



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

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

Thursday, June 27, 2024 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

The Community Planning and Transportation Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma met in Regular Session in the Executive Conference Room of the Norman Municipal Building, on the 27th day of June, 2024 at 4:00 p.m., and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Holman called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

PRESENT

Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman, Chair
Councilmember Ward 5 Michael Nash
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, Interim Public Works Director
Tim Miles, Capital Projects Engineer/Acting City Engineer
Mr. Chris Mattingly, Director of Utilities
Ms. Shannon Stephenson, Assistant City Manager
Mr. Rick Knighton, Interim City Attorney
Mr. Jason Huff, Transit Planner and Grants Specialist
Ms. Linn Blohm, ADA Committee Member
Mr. Lamar Hammon, EMBARK Operations Specialist
Mr. Marion Hutchison, (RTA) Regional Transit Authority Vice-Chairman

AGENDA ITEMS

ITEM 1: PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT.

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

Mr. Johnson, said this will be the last meeting until August and the June and July report will be included in the August meeting.

A recap of the previous activities was given; fleet maintenance, route changes, grants, progress on overhead charges on project, etc. He said it has been a year since becoming a Micro-Transit provider and there have been two route extensions with expanded boundaries.

Chairman Holman asked about the paratransit vans and cutaways. Mr. Johnson said 1 new EMBARK Plus Vans have been received and explained the six cutaways to the committee. Chairman Holman asked if the five Ford Transit vans will let us expand On-Demand services. Mr. Johnson said, no, these are just replacement vehicles.

Chairman Holman questioned new route network and asked if Staff will be adding stops. Mr. Johnson said there were no operational changes, just more access to places like the food pantry; Alameda & Lindsey, now has better access to Thunderbird Clubhouse and Cotton Ridge Condos. The bus could not make the turn and the change has made this more accessible. Chairman Holman asked if there are stops for Urgent Care and the Senior Living Center. Mr. Johnson said these are now included in the bus route.

Councilmember Grant asked what the number of requests needed to be in order to add back the bus stop for the Adult Wellness Center? The biggest complaint for the Findley stop is limited mobility. Mr. Johnson said he walked the area before the route change and said it would not take much to make Findley accessible. He said they did a survey to see what the needs are and have made changes for Porter and Findley. They need to review it more, but it may be feasible to move the shelter from Porter and Johnson.

Councilmember Grant asked about accessibility information for Porter and Johnson. Chairman Holman asked, if a sidewalk would be put in as part of the Norman Regional Site Plan Redevelopment. Mr. Sturtz said this is included with the Norman Regional property plan and staff do not want to do something that will have to be disturbed in the redevelopment.

Mr. Sturtz said it ties in at both ends, and the sidewalk is included in the 2025 awards that are going to Council for approval soon. He will send the sidewalk crew to see how to make this area more accessible and report back.

Mr. Johnson, said the total ridership for EMBARK Norman in May 2024 was 34,693 compared to 29,881 in May 2023, with the average daily ridership being 1,334. Total ridership is 373,063 year-to-date, which is a 24.33% increase system wide.

The fixed route service transported 32,583 passengers in May 2024, compared to 27,833 in May 2023. Passengers with bicycles totaled 1,100 and we transported 477 passengers with wheelchairs or other mobility devices in May 2024.

ITEM 1: (continued) PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT

Saturday service totaled 2,748 in May 2024, compared to 2,603 in May 2023, a 5.57% increase, averaging 15.60 riders on each route per service hour.

Norman On-Demand completed 2,567 rides in May 2024, with 19 wheelchair accessible vehicle requests for a total of 23,638 riders since August 2023. There are currently 1,312 active accounts that have completed more than five rides each.

Councilmember Peacock asked what is driving the increased numbers on Lindsey West. Mr. Johnson said extending the route from 30 minutes to an hour and the inclusion of some of Main Street led to the increase.

He further said that Norman On-Demand saw about 23,000 riders from August 21, 2023 to May 2024. The second year of the contract with OU and VIA begins on July 9, 2024 and when school starts in August the numbers should reflect a really good year.

Chairman Holman asked if a shelter will be at East Lindsey Street in front of Faculty Heights Park stop by August and asked for an update on the Westbound route. Chairman Holman asked about adding an overhang and seats where people with groceries, etc., can wait, as there is no shade at stops facing Porter Street.

Items submitted for the record

1. EMBARK Norman Performance Report for March 2024

ITEM 2: CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE.

Mr. Sturtz gave a capital projects update. Porter Streetscape is out of time and any future work will begin to accrue liquidated damages. An extension was issued to the contractor to account for the fact they thought they were going to come in and do the project in one run, tearing off the street at one time. Atkins was hired by ODOT as the construction manager and ODOT will be assessing liquidated damages on the project starting the end of the month. Mr. Sturtz said this will be the first time since he has been with the city, that liquidated damages have been assessed on an ODOT project.

Landscaping and irrigation have to be completed, waiting on construction of decorative fences, monuments and the repair of a pot hole issue that developed.

Councilmember Grant said the planters are being used as trash cans. Mr. Sturtz said Parks is taking over maintenance of the planters once the project is completed by the contractor. Councilmember Grant asked about the time frame for planting, will it be August/September. Mr. Sturtz said the installation of plants, flowers, etc. will be put in for fall and spring planting to add some color.

Chairman Holman asked about lowering the speed limit on Porter Avenue to 25 mph from Alameda Street to Robinson Street. Mr. Sturtz explained how a speed study is conducted to determine the recommended speed limit and sometimes the study says it needs to be increased, not decreased. Mr. Sturtz said that traffic studies have been suspended until OU and the public schools are back in session when full traffic patterns can be assessed.

Chairman Holman asked “What if they want it slower. People are driving faster because there is no parking on the street and the planters are making cars hug the curbs. He said he would like to see Porter Avenue be the same speed limit as Main Street and Gray Street. With pedestrians walking right next to the traffic, he would like to put safeguards in place. Councilmember Peacock said that he would like to see the traffic study done as well and wanted to know if a consultant would need to be hired for it. Mr. Sturtz said this is an in house activity and will add it to the list to be conducted once the schools are back in session.

Mr. Sturtz provided an update on James Garner Avenue. The opening date is at the mercy of deliverables at this time. The street and sidewalk work is completed. Staff is waiting for the fence railing panels that were custom ordered to fit. Code required it to be 42”, but it was increased to five foot to be safer for bike riders. Waiting on the bridge aesthetics to be completed, signage, James Garner Legacy Trail, James Garners’ Signature, Firebird Artwork, and working on some lighting issues. Chairman Holman asked if it will be open by football season. Mr. Sturtz said they fully expect it to be open by football season.

Councilmember Grant asked if the work on Gray Street will start in August. Mr. Sturtz said according to their contract, work is to start approximately August 5th. This is another project where ODOT is in charge, with construction manager, WSB, handling the day-to-day operations. Mr. Sturtz said press releases will go out, while the inspectors and construction manager will be working with the corridor business’ and the Downtowner Association to let them know what is coming and when. Plans are to keep everyone informed as much as possible.

Chairman Holman asked if this is a reconstruction of Gray Street. Mr. Sturtz said this is a conversion from one-way to two-way, street scape project. Limited work will be done on sidewalks, four-way intersections will be signalized, railroad center curb medians for quiet zones, decorative elements in intersections for a cohesive downtown, street overlay and restriping. James Garner Street and Gray Street will also become signalized intersection. When Phase III of James Garner is done, Main Street will also become a signalized intersection. Staff has been working with BNSF on the plans to make sure it meets railroad requirements.

Councilmember Peacock asked if there will be coordination of railroad signals. Mr. Sturtz said that the coordination of railroad signals is part of the project and was included in the plans with BNSF while working on the James Garner Street project.

Mr. Sturtz said he has good news to report for a change, the City received \$2.7 million additional funding for the Jenkins Street project, reducing the amount of bond money used, leaving more funds available for future projects.

Councilmember Nash asked about the 60th Bridge timeline. Mr. Sturtz said they are looking at July 9th for the project award. Rights of Way had to be obtained for shoulder safety as the bridge is wider than the existing bridge. Staff expects rights of way access to all properties resolved by the end of next week.

OEC will be given a Notice to Proceed for utility relocation and a section of water line has already been moved in preparation of project work. The Pre-Work Meeting is set for the week of the 17th and construction is set to begin the 1st of August, with a March 2025 completion date. Because there will be rain during the project time period and work will be in the creek, staff anticipated and prepared for weather delays.

Mr. Sturtz provided an update on the Classen Street and Lindsay Street Bridge. It went out for bid, but did not get good numbers and Staff is looking at combining the project with Main Street Bridge to hopefully get better bids on a larger package.

Councilmember Nash asked if any other bridges have design work done. Mr. Sturtz said these are the only ones completed now. He said they did a consultant preselection to speed up the process on projects, pooling the qualifiers for use on upcoming projects.

Councilmember Nash asked how long is it going to take to do the Porter Street Bridge. Mr. Sturtz said one year, with Porter having to be closed for the work.

Mr. Sturtz told members that Jenkins goes out for bid with ODOT in September, expect project to start around the 1st of year and Jenkins will be torn up during the next football season as the project will take more than a year to complete.

Mr. Sturtz said a roundabout will be installed on Constitution Street and Imhoff Road right in front of the new "Loves" soft ball field. This will make a nice gateway feature to welcome people to the City of Norman and OU campus.

Chairman Holman asked if, they can put in a separate project to complete the one block of sidewalk gap from Chesapeake Street to Congress Street in next cycle. He would like to know how much it would take to do this project as it will complete the Legacy Trail all the way to Highway 9.

Mr. Sturtz said the 10-foot Flood Street multimodal project awarded through ODOT and pre-work meeting was held today. Crossing will be at Flood Street and people will not have to cross all seven lanes of Robinson Street at Flood. Estimated construction to start mid to late July for tie in, up Tecumseh Road and over to 24th Avenue, connecting the trail.

Mr. Sturtz updated members on 36th Avenue NW and status of funding. The project was submitted again, but did not get funded. A request was made to Congressman Cole for funding of the intersection at Franklin and 36th Avenue NW and staff is waiting on word from OTA for the north mile before anything can be done. The intersection is the major cost of work on the project.

Staff has an upcoming meeting with the City of Moore to discuss connection from Indian Hills Road and 34th Avenue in Moore. Previously tried a partnership with Moore to increase funding chances on a Raise Grant, but did not get funded.

Looking at using the HAWK System for Ruby Grant Park, (pedestrian stop control for projects), the plans are back and under review in-house. This will be an interesting option in the future and projects will be designed in a way to remain after construction.

Chairman Holman asked if projects were funded to do Tecumseh Road & 24th Avenue, Flood Avenue & 24th Avenue in the Entertainment District. Mr. Sturtz said these were unfunded, but may be able to get funded if brought back and are looking at different grant funding opportunities for these projects. Preliminary designs are done, but will need to be updated if project goes for funding.

Chairman Holman asked if the Entertainment District is being discussed in the planning meeting as people thought there was a current funded project for the area. Mr. Sturtz said Staff is looking at other options for the UNP traffic flow, but there is nothing funded at this time. Staff may look at doing some small improvements for better flow in the future, if funding becomes available. Chairman Holman said people are concerned about the traffic flow now with the area not even half developed and want to know if and how this is being addressed.

Chairman Holman asked about sidewalk projects – The crosswalks do not line up with ramps at 24th Avenue & Main Street, crosswalk bars on road do not line up with crosswalk ramps. Chairman Holman asked that Porter Street and Alameda Street, be looked at, as well as anything in town where bars do not line up with ADA Ramps. Mr. Sturtz will look into it and work at lining up.

Chairman Holman asked that Mr. Sturtz look at the Classen Street Project, Duffy Street and Brooks Street, Constitution Street and 12th Avenue, sidewalks are missing and/or don't line up. Mr. Sturtz said Staff is working on a solution for area, will do contract amendment with the sidewalk contractor to fix the area.

Chairman Holman asked for update on Brooks and Duffy. Mr. Sturtz said the road panels have to be ADA compliant, but has had no response from BNSF at this time.

Items submitted for the record

1. "Draft Full System Map" dated April 03, 2024

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.