



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

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

Thursday, October 26, 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 4 Helen Grant
Mr. Paul D'Andrea, Capital Projects Engineer
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager
Mr. Chris Mattingly, Director of Utilities
Mr. Jason Murphy, Stormwater Program Manager
Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works
Mr. David Riesland, Transportation Engineer
Mr. Jessie Rush, Assistant Director of Operations, EMBARK
Mr. Scott Sturtz, City Engineer

AGENDA ITEMS

1. PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT.

Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager, said the fixed route service transported 33,881 passengers in September 2023, compared to 21,897 in September 2022. The daily average ridership was 1,011 and there were 861 passengers with bicycles and 498 passengers with wheelchairs or other mobility devices transported in September.

The paratransit service transported 1,866 passengers in September 2023, compared to 1,970 in September 2022. Average daily ridership was 80 in September 2023, compared to 94 in September 2022.

Saturday service totaled 3,033 in September 2023, a 172.51% increase from 1,113 in September 2022.

Mr. Johnson said Norman On-Demand is a pilot microtransit service provided in Core Norman by TransitTech provider Via Transportation. This service 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 2,223 rides in September 2023, with nine wheelchair accessible vehicle requests.

Following interest from the University of Oklahoma (OU), a contract with OU and a companion amendment were added to the existing contract with Via Transportation to expand the program to include OU's SafeRide Program. Staff has not been able to differentiate the number of student riders yet, but is looking forward to being able to break those numbers down soon.

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.

Item 1, continued:

Mr. Johnson said route changes will affect the entire Norman Transit Service and in total, 41 official interactions were collected during the public comment period. All routes will operate out of the new Norman Transit Center located at 320 East Comanche Street and all routes will be reconfigured to improve service operations and passenger usability. Some route segments will be eliminated or realigned resulting in both retired and new bus stops. He said new route changes will begin October 16th in coordination with the opening of the new Transit Center on October 12, 2023.

The new Transit Center includes exterior bus bays; ADA compliant site circulation, benches, trash cans, 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 September includes outdoor seating structure installed; sheetrock installed; interior paint completed; final concrete work; bird netting installed; storefront glass installed; grading for landscaping; flooring and cabinets installed; plumbing fixtures installed; and signage installed.

Mr. Johnson said by the end of 2024, he anticipates that all busses will have been replaced so the City will have purchased 27 busses/paratransit vans with 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.

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 said he would be interested in seeing what it would take to expand the service boundary to specific areas, such as Ed Noble Parkway.

Councilmembers thanked Staff for the update.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated October 26, 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 September 2023

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2. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM REPORT.

Mr. Jason Murphy, Stormwater Program Management, introduced Mr. Brandon Clayborn, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of MEHSEK and Associates, L.L.C., and Mr. David Key, Technical Lead for Project with ESP 35. He said ESP has developed these flood warning systems and sets the standard nationwide for developing flood warning systems. He also introduced Mr. Harris Wilson, Local MESHEK Project Lead.

Mr. Murphy said he is going to talk about why Norman needs a flood warning system and his colleagues will talk about what the system would look like. Why does Norman need a Flood Warning System? He said for anyone that lives in Norman, it is pretty apparent why this system is needed. Any time there is predicated to be a significant amount of rain, news station reports come in waiting for Norman to flood and that has become a normal occurrence. He said major flooding areas requiring road closures include Rock Creek Road and 72nd Avenue N.W.; 72nd Avenue N.E. between Robinson Street and Alameda Avenue; and Andrews Park Pavilion. He said flooding does not just happen in these areas, it is a Citywide problem.

Currently, when flooding occurs in the City of Norman, there is not an efficient way of being able to identify where flooding problems are in order to close roads. He said employees place road closed signs on roads the City knows will flood when a heavy rain event occurs. He said the City needs to be more proactive addressing flooding concern in the City, but a lot of times employees are unaware a road is flooding until a vehicle becomes stranded and rescue operations are needed. A Flood Warning System would provide gauging stations installed Citywide and the City will be able to see what is happening in rivers in real time. In the process of scoping, MESHEK and EST met with all stakeholders that included police, fire, emergency management, etc. He said individuals will be able to sign up for alerts for their specific area.

Mr. Key highlighted how a Flood Warning System works using sensors out in the field, on bridges, or on streams, that give real time measurements every five minutes. The data is transmitted from sensors that Norman may own or any sensors the others own and that data goes into a database and is supported with a lot of modeling data. That modeling data give a real time representation of where the flooding is happening right now. Staff will be able to see a map showing the location of flood plains and what it is impacted, such as building, critical infrastructure, roads, bridges, etc., in real time. The data is driven by Inundation Libraries and in order to develop these Inundation Libraries, sensors are needed in the field, telemetry, and pre-developed modeling of rivers and streams to show mapping on the website for emergency managers and City Staff. Inundation Libraries will be updated every five minutes.

In October 2022, MESHEK awarded the contract for Flood Warning System Project Scoping that recommended a three phase approach to include Phase I: Develop Assessment Standards (scoping); Document Current Emergency Management Standard; Assess Traffic and Development Information; Development of Flood Warning System Requirements and Location Priority; and Report and Implementation Plan (October 2022). Phase II: Phase 1 Deliverables Submittal Final (July 2023) and Phase III: Scope of Development (Fall 2023).

Item 2, continued:

Risk assessments were reviewed as well as hazards and vulnerability that includes flooding risk, building vulnerability, and road vulnerability. Mr. Key said there are 25 locations in Norman that are the best places to start with sensors.

Mr. Clayborn said sensor location prioritization includes Boggy Creek (60th Avenue N.W.; Boggy Creek (west Rock Creek Road); Bishop Creek (Findley Avenue); Brookhaven Creek (west Robinson Street); Canadian River (Interstate I-35); Canadian River Bridge (I-35); Canadian River (I-44); Imhoff Creek (west Main Street); Imhoff Creek (Lindsey Street); Little River (24th Avenue N.W.); Little River(12th Avenue N.E.); Little River (60th Avenue S.E.); Little River (State Highway 9); Little River (Nantucket Boulevard); Little River (Sequoyah Trail); Merkle Creek (Crestmont Street; Merkle Creek (12th Avenue); and North Fork Creek (Indian Hills Road).

Mr. Clayborn said MESHEK and ESP recommend IntelliSense for their efficiency, reliability, and cost effective. The City will be responsible for making sure the sensors are maintained. Mr. Key said this is an all in one system with solar power, radio, cellular, and the sensor that are less than \$5,000 a unit compared to \$25,000 for other systems. The system will cost \$4,000 plus per unit and includes rain sensors and optional cameras; integrated solar power that can operate seven to ten days without charge; rugged and lockable; automatically detects flash floods; and uses a cloud-based operating system.

Phase II Overview of the Flood Warning Application includes Site Users; Public, Stakeholders, Emergency Management; Sensors: recommended low cost IntelliSense AWARE Flood Warning Sensors; Real Time Stream Stage and Water Elevations; Enterprise Flood Warning Database Development; Perform Inundation Library, modeling inundation Mapping and Impact Assessment; Real Time and Scenario Based Mapping and Impact Analysis that includes Floodplain Extent, Buildings Impacted, and Roadways impacted.

Additional benefits of Flood Warning System include Efficient Post Event Damage Assessments; Benefit Cost Analyst Calculations; Federal Emergency Management (FEMA) Grant Applications; Hazard Mitigation Planning and Exercises; Emergency Response; and Community Rating System (CRS).

Next steps include securing federal grant for Flood Warning System Implementation; City Council considers contract amendment with Meshak and Associates for Phase II of the Flood Warning System; coordinating Flood Warning Systems with Traffic Management Center (TMC); and finalize implementation of Flood Warning System 2025.

Councilmembers thanked MESHEK and Associates for the update.

Item 2, continued:

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "City of Norman Flood Warning System Overview," dated October 26, 2023

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3. UPDATE ON THE PORTER AVENUE CORRIDOR PROJECT AND THE JAMES GARNER WIDENING PROJECT.

Mr. Scott Sturtz, City Engineer, said both projects are voter approved projects and the Porter Avenue Streetscape was actually part of the 2019 Transportation Bond package and James Garner Avenue, Phase II, was part of NORMAN FORWARD. These two projects are slightly similar in that they both applied for and received federal funding through the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG). He said because federal funds are being used, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) will administer the project.

Mr. Sturtz said the Porter Avenue Streetscape was an interesting project because that corridor is not pedestrian friendly nor is it Americans with Disabilities (ADA) compliant. He said the Porter Avenue Streetscape Project includes new sidewalks; driveway consolidation (access management); decorative roadway and pedestrian lighting; landscaping (trees, planter boxes, colored stamped concrete); new curb and gutter; new decorative traffic signals; pedestrian safety improvements; and pavement mill and overlay with new pavement markings.

Chairman Holman asked who would be taking care of the landscape planters, property owners or the City and Mr. Sturtz said the City will maintain the landscaping; however, there have a couple of businesses that volunteered to take care of the landscaping on their property.

Mr. Sturtz said James Garner Avenue creates a new, uninterrupted corridor into Downtown Norman from Flood Avenue. Phase II stretches from just north of Acres Street north to the new library, north over Robinson Street to a connection with Flood Avenue north of the existing water tower. Construction will consist of a new two-lane divided street, a new bridge over Robinson Street and a multi-lane roundabout intersection at Flood Avenue. The new corridor will connect to re-align Legacy Trail to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety. The project will provide an alternative route to downtown in an effort to relieve traffic congestion within nearby neighborhoods and on Flood Avenue and Porter Avenue. He said the bridge theme is all about James Garner with Norman and James Garner's name on the bridge with his signature as well as the Firebird emblem. He said lighting on the bridge has the ability to change colors.

Councilmembers thanked Staff for the project update.

Item 3, continued:

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated October 26, 2023, from Scott Sturtz, P.E., CFM, Director of Public Works through Shawn O'Leary, P.E., CFM, City Engineer, to Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee
2. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Porter Avenue Streetscape and James Garner Avenue, Phase 2, Construction Updates," dated October 26, 2023

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:24 p.m.