

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MINUTES

October 16, 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 Council Chambers on the 16th day of October, 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 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT:

Councilmembers Castleberry, Gallagher, Griffith, Jungman, Kovach, Lockett, Spaulding, Mayor Rosenthal

ABSENT:

Councilmember Williams

Item 1, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN PROJECT OVERVIEW AND TIMELINE.

Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said the 2009 City of Norman Community Survey reflected that citizens felt the two (2) top priorities needing City emphasis included overall maintenance of City streets/sidewalks and management of traffic flow. He said at Council's request, Staff conducted a scoping study for a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) in December 2011, which included meetings around the community within each Ward to survey citizens on how they felt about transportation in the community. Mr. O'Leary said the common theme from the 2011 CTP Survey/Scoping Study was that citizens were frustrated with traffic congestion and issues, maintenance of roadways and bridges, constructing and repairing sidewalks, as well as adding dedicated-lanes for bicycles on major streets. He said Council budgeted funds in the FYE 2013 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and requested Staff to proceed with a CTP.

In June 2012, Staff began a nationwide search for a firm to assist with the development of Norman's first ever CTP and Mr. O'Leary said Staff anticipates submitting a contract with Freese and Nichols, L.L.C., a firm from Fort Worth, Texas, who will be partnering with Garver Engineers, a local firm, for Council consideration at the October 23, 2012, Council meeting.

Mr. O'Leary introduced Mr. Eddie Haas, Project Manager, Freese and Nichols. Mr. Haas said shaping a great city takes a series of improvements that include transportation, not only vehicular but bicycle, pedestrian, transit-bus and/or rail to create a cohesive system offering long term mobility. Mr. Haas said Norman's CTP is a 20 year plan and issues such as gas prices and aging population will shape the way people move around their community. He said the strategy is to build a CTP on Norman's current plan. Other considerations to evaluate include on-going roadway enhancements along Interstate 35 (I-35) and the recent bond program Norman voters approved regarding storm water and traffic improvements, which will help facilitate access and circulation to new developing parts of the community.

Mr. Haas said the CTP Planning Team includes Freese and Nichols, Garver Engineers, and Alliance Transportation Group as well as sub-committees gathering citizen input.

Mr. Haas highlighted the CTP project tasks and gave a brief overview of each component.

Guiding Principles, Goals and Objectives. This component begins with a project initiation with City Staff to review goals for the CTP. The subcommittees and framework will consist of four (4) categories, i.e., autos/parking; transit; pedestrian, bike and streetscapes; and freight, airport, and emergency response. The meetings will be scheduled at the same location concurrently. Key task leaders from the CTP Planning Team will head the subcommittees that will be comprised of Community Visioning Committee members to develop specific actions by mode for the development of the CTP. Framework for the social media outreach will be the City website, Facebook, and Twitter to get deliverables to the general public while at the same time gather ideas and concepts. The subcommittee meetings will review goals,

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principles and establish objectives. There will be two (2) informative public meetings that will be interactive, offer information, and gather input. They will include instant polling and breakout groups that will offer feedback to the subcommittee. The key deliverable from this segment will be the chapter on Principles, Goals, and Objectives.

Assessment of Existing Systems. This component will summarize existing plans by researching and evaluating the existing systems in Norman, i.e., vehicular, bus, bike, pedestrian, passenger rail, aviation, etc. Data collection and compilation will include how the systems are operating now and determine key issues and deficiencies that will be used as a basis to develop a short term plan that will ultimately be fed into short and long term goals in planning recommendations. This segment will also review trends, committed improvements, programs, and initiatives including existing studies and the work that has been done to date. An analysis of existing conditions will include the various modes of transit and the assessment of deficiencies will include issues such as those associated with I-35, Highway 9, and other congested areas. The key deliverable will be the chapter on Existing Conditions.

Assessment of Needs. This component will include an initial system Needs Assessment using the travel forecast model and evaluating the current roadway network as well as any existing committed projects in order to gather short range ideas to take to the subcommittees. Developing initial strategies will determine critical needs for Norman and the subcommittees will formulate concepts. The next step will be to refine the needs and concepts and then review them with Commissions, Committees, and Council. An Open House will be scheduled to report the CTP Plan process, existing conditions, and the Needs Assessment. The key deliverable will be the chapter on Transportation Needs Assessment.

Travel Forecast Modeling. The segment will review and update the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) Regional Transportation Digital Model (TDM) for land use and network, which will expand it to incorporate the Norman area. This will include validating the base year model for Norman traffic volumes by looking at demographics that are not only programmed as the base year but also for the year 2035. A land planning Charrette will be scheduled with key Staff to determine if the land uses that are part of Norman's future Land Use Plan are valid and determine how the community is growing. This is to make certain the data developed for Norman will be good data so that good output is achieved. This process will include refined demographics for the community and include a "no-build" 2035 operations scenario, as well as a 2035 model for new roadway and congestion mitigation needs. These comparisons will help conduct a comparative analysis to establish key improvements and determine if the key improvements match up with the objectives that were developed as part of the principles and initial goals. The next steps will include collaborating with City Staff on the 2035 future Land Use Plan and completing a transit system analysis by using the travel forecast model to set the stage for technical work that can be used in developing the CTP. The key deliverable will be the Base and 2035 Subarea Model.

Transportation Plan and Prioritization. This segment includes subcommittee collaboration regarding the transportation plan and improvements. Street classifications and configurations will be completed by addressing key issues according to mode and street classifications as well as altering street sections to consider complete streets. The short and long term range improvements will be discussed with subcommittee collaboration. Capital Improvements Project (CIP) methodology, scoring, and ranking of the short and long range projects will be done using criteria geared toward the specific goals of the CTP. Subcommittee collaboration, a review with the Commissions, Committees and Council, and social media outreach will be completed. The key deliverable will be system plans, short/long range CIP, and chapter materials.

Transportation Policies and Programs. This component will consist of reviewing existing policies and programs in Norman to review how multi-modal integration, transportation finance, traffic impacts, maintenance, traffic calming, access management and parking is addressed. The subcommittee will help identify communities to evaluate for a peer city review including best practices communities utilize to enhance multi-modal integration, transportation finance, etc., The Project Team will collaborate with City Staff and the subcommittee to develop action plans and address programs and offer recommendations to implement strategies, roles, and responsibilities regarding funding, short/long

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term priorities and goals. Draft policies will be reviewed with Commissions, Committees, and Council and provided to various social media outreaches. The key deliverable will be the chapter on Policies, Programs and Procedures.

Implementation. This segment will begin with a review of transportation revenues and constraints, correlate revenues and prioritized improvements, and develop a finance plan for short and long range CIP. The initial project listing and ranked projects will be assessed for potential new funding strategies reviewed by City Staff and the subcommittee with outreach through social media. A meeting with the Committee and Council regarding improvements and funding strategies would be scheduled; a Five-Year Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) will be developed and reviewed with Commissions and Committees followed by a public hearing on the draft TIP. The key deliverable will be implementing strategies, funding, and a draft TIP.

Documentation. This will be provided in the form of a draft report the public can review and provide comments on. A draft of the final document will be completed and the Committees and Commissions will review it before going to a public hearing on the plan document. A final report will be completed by approximately January 2014, and given to Council for consideration. Mr. Haas said the CTP technical work schedule will be a 12 month process followed by a three month process of public hearings.

Councilmember Kovach asked if the CTP will assess obstacles, i.e., speed humps/tables, emergency routes, etc., and Mr. Haas said yes, Geographical Information Systems (GIS) will review demographics within one-half a mile of existing transit routes and then at activity centers to determine what needs to be connected. Mr. Haas said if speed tables are creating issues with existing routes then the Planning Team will try to find some recommendation(s) to achieve connecting the end points of that particular portion of the network. He said emergency routes will also be addressed/assessed and recommendations will be made according to how the community has grown or is growing.

Councilmember Spaulding asked if existing citizen committees or newly created committees will serve on the CTP Committee(s) and how they will be chosen? Mr. Haas said his understanding is the City's existing Citizen Visioning Committee (CVC) will assist with the CTP and some of the CVC members may also be pulled into specific subcommittees. He said the subcommittees will consist of 10 to 12 members with a mix of citizens, stakeholders, interest groups, and City Staff, with the majority being City Staff.

Councilmember Castleberry asked the cost of the contract with Freese and Nichols and Mr. O'Leary said the amount of \$300,000 was established through the scoping process. Council discussed the project in its Capital Budget review in February and April 2012, and it was included in the FYE 2013 Capital Budget, which is part of the overall FYE 2013 Budget with final approval in June 2012.

Councilmember Gallagher asked how the CTP will address street improvements/bonds that were recently approved by voters and Mr. Haas said the travel forecast model will be looked at to assist in researching the long term implications of growth as it relates to mobility in Norman. Mr. Haas said recommendations will be a series of short and long range improvements; however, the bond improvements have already passed and will be included in the existing/committed network. He said the CTP will review not only at the existing roadway network, but the existing approved roadway projects including bond projects. The Project Team will make recommendations from a 20 year growth scenario as to how the network will operate. Mr. Haas said the travel forecast model will indicate if there are deficiencies in the east/west network routes, not only from a capacity perspective but also as a level of service. He said key network enhancement and connectivity needs, whether east/west or north/south, will be identified.

Councilmember Gallagher asked about connectivity alternatives regarding property around Max Westheimer Airport. Mr. Haas said City Staff will address this issue, but his understanding is that there is growth opportunity for non-aviation related land use around the airport. Mr. Haas said the CTP will look at whether or not business development that may occur around the airport will allow accessibility and connectivity according to the existing land use plan.

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Councilmember Gallagher asked how petitions for neighborhood traffic calming will be addressed. Mr. Haas said implemented traffic calming would not be taken away, but at the same time, the Project Team/subcommittees will look at the Traffic Calming Policy to determine if key elements within the policy need to be retained to ensure best practices are being used. Mr. Haas said the CTP process will look at emergency routes to make sure they are maintained for accessibility throughout the community as well as routes that may negatively impact neighborhoods. He said the CTP will also reflect and promote other ways to be connected.

Councilmember Gallagher asked how long the contract would take and Mr. Haas said overall, it will be a 15 month schedule, i.e., the technical work will take approximately 12 months and the process of public hearings/meetings will take approximately three months.

Councilmember Kovach asked whether the CTP will tie into Texas Department of Transportation's (TDOT) and Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) study on rail and Mr. Haas said yes, one of the Project Team members with Alliance Transportation Group is working on a Commuter Rail Study and hopes to incorporate draft information from TDOT and ODOT into the CTP. Councilmember Kovach asked if the direction of commuter rail is determined and whether the CTP will look at potential stops in Norman. Mr. Haas said the Commuter Rail Study would factor that information and the CTP will have recommendations as to where a rail station should be located in Norman based on future land use plans.

Councilmember Castleberry asked about other cities including their population that Freese and Nichols have worked with and Mr. Haas said they are currently working on a multi-modal transportation plan with the City of Weatherford, population 30,000 and completed a sub-area plan regarding a land use and transportation network to support long term growth for the City of Greenville, Texas, population 25,000. Mr. Haas said Freese and Nichols has worked with Parker County, Texas, reviewing connectivity of all the different municipalities within the county boundaries to use as a basis for a bond program. Freese and Nichols has prepared comprehensive plans for large and small communities that include Cedar Hill, Beecave, Glenrose, Hudson Oaks, Mount Vernon, and Midwest City, Oklahoma, and those plans included transportation elements. Councilmember Castleberry asked how improvements are typically funded and Mr. Haas said improvements can be funded by a range of sources such as bond programs, Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Districts, Tourists Districts, Municipal Management Districts, Transportation Management Districts, Public Improvement Districts, impact fees, and developer agreements.

Councilmember Spaulding asked how detailed funding strategies would be and Mr. Haas said Freese and Nichols will identify funding strategies and highlight how the City can leverage funding strategies through public avenues or in coordination with other public entities. Mr. Haas said the final report will include general costs and/or a range of costs for recommendations brought forward.

Councilmember Jungman said he understands the CTP was budgeted at \$300,000, but how was that figure determined and Mr. O'Leary said the scoping process established the amount. Mr. O'Leary said once Freese and Nichols was selected, Staff used a qualifications based selection process and negotiated the contract.

Mayor Rosenthal asked Mr. O'Leary to describe the make-up of the selection committee that evaluated the team of consultants and Mr. O'Leary said the selection committee included Ms. Susan Connors, Director of Planning and Community Development; Mr. Angelo Lombardo, Traffic Engineer; Mr. David Riesland, Assistant Traffic Engineer; Mr. Tom Sherman, Chairman of Chamber Transportation Committee and member of the Citizen Visioning Committee; Mr. Doug Myers, Director of Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART); and himself. He said the Selection Committee mailed out 80 applications and selected four firms to interview. Mayor Rosenthal asked if the committee had reviewed documentation and final reports that are in the recommendations to Council and Mr. O'Leary said yes, selections were also based on the firm's past performances, practices, successes, and references. He said the CTP is patterned after the Storm Water Master Plan (SWMP) in terms of existing conditions, future projections, costs, funding strategies, and implementation process.

Item 1, continued;

Mr. Harold Heiple, attorney representing the Norman Developers Council, asked why the City is asking the consultant to identify funding sources, etc., rather than just identifying areas that need to be improved. He felt the market would dictate the timing and priorities of the improvements. Mr. Haas said the CTP process will identify segments that should be considered for implementation within a short and long range time frame. He said along with that information, Freese and Nichols will also identify potential funding source options.

Ms. Helen Robertson, member of the Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC), asked how the Bicycle Plan would factor in to the study and how peer comparison cities are selected. Mr. Haas said it is tailored toward the analysis of transit and the CTP will utilize field recognizance as well as review the current Bicycle Plan in terms of route conditions, intersections, trail crossing elements, connections to activity centers, and crossings of major barriers. He said peer cities are selected according to similarity in size, ties to a major university, and metropolitan areas.

Mr. Chris Applegate, 622 North Jones Avenue, asked if the City could place the study on the website for citizens to review. He asked if the City is going to use their current social media tools for public outreach or if a new one will be created. Mr. Haas said the City could provide comprehensive plan documents on their website and, as far as social media, Freese and Nichols would recommend using the City's current social media tools.

Ms. Joy Hampton, The Norman Transcript, asked if sidewalks will be included in handicap accessibility areas, whether east/west connection solutions are being considered, and why print media is not included in the communication connection with the public. Mr. Haas said pedestrian evaluations will include reviewing continuous routes, American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, and east/west connectivity issues. He said not using print media is a cost saving measure, but there will be notices in the local newspapers regarding public meetings. Mr. O'Leary said public engagement is critical to the CTP and all types of available media will be used; however, social media is very evolving and is an important way to reach the public.

Ms. Chris Nanny, 1815 Lakehurst Drive, asked Staff to define "complete streets" and asked if the City plans to create a subcommittee consisting of members with disabilities. Mr. Haas said the City wants a good cross section of people as part of the committee, which could include citizens with disabilities. He said "complete streets" is the notion that public rights-of-way should be used for more than just vehicular activity. He said rights-of-way could be used for bike lanes and wider sidewalks that are more conducive to pedestrian activities such as sidewalk café's.

Mayor Rosenthal said the design contract is scheduled for Council's consideration on October 23, 2012.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Norman Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), Project Overview," Norman City Council, October 16, 2012

Participants in discussion

1. Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works
2. Mr. Eddie Haas, Project Manager, Freese and Nichols
3. Mr. Harold Heiple, 218 E. Eufaula
4. Ms. Helen Robertson, Bicycle Advisory Committee member
5. Mr. Chris Applegate, 622 North Jones Avenue
6. Ms. Joy Hampton, The Norman Transcript
7. Ms. Chris Nanny, 1815 Lakehurst Drive

The meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor