



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

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

Thursday, February 23, 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 8 Matthew Peacock
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman, Chair

ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT:

Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Mr. Donny Davenport, Fire Department Chief Suppression Officer
Dr. Marilyn Dillon, Ph.D., Mobility Management Administrator/American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator for Embark
Mr. David Grizzle, Emergency Management Coordinator
Mr. Joseph 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. David Riesland, Transportation Engineer

AGENDA ITEMS

1. PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT.

Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager, said the fixed route service transported 25,477 passengers in January 2023, compared to 17,709 in January 2022. The daily average ridership was 1,022. There were 701 passengers with bicycles and 220 passengers with wheelchairs or other mobility devices transported in January.

The paratransit service transported 1,770 passengers in January 2023, compared to 1,549 in January 2022. Average daily ridership was 66, an increase of 9.23% compared to January 2022.

Saturday service totaled 2,333 in January 2023, a 76.08% increase over 1,325 in January 2022.

Mr. Johnson said Staff continues to work closely with the architects to finalize renovation plans for the 320 East Comanche Street property into a City Transit Center. On December 12, 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 2023. He said the Plan creates 80 bus stops and discontinues 63 bus stops throughout the City and bus stop improvements will take time and coordination with EMBARK and Tyler Media who supplies bus shelters.

On October 31, 2022, Staff submitted a grant 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. 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.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated February 23, 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 January 2023

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2. DISCUSSION REGARDING PARKING ISSUES AROUND SCHOOLS.

Mr. David Riesland, Transportation Manager, said when a complaint regarding operations at a school is received City Staff reaches out to Norman Public School System (NPS) to discuss and meet if necessary because the solution can involve things that both NPS and the City can do to alleviate the issue in the complaint. Both NPS and the City know that the pick-up times present challenges at most schools. Generally, NPS nor the City try to get too concerned about complaints that come in toward the beginning of the a school term as these complaints are usually about something new or changes made to pick-up locations and work themselves out. All complaints are treated the same and are evaluated over a series of discussions and/or observations.

NPS takes criticism of its pick-up and drop-off procedures very seriously and has a dedicated staff member assigned to collaborate with the City on school traffic related issues. There have been a number of successes that have resulted from this collaboration including Irving Middle School who recently initiated some changes to the pick-up/drop-off process that may have helped the students and faculty, but created traffic gridlock. The City is helping them work through the issues for an acceptable outcome. McKinley Elementary Schools has been an issue for a number of years and the City works with NPS to improve the pick-up/drop-off procedures by constructing an exclusive lane to have this traffic queue outside the normal travel lanes.

Mr. Riesland said at any school, the impact to neighborhoods is minimal during drop-off times before school and there is no queuing of vehicles 30 to 45 minutes before school. He said drop-off is a fairly quick procedure as there is no necessary pairing of the student with the vehicle. The only reason for back-ups is if all parents/grandparents arrive at the same time, but these chances are reduced by early drop-off opportunities.

School pick-up time is much more complicated as parents/grandparents tend to arrive well before the school dismissal time for pick-up. Schools located in residential neighborhoods on relatively narrow streets have limited space to accommodate the queues that develop prior to pick-up times. Mr. Riesland presented photos taken at nearly every elementary school or middle school in Norman depicting long pick-up queues. He said everyone has seen situations like the one depicted in the photos where cars are parked everywhere and it seems like complete gridlock. The basic community services like trash service and mail delivery seem to be compromised by the traffic on these narrow streets not to mention irregular services such as emergency vehicles. Under normal circumstances, sanitation drivers and mail carriers are aware of these areas normally are able to avoid the areas during student drop-off and pick-up times by adjusting their routes. He said vehicles waiting to pick-up students will have to allow emergency vehicle through the area by moving when necessary.

Recent construction of a new office at Jefferson Elementary School allowed the school to change drop-off/pick-up locations to the east side of school helping to eliminate traffic congestion along the neighborhood street.

Item 2, continued:

Based upon NPS observations of the pick-up queue extending west along Hughbert Street to Finley Avenue and north and south along Findlay Avenue to Hughbert Street, Staff will schedule and evaluate the Findlay Avenue intersection with Hughbert Street to see if any improvements, such as signage and/or striping, can be offered to assist with present traffic conditions. This intersection is key to both Jefferson Elementary School and Longfellow Middle School.

Mr. Riesland said Staff will continue its ongoing collaboration with NPS to respond to issues as they arise.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Norman Public Schools: Operations Update," dated February 23, 2023

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DISCUSSION ITEMS

3. DISCUSSION REGARDING EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO TRAIN DERAILMENTS AND OTHER HAZARDOUS SITUATIONS.

Mr. David Grizzle, Emergency Management Coordinator, said the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad provides cities with commodity flow paperwork regarding the types of materials being transported by the train passing through their area. He passed around a copy for Council's review, but said this is considered sensitive information so Council cannot have a copy of the manifest. He said if a derailment occurs, everyone starts calling 9-1-1 or reaches out through social media. He said depending on the need, Dispatch immediately contacts police, fire, and/or emergency medical services. He said the important thing is knowing what is being transported, which can be done in various ways, i.e., placards and signs with numbers, letter, and symbols on the railroad cars that lets emergency responders know what is in each railroad car or tanker. He said these numbers, letters, and symbols mean something and are detailed in the commodity flow paperwork. He said the signs or placards are color coded and emergency responders can tell by the color what is being transported, i.e., the color red is explosive material, white is corrosive material, etc., and emergency responders know how to respond to each color category.

Mr. Ronnie Davenport, Chief Suppression Officer for the Norman Fire Department, said emergency responders assess the scene to determine what has spilled, is it hazardous or non-hazardous, did it leak into a water source, is an evacuation needed, etc. He said the initial response would be to send out two chief officers, two engines, two ladders, etc. He said the City would contact BNSF, check the manifest, and check the Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG) that details mitigation of and responses to whatever the train is transporting. The Emergency Manager begins working on processes with the City, State, and Federal governments. He said, if needed, the City will set up hazmat zones, command posts, safe area refuge, evacuation areas, etc.

Item 3, continued:

Mr. Grizzle said the BNSF may not require the City's help because they have their own response teams so collaboration with the railroad happens immediately. The key thing to remember is this is the railroads problem and although the City may be the responder, the railroad must take care of all derailment issues. He said the City keeps lines of communication open with BNSF throughout the entire process.

Another aspect rarely mentioned is volunteer organizations that are active in disasters who come to help, which includes the Salvation Army, Red Cross, United Way, etc.

Councilmember Schueler asked how citizens would be notified if there were an evacuation or area closures and Mr. Grizzle said there are multiple ways of notification that include social media, press releases, driving through neighborhoods using a loudspeaker system, website alerts, Norman's siren system that has voice capability, etc.

Mr. Grizzle said Staff attends a lot of events, such as National Night Out, Medieval Fair, Sooner Con, etc., where citizens are given educational materials on preparedness for many situations.

Councilmember Peacock left the meeting at 5:13 p.m.

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4. DISCUSSION REGARDING FENCING TYPES ALONG INTERSTATE 35 THROUGH NORMAN.

Mr. Joseph Hill, Streets Program Manager, said various barriers and fencing materials are in place throughout the I-35 Corridor which is utilized by the Oklahoma State Department of Transportation (ODOT) as methods of access control. He said I-35 is ODOT's jurisdiction and the City does not currently have any rights-of-way (ROW) maintenance responsibilities within the I-35 Corridor. He said any request to change fencing types throughout the I-35 Corridor would require ODOT approval. He said, if approved, maintenance responsibilities and cost for installation would be the sole responsibility of the City.

Mr. Hill said the City is responsible for maintenance of the Lindsey Street Extension vinyl fencing and last year, over \$20,000 was used for contracting, materials, and labor along the various fence line damaged by vehicular impacts, pedestrians, and wildlife.

There is roughly 45 miles of existing ROW fence along the I-35 Corridor within the City of Norman limits. The average cost per linear foot for removal of existing and installation of new vinyl split rail is estimated to be \$24 per linear foot for an approximate total cost of \$1.7 million. In addition, the City would need to budget annual dollars for regular maintenance and upkeep of the fencing.

Item 4, continued:

Chairman Holman said he would like to see cost estimates and decorative fencing options (not vinyl) specific to Rock Creek Road to Robinson Street or Tecumseh Road to Robinson Street. He would also like to replace the Lindsey Street Extension fencing to a more durable material and requested Staff provide costs and durable fencing options.

Mr. Hill said Staff will approach ODOT regarding a fencing change and obtain costs for installation and maintenance.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "ODOT Right-Of-Way I-35 Corridor," dated February 23, 2023

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:39 p.m.