

COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MINUTES

February 7, 2012

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a study session at 5:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building Conference Room on the 7th day of February, 2012, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray, and the Norman Public Library at 225 North Webster 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT: Councilmembers, Dillingham Ezzell,
Gallagher, Griffith, Kovach, Lockett, Quinn,
Spaulding, Mayor Rosenthal

ABSENT: None

DISCUSSION REGARDING CITY OF NORMAN TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

- PREVIEW OF COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN SURVEY RESULTS
- HISTORY OF FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION FUNDS RECEIVED
- REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN
- FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2013-1016 PROJECTS
- POTENTIAL GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND PROJECTS

Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said Staff's goal is to help Council understand what the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) is, how it relates to the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and all that might relate to a possible bond election in June 2012, for transportation projects.

Mr. O'Leary highlighted pertinent results of the 2011 Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) survey prepared by ETC Institute. He said citizens were dissatisfied with the flow of traffic on streets, particularly during rush hour traffic; parking downtown and Campus Corner; availability of on-street bike lanes; traffic calming devices; east to west travel; availability of pedestrian walkways; traffic signal timing; and condition of roadways. He said the City will need to decide which three of the perceptions are the most important over the next ten years and what should City government focus on.

The survey asked which three current transportation issues were the most important over the next ten years. He said approximately 90% of citizens are in support of improvements in traffic; eliminating bottlenecks and traffic congestion; improving maintenance of streets, highways, and bridges; improving major roads around the edge of Norman; adding improvements without widening existing roads; and constructing and repairing sidewalks.

The survey asked which three sections of roadway should receive attention first. Mr. O'Leary said several sections of roadways are congested and have high incidents of accidents and, according to the survey, the top three are Porter Avenue from Robinson Street to Alameda Street; Robinson Street between 24th Avenue N.W. and 36th Avenue N.W.; and Lindsey Street, west of Berry Road.

Mr. O'Leary said the survey asked if a bond issue included funding to address the top three choices, how likely would you be to vote in favor of the issue. He said 80% stated they would be extremely likely or somewhat likely to vote in favor of a bond issue. He said the City does not get 80% on very many bond elections or elections in general.

Mr. O'Leary said only 33% of those surveyed have ridden a bicycle in the past year. He said of those that do ride bicycles, 57% felt that riding on City streets is not very safe.

He said results of the survey indicate that transportation needs are a high priority, there is appetite for a potential bond issue to fund major transportation improvements projects; and multi-modal transportation.

Mr. O'Leary highlighted transportation federal funds through the years. He said the first funding was in the 1970's for the Federal Aid Urban System (FAUS) providing funding support for cities and counties based on population. He said Norman received approximately \$700,000 per year, which even then, was not enough for major projects. He said in 1991, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) was signed into law. He said the ISTEA provided funding for congestion mitigation and came with greater flexibility on how money was spent. He said this was the beginning of the Transportation Enhancement Program through which the City of Norman rehabilitated the Norman Depot, constructed Legacy Trail, and the Downtown Streetscape Project.

Mr. O'Leary said in 1998, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) was signed into law. He said this act focused on safety programs; intelligent transportation systems; economic growth and development; and environmental protection controls. He said the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) came into law in 2005, providing more funding to states that paid more gas taxes than other states. In 2010, the SAFETEA-LU provided funding in the amount of \$547,146,429 for the State of Oklahoma. He said \$22,000,000 was allocated to the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG), which is the share of dollars that produces the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). He said funding depends on Oklahoma's ability to rank and compete in the region and Norman is very dependent on federal funding. He said if Norman continues to compete for federal funding and had a bond election, the City could do numerous transportation projects.

Mr. O'Leary said Norman is a part of the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (RTIP) and it is important to be a part of that plan. He said the RTIP is a four year program and projects must tie back and be identified in the Regional Transportation Study, Encompass 2035. He said Federal law requires that all Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) prepare a TIP for their designated region. He said the Oklahoma TIP is prepared annually by ACOG in its role as the MPO for transportation planning within the Central Oklahoma region. The document is prepared under the guidance of the Intermodal Transportation Technical and Policy Committees, and is submitted to the Governor, the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration through the Oklahoma Department of Transportation.

Mr. O'Leary said the RTIP has \$22,000,000 available per year with 10% set aside for cost overruns and 10% set aside for safety projects (safety project receive 100% funding while other projects share cost at 80%/20%). He said only ACOG members within Encompass 2035 are eligible to apply for the funding, but no single local government can receive more than 50% of the total funding. He said funding is guaranteed during the first year for budgeting and the second through fourth years are not budgeted, but it tends to be consistent in the ranking and rating process.

Mr. O'Leary highlighted the ACOG TIP process timeline. He said project selection criteria is reviewed and modified between June and September. In November, the application process begins and there are 22 projects in the 2012 application packet. In December, applications are submitted to ACOG; in April ACOG submits the TIP to ODOT; in September the Oklahoma Transportation Commission approves the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) then submits it to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for approval. On October 1st, funds become available for projects included in the first year.

Mr. O'Leary said City Council must endorse the projects by resolution, in which the City agrees to provide engineering design services, right-of-way acquisition, relocation of utilities, and local match of 20% of construction costs. He said Staff then works to merge the TIP into the City's Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). Councilmember Lockett asked what the funding percentages were when you add in those costs and Mr. O'Leary said approximately a 50/50 share.

Mr. Angelo Lombardo, Traffic Engineer, said ACOG recognizes nine different types of projects in the TIP process and the projects get rated and ranked by weight of the project. He said categories of projects included in the evaluation are as follows:

- Widening, including railroad/highway grade separations
- New construction
- Intersection/Safety Improvements
- Resurfacing, Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, Restoration
- Bridge improvements
- Transit, Park-and-Ride, High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes
- Independent Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities/Projects
- Carpool/Vanpool Administration
- Safety Projects

Mr. Lombardo said the weighing factors consist of average daily traffic; projects with higher volume of traffic and capacity; accident severity; air quality; surface condition; recurring congestion corridor; and project readiness, which are all key to the process. He said ACOG will review all applications for accuracy and create a master list that includes all the projects in order of score. Mr. Lombardo said the City basically looks at the availability of funds for a particular year and determines what projects can be completed. He said any project that the City does not elect to choose will be considered the following year by carrying out the same TIP process. Mr. Lombardo said over the past 20 years, the City of Norman has obtained nearly \$80 million dollars by participating in the TIP process.

Mr. Lombardo highlighted the TIP process overview 2013-2016 application cycles, stating 22 projects have been submitted to ACOG, including the seven potential bond projects. He said 19 projects have been selected totaling \$34,745,894 of the \$85,320,000 available funding which is 36% of the total available funding. He said the projects that were submitted but not included in the TIP are as follows:

- Franklin Road Bridge Replacement – west of 12th Avenue N.W.
- 36th Avenue N.W. – from Tecumseh Road to Indian Hills Road
- Rock Creek Road – at 12th Avenue N.W. and Trailwoods Drive

Mr. O'Leary said the federal fiscal year begins October 1 and ends September 30, of each year whereas the City's fiscal year is from July 1 to June 30. Mr. O'Leary and Mr. Lombardo highlighted the TIP projects for Federal Fiscal Years 2011-2016, including the scope and total project cost for each. The update included whether the project was currently under construction; scheduled for bid; the design was complete or incomplete; whether a construction contract has been awarded; if the project is a phased project, whether a phase is currently completed and when the next phase is scheduled; and whether the project was being considered as a potential bond project.

Mr. Lombardo highlighted the potential bond projects beginning with the 12th Avenue S.E. from Cedar Lane to State Highway 9 which is scheduled in FYE 2014, and said the federal share is 80% or \$2,204,800 but the project is waiting on funds for design.

Mr. O'Leary said there are two (2) potential bond projects slated for FYE 2015, beginning with the Lindsey Street Conceptual Plan. He said a Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued to 62 firms on December 17, 2011, seven (7) proposals were received, four (4) engineering firms were interviewed, and Staff selected Cabiness Engineering and Garver Engineering, both being local firms. Mr. O'Leary said Mayor Rosenthal, Councilmember Kovach, and Staff met with Lindsey Street property owners on January 19, 2012, and data gathering, field surveys, and concept design is currently being performed. He said Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager, approved the contract on January 25, 2012, and a Design Charrette will be conducted on March 1, 2012, followed by a Public Meeting scheduled on March 12, 2012. The Lindsey Street Conceptual Plan is scheduled for discussion at a Council conference on March 13, 2012, and tentatively a bond election ordinance would be on Council's agenda for first reading on April 10, 2012.

Mr. Lombardo said the Main Street west of 36th Avenue N.W. Bridge Replacement Project is another potential bond project slated for FYE 2015. He said the project is currently under design and federal funding will be approximately \$2,422,508. He said another potential bond project for FYE 2016 is 24th Avenue east north of Lindsey Street to Robinson Street and said the federal funding will be approximately \$7,022,800, but the project is waiting on funds for design.

Mr. O'Leary said there are eight (8) General Obligation (GO) Bond projects scheduled for FYE 2012-2016, which total \$71.6 million without federal funding but lowers significantly to \$38.2 million with federal funding. He said the potential GO Bond projects are combined Storm Water and Transportation Improvements and Staff will provide a list of options for Council to consider. Mr. O'Leary said combining the street and drainage improvements together allows Staff to access more federal funds and another key factor to take into account is that the particular corridors, i.e., Lindsey Street, Main Street, etc., will only be disrupted one time as opposed to completing a drainage project only to return to the area in a year or two to perform a street improvement or interchange project. The GO Bond Projects include:

Storm Drainage and Street Widening Projects

1. West Main Street Bridge
2. Lindsey Street from 24th Avenue S.W. to Berry Road
3. Franklin Road Bridge

Street Widening Projects

4. Cedar Lane from 12th Avenue S.E. to 1/2 mile from 24th Avenue
5. 12th Avenue S.E. from Cedar Lane to Highway 9
6. 24th Avenue S.E. from Lindsey Street to Robinson Street
7. 36th Avenue N.W. from Tecumseh Road to Indian Hills Road

8. Alameda Street Safety Project

Councilmember Gallagher asked if improvements to McGee Drive will be included in the GO Bond projects and Mr. O'Leary said yes it is in the scope of work. Mr. O'Leary said the Lindsey Street project includes improvements to McGee Street and is a \$21.5 million project but with federal funding of approximately \$8.5 million the total project cost will be \$13,033,110.

Councilmember Kovach asked Staff to address why this proposed project for Lindsey Street will accomplish what project(s) in the past have not and Mr. O'Leary said rain water is discharged to a very large drainage area at Lindsey Street and McGee Drive. He said it will take a very large drainage system to deplete the rain water away in order to resolve the drainage issue(s). He said a proposed drainage system will begin at the Lindsey Street and McGee Drive area, with some of the water discharging slightly east to Imhoff Creek which is existing drainage. Mr. O'Leary said the majority of the rain water would be directed west, south, and then west again to the I-35 corridor. He said while Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) is performing work along I-35, Staff will continue to discuss and work to have an additional drainage system inserted into the I-35 corridor so that the water run-off will discharge directly underground to the South Canadian River. Mr. O'Leary said this is a concept that has never been discussed before. Past discussions always involved directing the water run-off to Imhoff, Merkle, and/or Normandy Creek further impacting those overburdened streams. Councilmember Kovach said this drainage project will also assist with the current flooding issues along Briggs Street and Wiley Road because the proposed drainage system will direct the water run-off down Briggs Street which does not currently have any storm water facilities.

Mr. O'Leary said ODOT will also bring \$155 million in improvements to Norman over the next three to five years with projects such as the I-35 South Corridor project that will include a noise wall; Main Street, State Highway 9, and Lindsey Street interchange improvements; and lighting for the South Canadian River Bridge. He said additional ODOT

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projects include widening State Highway 9 from 24th Avenue S.E. to 72nd Avenue S.E. to four lanes and at some sections widening to five lanes; improvements to Classen Boulevard and Imhoff Road; Robinson Street and 12th Avenue N.E.; Kennedy Elementary Safe Routes to School project; and three (3) transportation enhancement projects which have not been completely approved, i.e., State Highway 9 Legacy trail extension, downtown streetscape, and 24th Avenue N.W. and 36th Avenue N.W. Legacy Trail Extension.

Mr. O'Leary said the next steps will be to discuss GO Bond projects and schedule election date(s) and a public outreach campaign. He said the TIP has a direct relation to the City's Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) and Council will discuss the CIP, as well as the merging of the TIP and CIP at the Council Conference scheduled on February 28, 2012.

Mayor Rosenthal asked about funding for the downtown streetscape and Legacy Trail and Mr. O'Leary said if the application is approved the City's share would be 50% which has been budgeted. Mayor Rosenthal felt there is a great desire among the downtown business community to see the completion of the downtown streetscape on the west side of the railroad tracks and Mr. O'Leary believed the City had a very strong application which was favorably received but is now pending due to final negotiations.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled "Transportation Improvement Plan, City Council Study Session February 7, 2012"

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor