Thursday, December 28, 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 5 Michael Nash
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman, Chair
Councilmember Ward 8 Matthew Peacock

ABSENT

Councilmember Ward 2 Lauren Schueler

OTHERS PRESENT:

Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager
Mr. David Riesland, Transportation Engineer
Mr. Scott Sturtz, City Engineer
Ms. Beth Muckala, Assistant. City Attorney III

AGENDA ITEMS

1. PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT.

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

Mr. Johnson, said the total ridership for EMBARK Norman in November 2023 was 32,374 compared to 27,220 in November 2022, with the average daily ridership being 1,295.

The fixed route service transported 30,430 passengers in November 2023, compared to 25,295 in November 2022. Passengers with bicycles totaled 683 and we transported 426 passengers with wheelchairs or other mobility devices in November 2023.

Saturday service totaled 2,276 in November 2023, compared to 1,570 in November 2022, a 44.97% increase, averaging 13 on each route per service hour.

Year-To-Date we are running 50,000 more riders than last year and Fixed Routes are averaging 18 people on each route per service hour.

The paratransit service transported 1,944 passengers in November 2023, compared to 1,925 in November 2022. With the average daily ridership being 78 in November 2023, compared to 77 for November 2022. Passengers with wheelchairs or other mobility devices totaled 336 for November 2023 compared to 373 for November 2022. Replacement Paratransit Vehicles are on order and expected to arrive in the next couple months.

Mr. Johnson said Norman On-Demand is a pilot Microtransit service provided in Core Norman by TransitTech provider Via Transportation and 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).

Norman On-Demand completed 2,850 rides in November 2023, with 29 wheelchair accessible vehicle requests for a total of 8,165 riders since August 2022 and 4,881 service trips to date.

Staff will continue to monitor the new route changes and ridership of all transit options in order to meet the needs of the community.

Transit is now operating out of the new Transit facility as the project is completed and more of the new vehicles have arrived.

City Fleet Maintenance staff continue to ensure that the transit fleet is in operational condition each morning for line up, despite the age of the vehicles that the City inherited. The City's transit fleet includes 27 revenue vehicles, (13 in the fixed route fleet and 14 in the paratransit fleet). 13 of the 27 revenue vehicles used in the City's transit fleet have met their useful life and are eligible to be retired according to FTA requirements.

Mr. Johnson said there are multiple ongoing purchases for replacement vehicles in progress and once all of the ordered vehicles have been delivered, the number of vehicles in need of replacement will be three in the fixed route fleet.

By the end of 2024, it is anticipated that all busses will have been replaced and the City will have purchased 27 busses/paratransit vans with the help of grant money, Council and community support.

Transit purchased five paratransit vans and the first two were delivered on December 15, 2023. Council approved R-2122-72 for the van purchase using Capital Funds, Public Transit and Parking funds for a total of \$469,515. Due to ongoing supply chain issues, the price of the vehicles increased, but staff was able to identify, apply for and receive additional Regional Transit Authority funds to supplement the increase, and the local match requirement was decreased to \$88,508. The additional grant and decreased match was approved under R-2122-98 on March 8, 2023.

On June 26, 2023, Federal Transit Administration awarded the City's grant application for the FTA's Bus and Bus Facilities and Low-or-No Emissions Grants program to purchase six CNG cutaway busses for fleet replacement. Staff are currently working on developing specifications for these vehicles and anticipate bringing a request to Council in the new year for acceptance of the grant and procurement of these vehicles.

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.

On December 12, 2023, Council approved contract K-2324-105 with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation accepting \$207,400 in funds from the FY 2024 State of Oklahoma Public Transit Revolving Fund.

Chairman Holman asked for a transit stop shelter update and Councilmember Grant asked about putting a bus stop on the other side of Main Street. Mr. Johnson informed the committee that there is currently a bus stop on both sides of Main Street and he is working with Tyler Media for a bench structure to be placed at both locations.

Tyler Media exclusively installs, maintains and sells ads for the Benches/Shelters and the City receives a \$12,000 or 10% rebate, (whichever is greater), on the ads to be used for transit funding. The placement of additional shelters is based on number of riders per stop and Tyler looks at 15 riders per stop to consider shelter placement. The City of Norman can add benches, with no shelters, anywhere they designate without the assistance of Tyler.

Councilmember Grant asked what are the current route specific areas? Mr. Johnson listed 1) Sutton west on Rock Creek to Garland Square. 2) Lindsay East Route, all of East Norman, apartment complexes, Main and 12th North East & does turnaround.

Chairman Holman asked about doing a temporary route from the transit center to the east side library and possible expansion. Mr. Johnson stated that they would need to get cost estimates from Embark and also look at a new vehicle. Mr. Johnson explained that ridership numbers would have to be evaluated before they could establish a regular route to east library. They would also have to address the lack of turn around area at the location. Transit currently has a route to the west side library.

Councilmember Grant asked about the barriers to realizing the total vision of the plan. Mr. Johnson stated funding, new bus stops, public outreach, reorganize priorities. Also, any changes from the approved “Go Norman Transit Plan” would require a public hearing to be held in order to inform the public of the changes

Update on expansion - 36th Avenue North West boundary Lindsay to HealthPlex and along interstate to Rock Creek. Full Council would need to be involved and vote to approve the potential expansion.

Mr. Johnson has already reached out to VIA Transportation on the expanded route and they estimate a cost of \$68,000 to \$72,000 for operation and another vehicle for the additional route for the remainder of the contract through August 2023. The following year would be double as the pilot program will no longer be funded and would need to be included in the next FY budget.

Dr. Marilyn Dillion, Mobility Manager for Embark, wants to come back to the committee and explain some of the other types of services, one of which is a software that would handle On-Demand Paratransit when it is completed.

Chairman Holman said that he would support moving the expansion recommendation to Council to include 36th Avenue North West Lindsay boundary to HealthPlex and across Rock Creek in the January Study Session.

Councilmembers thanked Staff for the update.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated December 28, 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 November 2023

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2. DISCUSSION REGARDING ROAD DIETS.

Mr. David Riesland, Transportation Engineer, gave a power point presentation on “Road Diets” to the Commission.

A Road Diet allows for reclaimed vehicle space to be allocated for other uses. (bus lane, pedestrian refuge islands, bike lanes, sidewalks, bus shelters parking or landscaping), with the most common example being, restriping a four lane into a three lane road with bike lanes.

In previous years, congestion was an indicator of widening a road from two lanes to four lanes. Road Diets, now look at left turn lanes, bicycle, pedestrian and transit traffic as an alternative.

The 2014 (CTP), Comprehensive Transportation Plan, identified several roadways that should be considered for a road diet in order to add bike lanes.

The City of Norman has completed the following identified projects from the 2014 CTP: Rock Creek Road from 48th Avenue NW to Grandview, Main Street from 48th Avenue NW to Willow Branch Road. (restriped from four lanes to three and added bike lanes). Lanes were narrowed on University Boulevard from Boyd to Apache and Webster Avenue, from Daws Street to Duffy Street in order to provide bike lanes. The two bike lanes funded with the ACOG Grant have been committed and data continues to be monitored and shows that the lanes are being used.

Public reaction for these projects has been mostly positive, with the negative comments dying down over time.

The three remaining projects from the 2014 CTP for the Road Diet are 48th Avenue NW between Main Street and Robinson, Boyd Street east of Flood Avenue, Alameda Street west of Porter to Ridge Lake Boulevard. (Narrowed lanes to Three, with bike lanes on the sides).

Because of the unique issues of Boyd Street and other areas included in the plan, there is a need to obtain current data for the CTP. Also, need to update the plan and consider turnpike effects on the north section plans.

Streets that are still on the books or being considered for future projects, include Rock Creek: 36th Avenue NW to Grandview – project was put on hold due to negative reactions, but staff is still working on getting the necessary right of ways. Estimates to complete will be between \$3.5 to \$4 million dollars and additional funding will need to be secured before moving forward.

Other Road Diet projects working on for future funding include Porter Avenue to Brooks Street, Main Street to 2-way and James Garner completion. Update on Main Street/Porter Avenue light poles – expected February 2024.

Staff is working on applying for 2026 project funding. Previous project funding applications received additional points for readiness, plans, engineering, environmental, etc., which put the City of Norman at the top in funding awards.

Councilmembers thanked Staff for the update.

Items submitted for the record

1. Power Point Presentation entitled Road Diets, dated December 28, 2023.

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3. DISCUSSION REGARDING SIDEWALKS AS THEY RELATE TO THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) SIDEWALK AND GAPS.

The Public Works Department has several tools and programs that identify, track, rank and complete sidewalk projects. (ADA Transition Plan, Ranking Lists, Annual City Sidewalk Programs, Grant Programs, Capital Improvement Plan, CTP)

The original ADA Transition Plan was completed 1993 and updated in 2018. The Plan identified four corridors totaling 8.01 miles that needed to be addressed for sidewalks. To date all but 2.05 miles of the East Lindsay Street Corridor have been completed. This project runs from 12th Avenue SE to 24th Avenue SE, has been funded, and is under design to meet ADA requirements, fix issues, etc., estimated cost for the project is \$700,000.

The plan also identified Curb Ramp Compliance findings at many intersections throughout the city. There are currently 47 locations, with more than \$3.8 million in identified sidewalk projects that need to be addressed.

2011 ADA regulations required tactile warning at stop light intersections, federal guidelines followed, rumble strip, required to bring up to requirements when doing a project from that date forward.

There have been approximately 20 signalized intersections identified in the City of Norman ADA Transition Plan. Anytime a project is done that effects a light it will be brought in compliance with ADA regulations.

Staff maintains two lists for sidewalks to be addressed Large Project Ranking List and Citywide 50/50 Program location list, (where adjacent property owner carries 50% of the cost). These locations come from councilmembers, citizens, Action Center and other sources. This is a complaint driven program and does not have an employee actively searching for issues. Ranking is based on proximity to attractors, new or existing sidewalk, ADA complaint, accidents, number of requests, and time on list and are tracked by location, ward, ranking, and cost.

The 50/50 Sidewalk Program list is maintained for sidewalks where the adjacent property owners are responsible for the repair of the sidewalk. The City shares the cost with the property owner and manages the project, using City contractors. In FYE 2024, 61 locations have been repaired at a half cost of over \$100,000.

The 50/50 program has been a very successful program for the City of Norman and its residents. The cost for the remaining sidewalks on the 50/50 list is approximately \$3.8 million at ½ cost. Chairman Holman stated he would support an additional allocation to increase funding another \$50,000 in order to address more locations.

Bond projects under construction

James Garner phase 2

Porter streetscape

Elm Street, Boyd Street, College Avenue, new ramps already completed.

Bond projects within next year

Gray Street two-way Conversion
James Garner, Phase 3
Jenkins Avenue

Other areas that are under review and in various stages of work for future sidewalk construction projects are listed below with some of the challenges and/or barriers for the project.

South East corner of Boyd Street and Flood Avenue is in need of attention and ramps. Three other corners currently have ramps.

North side of Boyd Street & Berry Road has no right of way for sidewalks, Grover Lane to Boyd Street needs sidewalk, right of way and has retaining walls issues. Three large trees are also a factor as people want to save their trees. They may be willing to give more right of way in order to save them.

Boyd Street is on hold until school is out, so as to not impact OU and Norman Public Schools.

Lindsay Street is not pedestrian and ADA friendly, Constitution Street to Congress Street gap, Jenkins Street NW Corner Lindsey Street/Berry Street

Tecumseh and I-35 traffic effects to connect the HealthPlex to the east side

15% cost increase on materials in past 6 months

Utilities Department needs to be held responsible for replacing sidewalks damaged as part of utilities projects.

Discussion was had on possible bond election for sidewalk projects, but committee members were told that 60% voter approval is required for sidewalks bonds to pass.

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

Items submitted for the record

1. Power Point presentation entitled, "Sidewalk Gaps" dated December 28, 2023

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:53 p.m.