



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

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

Thursday, October 27, 2022 at 4:00 PM

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## MINUTES

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### CALL TO ORDER

#### PRESENT

Councilmember Ward 8 Matthew Peacock  
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman, Chair

#### ABSENT

Councilmember Ward 2 Lauren Schueler

#### OTHERS PRESENT:

Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant  
Mr. Brandon Brooks, Staff Engineer  
Mr. Hal Cantwell, Bicycle Advisory Board Chair  
Mr. Anthony Francisco, Director of Finance  
Mr. Joe Hill, Streets Program Manager  
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager  
Ms. Beth Muckala, Assistant City Attorney  
Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works  
Ms. Heather Poole, Assistant City Attorney  
Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager  
Mr. David Riesland, Transportation Engineer  
Mr. Scott Sturtz, City Engineer  
Ms. Kathryn Walker, City Attorney

## AGENDA ITEMS

### 1. PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT.

Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager, said the fixed route service transported 21,897 passengers in September 2022, compared to 21,584 in September 2021. The daily average ridership was 876. There were 861 passengers with bicycles and 332 passengers with wheelchairs or other mobility devices transported in September.

The paratransit service transported 2,051 passengers in September 2022, compared to 1,696 in September 2021. Average daily ridership was 82, an increase of 20.59% compared to September 2021.

Saturday service totaled 1,080 in September 2022, a 2.96% decrease over 1,113 in September 2021.

Mr. Johnson said Council approved and acknowledged the proposed public participation process for the recommended route network changes on September 27, 2022. The process will consist of two to three public meetings where Staff will glean feedback on the proposal and will conclude with a final Council agenda item requesting review and approval to move forward with implementation of the new fixed routes as recommended by the Go Norman Transit Plan.

Staff is working to submit an application to the annual Surface Transportation Block Grant Program – Urbanized Area (STBG-UZA) through the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) to replace two 32-foot Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fixed-route buses. The grant application is due October 31, 2022, and Staff continues to research eligible grants to support existing operations, vehicle needs, and future improvements. Mr. Johnson said the City has secured grant funding to purchase 12 new buses including two electric buses, which is about one-third of the fleet.

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.

Mr. Johnson said Council approved an amended Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Trust Indenture on September 13, 2022, due to Midwest City, Del City, and Moore withdrawing from the RTA. Each remaining member city, consisting of Edmond, Oklahoma City, and Norman, gained an additional RTA Board seat.

#### Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated September 22, 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 August 2022

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## 2. PRESENTATION FROM A REPRESENTATION OF THE BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE REGARDING THEIR REVIEW OF PROTECTED BICYCLE LANES.

Mr. David Riesland, Transportation Engineer, said during the September 24, 2020, Community Planning and Transportation Committee (CPTC) meeting, the Committee discussed protected bicycle lanes, which are gaining in popularity nationwide. He said the Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) was asked to review bicycle lanes throughout Norman looking at further protections that may be provided using methods other than a painted line. The CPTC was updated on the BAC's progress on September 23, 2021; however, the City Cycling Map update dominated BAC's March and April 2021 meetings and in May 2021, an emergency topic of bicycle lanes for the 24th Avenue East Bond Project was presented to BAC. Mr. Riesland said this project was designed to include the traditional green bicycle lanes, but faced shortages of material and escalating costs. The City's project manager asked the BAC for a recommendation on how to proceed with these bicycle lanes.

During an ACOG meeting, Mr. Riesland and Mr. Hal Cantwell, BAC Chair, heard a presentation from Oklahoma City (OKC) regarding their bicycle lane standards including protected bicycle lanes. Mr. Riesland said this was a huge step in what the BAC needed to offer in terms of a recommendation for Norman's future bicycle lanes.

Mr. Cantwell highlighted the types of protected bicycle lanes recommended by OKC that included concrete curb buffers, concrete planters, "armadillos," and traffic bollards. The concrete curb buffers provide maximum protection for bicyclists, but can be too restrictive for advanced riders and drainage can be an issue since the bicycle lanes tend to hold water. The concrete planters remove the drainage concerns but the location of the planters adjacent to the travel lane can be dangerous for motorists; the maintenance of the planters requires closure of either the vehicular traffic or bicycle lane. Lanes separated by flexible barriers feel less safe to riders if the bicycle lane does not provide adequate width. He said there are ongoing issues with maintenance of barriers, such as being struck by vehicles, which can sometimes damage the barrier as well as the pavement supporting the barrier.

Mr. Cantwell said the BAC collected opinions from the Norman cycling community regarding the perceptions and opinions of different types of bicycle lanes and the general feeling and trend seems to support bicycle lanes that somewhat protect the rider. He said this can involve a buffer space between bicycle traffic and cyclists or a physical barrier; however, bicyclists prefer multi-modal pathways, such as Legacy Trail, when available because they provide the most safety to cyclists.

Mr. Cantwell said double lining enhances the feel of separation and safety for bicyclists and there are situations and certain locations where the flexible and non-flexible barriers with additional lane delineation through limited use of green paint can increase the cyclist's safety. He said the BAC believes the majority of bicycle lanes in Norman can and should be designated lanes with white lines, white 3-D lines, or double lines with hashed stripes if the setting allows and the use of solid green bicycle lanes should be

Item 2, continued:

discontinued. He said bicycle routes in neighborhoods can continue to be designated by signage and the determination of the exact type of bicycle lane to recommend for a specific stretch of street or roadway should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Cantwell said 3-D lane stripes could have potential to provide additional perceptual separation for bicycle lanes. The stripe would be a normal white line with the same size or half width black line on the traffic side of bicycle lane.

Mr. Riesland said future decisions will need to be based on adopted standards, the Norman Land Use and Transportation Plan, the pending update to the Engineering Design Criteria, street traffic volumes, and records of vehicular-bicycle collisions.

Other protected bicycle lanes throughout the region include a separate green painted bicycle lane at intersections as well as some flexible barriers; a separate bicycle lane with flexible barriers; a separate bicycle lane with limited green markings; a separate bicycle lane with double striping; and a separate bicycle lane protected by hard barriers, i.e., concrete barriers, etc.

Recommendations from BAC include designated lanes being separated with double striping, white 3-D line, or white line. Mr. Riesland said designated lanes in areas with increased motor vehicle and bicycle conflict should be separated with a double white line; designated lanes in areas with increased motor vehicle and bicycle conflict at intersections should be separated with a white line, green surface coating, and barriers; and designated lanes in areas with high motor vehicle and bicycle conflict should be separated with a white line, green surface coating through conflict zone, and barriers at most likely areas of conflict. Mr. Cantwell said bicycle routes designated by the City on many residential streets as well as section line roads with low traffic volumes can continue to use signage only.

Councilmember Peacock asked if BAC considered a six-inch curb as a buffer and Mr. Cantwell said yes, but that was not recommended due to how time consuming these types of projects would be in terms of design and construction as well as issues with street sweeping, drainage, etc. He said cyclists tend to avoid obstructions in the roadway so that would be a concern and cyclists already avoid the green bicycle lanes because the material collects debris causing safety issues and bicycle damage. Councilmember Peacock said the City of Moore requires a ten-foot wide sidewalk in their construction standards and he would like Norman to consider these types of opportunities in its standards as well.

Mr. Scott Sturtz, City Engineer, said the City will be expanding Legacy Trail along James Garner Avenue as well as construction of a multi-modal path connection between Norman and Moore on 36th Avenue N.W. He said future construction projects will be evaluated for removal of bicycle lanes from the roadway to be replaced with multi-modal paths.

Item 2, continued:

Chairman Holman said there seems to be consensus to accept the BAC's recommendations. He said the bicycle route on 12th Avenue S.E. at State Highway 9 (SH9) is very dangerous due to bicyclists having to cross SH9 traffic plus the issue of traffic exiting SH9 onto 12th Avenue S.E., which has a dedicated right turn lane. He said the geography of that configuration allows cars to merge using the bicycle lane. He would like this to be the first location addressed with some type of protected bicycle lane.

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### 3. DISCUSSION REGARDING A BRIDGE MAINTENANCE BOND PROGRAM.

Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said in 2004, Oklahoma was ranked 49th in the nation for on-system (State responsibility) bridge conditions; however, as of April 2021, Oklahoma was ranked seventh (7th) nationally for on-system bridge conditions. As of 2021, Oklahoma's rank for off-system (City responsibility) bridges in "poor" condition is 40th in the nation. He said the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requires all off-system bridges to be inspected biennially and the City contracted HW Lochner Engineering to perform inspections for the last three cycles. He said Council adopted an annual budget for bridge maintenance in FYE 2018 with an allocation of \$100,000 annually. He said in FYE 23, Council adopted a bridge maintenance budget of \$750,000, which is making an impact.

There are 80 nationally registered bridges within the City of Norman and the 2017 inspection cycle identified 18 structurally deficient bridges (poor rating) and the 2021 inspection cycle identified five structurally deficient bridges with 15 bridges being at-risk of becoming structurally deficient. Three bridge failures since 2016 include Havenbrook Street Bridge, Main Street Bridge, and Imhoff Road Bridge.

Mr. Joe Hill, Streets Program Manager, said aging infrastructure limits mobility and highlighted approximate vehicle weights with the average car weighing one and one-half tons; average fire truck weighing 19 to 20 tons; average standard truck weighing three tons; average garbage truck weighing 28 tons; average ambulance weighing five tons; average plow truck weighing 28 tons; average loaded school bus weighing 17 tons; average loaded cement truck weighing 33 tons; average loaded charter bus weighing 20 tons; and average loaded semi-trucks weighing 40 tons. The 60th Avenue N.E. Bridge over Rock Creek built in 1940 has a posted weight limit of four tons; the East Robinson Street Bridge located at 72nd Avenue N.E. built in 1938 has a posted weight limit of five tons; and the Franklin Road Bridge over Little River built in 1942 has a posted weight limit of 12 tons.

Mr. Hill said Staff compiled data from the bridge inspection reports to generate a rank-ordered list consisting of the City's highest priority locations. Staff contracted with HW Lochner to review the rank-ordered list and generate replacement and/or rehabilitation cost estimates for each location. Using the Discovery Report, Staff began an investigation related to possible funding opportunities and is proposing a Bridge Maintenance Bond Program using the same concept as the City's Street Maintenance Bond Program. The proposed program would replace ten identified bridge replacement



Item 3, continued:

locations and nine identified major bridge rehabilitation and maintenance locations. This proposal would be a \$45 million program over a ten-year period with a monthly property tax increase of \$4.54 for homes valued at \$100,000, \$7.01 for homes valued at \$150,000, and \$9.49 for homes valued at \$200,000.

Mr. Hill highlighted bridge locations that need replacement that includes 60th Avenue N.E.; North Porter Avenue; East Robinson Street, 72nd Avenue N.E.; Lindsey Street; 24th Avenue N.E.; 36th Avenue N.E.; East Post Oak; and Franklin Road. Major bridge rehabilitation locations include Indian Hills Road; Franklin Road; 24th Avenue S.W.; West Robinson Street; Lindsey Street; Boyd Street; East Robinson Street; and Main Street.

The FHWA announced new funding opportunities on June 13, 2022, through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and created three new categories of program funding that includes Planning (up to 100% funded), bridge projects (80/20 match), and large bridge projects (50/50 match). Mr. Hill said the purpose of the funding is to improve safety, efficiency, and reliability of the movement of people and freight over bridges and provides financial assistance that leverages and encourages non-Federal contributions. The funding can be used for bridges in poor condition, bridges in fair condition at risk of falling into poor condition, bridges that do not meet current geometric design standards, and bridges that cannot meet the load and traffic requirements of the regional transportation network. The Federal Bridge Investment Program is funded for five years at \$2.4 billion nationwide annually. Staff contracted with Garver, L.L.C., to build an application package for a Bridge Investment Program Planning Grant for \$400,000. The Planning Grant application submitted in July 2022 was unsuccessful as one Planning Grant was awarded to the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) for an on-system bridge over Lake Texoma. He said a nationwide pool of both local and state entities creates a very competitive environment.

Mr. O'Leary said, in summary, Norman has 80 bridges and over 300 culvert crossings and while Norman's bridges are safe, some are in need of replacement or major repairs. He said 23 bridges were constructed prior to 1950 and a possible Bridge Maintenance Bond Program election could help replace/repair 19 bridges. There is currently no steady, predictable funding source for bridge replacement or major repairs. He said on October 11, 2022, Council approved a contract for engineering design for the 60th Avenue N.E. Bridge and the Porter Avenue Bridge. Bridges on 60th Avenue N.E. and Porter Avenue may qualify for federal grants when engineering design is complete. He said Staff will continue pursuing grant funding opportunities.

Councilmember Peacock said he would prefer to start small with a five-year program, as he believes people will not be happy with a large monthly property tax increase, which would cause the election to fail. He felt a shorter window would soften the blow and ensure a more successful election so he would like to see information on a five-year program.

Item 3, continued:

Chairman Holman said the Street Maintenance Bond Program has been very successful and believes having a dedicated funding source only helps the City obtain other funding and grant opportunities.

Councilmember Grant said the public needs to recognize the public safety aspect of being able to rehabilitate/replace bridges. She said emergency response time is hampered in areas where bridges have posted weight limits that do not support emergency vehicles.

Chairman Holman said most people understand that bridges and safety go hand-in-hand and that bridges are expensive to build and maintain so he feels confident about moving this proposal forward to the entire Council for consideration.

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#### 4. DISCUSSION REGARDING LANDLOCKED PARCELS.

Mr. Scott Sturtz, City Engineer, said landlocked parcels are parcels that do not have access to a public street. He said a recent replat application for the Empire Addition could not be approved due to subdivision regulation language that requires lots, parcels, tracts, or blocks of land to have direct access to a public streets as defined in Sections 19-203 and 19-407 of the City Subdivision Regulations. He said Oklahoma City and Edmond have similar language.

Section 19-201 states, "Except as permitted by Article VI of this chapter, it shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to sell to any other person, firm, or corporation any lot, parcel, tract, or block, unless such lot, parcel, tract, or block of land abuts on a public street or road for the distance required by the zoning regulations pertaining to the zoning district in which such lot, parcel, tract, or block of land is situated, provided, however, that for all deeds filed of record prior to October 26, 1965, it shall be lawful to convey title to the total area described in each of said deeds."

Section 109-407 states, "In subdivisions for commercial and industrial use, lots should be of appropriate size and arrangement to provide for appropriate sanitation service, adequate off-street parking, and loading facilities based on the intended use and such lots shall abut a public street, frontage or otherwise, on a minimum of one side."

The Empire Addition was originally platted in October 2007, and was laid out in tracts that all have frontages abutting Highway 77. As time went on, the property owner had an opportunity to sell property where Casey's Convenience Store is located that required a lot line adjustment filed of record in 2012, which created a lot to the south that does not have public roadway frontage.

Mr. Sturtz said the proposed replat of Empire Addition's northwest lot does not have a public water line or sanitary sewer available and the lot does not have frontage to a public street as required. Staff has been working with the property owner on options

Item 4, continued:

that includes leasing the property and build lease on it, which would work under the existing plat, or creating a frontage through subdividing the property, known as a Flag Lot. He said a Flag Lot would meet the legal standards of a roadway frontage but the applicant is not amenable to options offered by the City.

Chairman Holman thought another potential solution could be a short form plat and asked Mr. Sturtz to explain why that would or would not be an option. Mr. Sturtz said a short form plat requires that all the required utilities be available to both lots and in this case, they are not. He said the property owner would need sewer and water extensions to the lot and short forms still require roadway frontage.

Chairman Holman asked if other cities in the metro area require legal frontage and Mr. Sturtz said he has not specifically reviewed any cities other than Oklahoma City and Moore and it would not be allowed by either city. Ms. Beth Muckala, Assistant City Attorney, said she spoke with a Planner in Oklahoma City who was very adamant that Oklahoma City would not allow that.

Chairman Holman asked if there are examples of landlocked parcels in Norman and Mr. O'Leary said he does not have that information at this time, but it is not unusual to have a property owner come to the City to file a plat or to apply for a building permit only to discover they do not have legal frontage. He said when that happens Staff tries to help the applicant find a solution.

Ms. Muckala said she has not found any exceptions by the City for the frontage requirement.

Mr. James Parker, Applicant, said Staff told him that this project could not be done and the only way to replat this parcel was to ask City Council to change the Code. He said the cross access agreement is a part of the plat the City approved and every title company and attorney he has dealt with has stated a plat cannot be changed in the City of Norman without Council approval, which makes this piece of property unique. He said when you look at the parcel being part of the plat and read the cross access agreement, this is a unique circumstance and variances should be granted in unique circumstances. He said he will do what needs to be done and spend the extra money after fighting with the City for 13 months, but felt the City government process should not be so challenging.

Chairman Holman said although this is a unique situation, Staff has offered other solutions and stated they would not recommend altering the City Code. He said if issues like this arise in the future with other properties in Norman, he would not be opposed to revisiting the topic.

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## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:51 p.m.