

CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE MINUTES

August 22, 2019

The City Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met at 4:00 p.m. in the Conference Room on the 22nd day of August, 2019, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted in 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 Scott, Wilson, and Chairman Holman

ABSENT: Councilmember Bierman

OTHERS PRESENT: Mayor Breea Clark
Councilmember Allison Petrone, Ward Three
Ms. Susan Coldwater, Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART)
Ms. Carrie Evenson, Stormwater Program Manager
Mr. Terry Floyd, Development Coordinator
Mr. Jud Foster, Director of Parks and Recreation
Mr. Kris Glenn, Director of CART
Ms. Janay Greenlee, Planner II
Ms. Brenda Hall, City Clerk
Ms. Jane Hudson, Interim Director of Planning and Community Development
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Public Transit Coordinator
Mr. Angelo Lombardo, Transportation Traffic Engineer
Mr. Scott Martin, Executive Director of Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Jack McMahan, ADA Technician
Ms. Beth Muckala, Assistant City Attorney
Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works
Lt. Carl Pendleton, Police Department
Mr. Scott Sturtz, City Engineer
Major David Teuscher, Norman Police Department
Captain Chad Vincent, Norman Police Department
Ms. Syndi Runyon, Administrative Technician IV

Item 1, being:

CLEVELAND AREA RAPID TRANSIT (CART) RIDERSHIP REPORT INCLUDING SAFERIDE AND EXTENDED SERVICE FOR THE MONTH OF JULY 2019.

Mr. Shawn O’Leary, Director of Public Works, said the City is under contract with the University of Oklahoma (OU) for the transit system and introduced Mr. Taylor Johnson, City of Norman Public Transit Coordinator. He said Mr. Johnson worked for Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART) and was recently hired as the City’s Public Transit Coordinator.

Mr. O’Leary said it is remarkable to have made the bus transfer with the addition of only one Staff member although two mechanic positions have been authorized. He said Embark began operating the fixed route bus system on August 5, 2019, and things are going fairly smoothly. He said the buses have been challenging for Fleet Maintenance because the City inherited a lot of old buses that are at the end of their life. He said OU will continue to operate the paratransit system (CARTaccess) through October 1, 2019, when the City will take over those operations. He said there is currently a shortage of drivers because Embark did not hire all the CART drivers that were laid off when the transfer took place. He said future ridership reports will be prepared and presented by City Staff.

Mr. Angelo Lombardo, Transportation Traffic Engineer, said Embark has reported an average of 1,000 trips per day on the fixed route system and Chairman Holman said that number is close to what was projected.

Chairman Holman asked how the student transition is going and Mr. O’Leary said it seems to be going well and students and citizens can ride the City’s transit system at no cost for a 90-day period (the end of October) excluding the paratransit system; however, future discussions will include the possibility of raising bus fares.

According to CART Ridership Reports for July 2019, fiscal year-to-date ridership (July to June) has a decrease of 20.9% over the same period last year. In July, CART transported 28,212 passengers that included 444 riders who traveled with bicycles and 300 riders who traveled with wheelchairs.

CARTaccess transported 2,380 riders in July, a decrease of 16.5% over the same month last year with an average daily ridership of 119 riders. Year-to-date primary zone ridership decreased by 8.5% while secondary zone ridership decreased by 17.2%.

Items submitted for the record

1. Cleveland Area Rapid Transit Monthly Report for July, 2019

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Item 2, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING A PROPOSED CAMPUS CORNER PEDESTRIAN SAFETY PLAN.

Lt. Carl Pendleton, Norman Police Department, said he supervises nightshift patrol and is here tonight to discuss issues on Campus Corner, primarily its increasing popularity and higher number of pedestrians. He said Campus Corner is the area bounded by Duffy Street on the north, Boyd Street to the south, Asp Avenue to the east, and University Boulevard to the west. He said it has become a popular nocturnal destination for college students with many bars and restaurants and has narrow streets with two-way traffic and on-street parking. He said approximately 2,000 to 3,000 pedestrians per night are on Campus Corner from Thursday through Sunday. He said there has been an increasing number of “close calls” between pedestrians and automobiles that includes pedestrians crossing the street mid-block, intoxicated pedestrians, pedestrians congregating in the middle of the streets, and obstructed visibility, such as Uber and Lyft, blocking traffic while waiting to pick-up passengers. He said emergency vehicles cannot move through the streets during these times.

Lt. Pendleton said during a pilot program this spring the Norman Police Department closed Asp Avenue and Buchanan Avenue from White Street to Boyd Street from 10:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.; however, police determined that Buchanan Avenue did not need to be closed because the bigger issue is on Asp Avenue. He said when venues serving alcohol begin to close on Campus Corner, everyone moves to Asp Avenue to eat so Asp Avenue becomes really crowded with pedestrians. He said police have had multiple meetings with the Campus Corner Association and leaders of fraternities and sororities. The Campus Corner Association suggested making White Street one-way eastbound, but police feel making White Street a one-way westbound is better for directing traffic to the City’s parking lot that is underutilized and would make a great staging area for ride share pick-ups. He said emergency vehicles were able to get through the streets during the pilot program and the Fire Department was pleased with the procedures.

Lt. Pendleton highlighted the proposed Campus Corner Pedestrian Safety Plan that includes temporary night closure of Asp Avenue between the first private driveway south of White Street and Boyd Street from 10:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.; permanent conversion of White Street from two-way to one-way westbound; creation of a staging area for taxis and Uber/Lyft vehicles in the new municipal parking lot; and establishment of a passenger pick-up area on the north side of White Street immediately west of Buchanan Avenue.

Chairman Holman asked if business owners on White Street were specifically contacted about the proposal and Lt. Pendleton said yes.

Councilmember Wilson asked how taxi companies and Uber/Lyft drivers will know what they are supposed to do and Lt. Pendleton said he has been in contact with Uber/Lyft owners and they stated they have no issues with the proposed plan. He said when ride share drivers are contacted for a ride they will simply leave the parking lot staging area to pick up passengers in designated areas on White Street north of University Boulevard. Councilmember Wilson asked how much it will cost to make White Street one-way and Mr. Lombardo said approximately \$2,000 for signage.

Item 2, continued:

Chairman Holman said his concern about making White Street one-way westbound would mean the only way to get to Asp Avenue is for drivers to go to Apache Street and circle back around. He said people will look for the shortest route to Asp Avenue, which means they will probably drive the wrong way on White Street. Mr. Lombardo said an important component of the plan is to direct people to the municipal parking lot so among the permanent signs installed there will be several strategically placed signs directing drivers to turn right to travel north on Buchanan Avenue to access the municipal parking lot. Councilmember Petrone said Council is considering locating permanent “bird nests” for e-scooters in the future so the scooters are not scattered all over the City or left on the street, in drainage channels, on sidewalks, etc. She said the parking lot could be a good “nest” area for Campus Corner.

Lt. Pendleton said, currently, White Street is 24 feet wide with an eight-foot parking lane on the north side of the street. The two traffic lanes are eight feet wide; however, standard lane widths should be 12 feet with a *minimum* lane width of nine feet. He said the two eight-foot lanes are too narrow to adequately support two-way traffic flow and there is no sidewalk on the south side of White Street between Buchanan Avenue and Asp Avenue making it unsafe for motor vehicles as well as pedestrians. The Safety Plan is recommending a one-way westbound ten-foot lane with a new six-foot Americans with Disabilities (ADA) sidewalk on the south side of the roadway. He said one-way signage will be installed to alert drivers that the street is one way westbound as well as signage to direct the public to ride share pick-up areas.

Lt Pendleton highlighted the Campus Corner Pedestrian Safety Plan implementation that includes seasonal closure of Asp Avenue beginning two weeks prior to the beginning of OU’s fall semester excluding summer months, Christmas break, and spring break; closing Asp from 10:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. Thursday through Sunday (only when needed); detour Asp Avenue vehicular traffic to White Street; actual closure and deployment of traffic control devices to be performed by Norman Police Department; specific plan to be developed by the Traffic Control Division; and traffic control devices to be pre-loaded on trailer and stored at the Norman Investigation Center (NIC) on Lindsey Street. He said the Police Department is searching for grants to purchase portable bollards for easier deployment and removal during events instead of having a bunch of barriers, cones, and road closed signs as well as employee overtime for placement and removal of those barriers.

Lt. Pendleton said the Campus Corner Association supports the staging area and passenger pick-up area for ride sharing companies and generally supports the temporary closure of Asp Avenue, but objects to the permanent one-way conversion of traffic flow on White Street. He said Campus Corner Association agrees there is a need for safety, but would prefer one-way eastbound instead of westbound; however, westbound works better for all safety reasons.

Lt. Pendleton said next steps include adopting the Campus Corner Pedestrian Safety Plan and considering converting White Street from two-way to one-way westbound.

Item 2, continued:

Chairman Holman said he agrees with the proposal except for White Street being one-way and would like more time to consider that proposal. Mayor Clark said making White Street one-way makes sense to her because the street is so narrow and she likes the idea of accessible sidewalks in Campus Corner.

Chairman Holman asked if the proposal is ready to move to full Council review and Lt. Pendleton said yes.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Campus Corner Pedestrian Safety Plan," City Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee dated August 22, 2019

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Item 3, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING PARKING REGULATIONS.

Ms. Janay Greenlee, Planner II, said Staff presented parking regulation information to the Community Planning and Transportation Committee (CPTC) on June 18, 2018, February 28, 2019, and May 23, 2019, at which time Council asked Staff to explore a more comprehensive approach to parking and landscape requirements as well as Green Infrastructure (GI) and Low Impact Development (LID) incentives. On May 28, 2019, Staff was directed to obtain a third party for assistance to explore how to implement these changes into the City's development requirements. Staff contacted Dr. Jason Vogel, OU College of Civil Engineering and Environmental Science Associate Professor and Director of the Oklahoma Water Survey, who worked with Staff to develop a guide to implement GI and LID incentives and requirements into the development requirements.

Ms. Greenlee said Staff has been working on creating a Request for Quotes (RFQ) that includes reviewing City Ordinances and guideline documents, such as design criteria, Center City Form Based Code, Wichita/Sedgwick County LID Manual, Norman 2025 Plan, parking requirements, landscaping/irrigation requirements, etc.; identifying potential barriers and areas of incentive for GI/LID; reviewing parking requirements and providing recommendations for changes to reduce the amount required and/or incentivize GI/LID; reviewing irrigation requirements in landscaping ordinance and provide recommendations for changes to incentivize GI/LID and water conservation; recommending changes, additions, and subtractions to ordinances/documents, ways in which operations and maintenance plans and routine maintenance could be required and/or enforced, and potential process changes or improvements; conducting stakeholder and public input meetings; developing LID design, operations, and maintenance manual(s); and developing guidance/training to educate the development community on incorporating GI/LID in their projects and associated benefits.

Item 3, continued:

Councilmember Petrone said the City should just make LID a requirement versus incentivizing and Ms. Greenlee said that is a possibility; however, stakeholder and public input would be needed as well as reviewing all regulations and ordinances. Councilmember Petrone asked if Dr. Vogel could give a presentation to the Committee because while incentives are okay for a little while, LID needs

to happen so the City should just make LID mandatory. Ms. Greenlee said she would speak to Dr. Vogel regarding a presentation, but felt the RFQ should be completed and a public/stakeholder meeting be held before moving towards mandatory regulations.

Ms. Carrie Evenson, Stormwater Program Manager, said the City wants to have a comprehensive review of ordinances and guidance documents to identify potential barriers to LID and part of that process will be stakeholder input. She said Staff would like to have a consultant selected before discussions begin on required versus incentives.

Ms. Greenlee said for an immediate impact, the City can amend parking requirements to reduce required parking stall size; require a percentage of compact car spaces based on the overall parking requirement; set parking maximums with minimum requirements using Customer Service Area instead of Gross Floor Area; require a maximum impervious coverage requirement in commercial/industrial zoning districts; and increase interior landscape island and buffer size.

Ideas for existing parking facilities includes adaptive reuse by allowing pop-up shops in underused parking facilities (there are current City licenses for food trucks and solicitor/peddlers that can utilize these parking lot with the owner's permission) and involving other City division/departments on working with retailers to encourage multi-use of underused parking lots.

Councilmember Wilson said she would like the pop-up shops to be more permanent structures and asked why the City would not want to encourage that. She would like to have a more detailed discussion on this subject.

Councilmember Petrone said many communities require rain gardens in parking lots for run-off purposes and less impervious surface. She would prefer to incorporate stormwater solutions in parking regulations. Ms. Greenlee said that will be addressed in the LID Manual to include bio-swales, rain gardens, bio-retention, alternative paving surfaces, etc., as well as incorporating landscaping requirements, such as xeriscaping.

Councilmember Wilson said retail is changing and big box stores with huge parking lots are no longer the norm and the City needs to be more creative in addressing the changing environment.

Mayor Clark said she would like to make any changes that can be made as soon as possible because when the time comes for round three of stormwater the City will need to point to changes it has made to fight impervious surface.

Item 3, continued:

Chairman Holman said in-fill development in parking lots has occurred in Norman, e.g., Alameda Street and 12th Avenue S.E. where Raising Cane and McDonald's were constructed in the strip mall parking lot and on Lindsey Street where Homeland is located. He agrees the City should move forward with any changes that can be made at this time.

Ms. Greenlee said the City requires a landscape maintenance bond for a period of three years; however, after the three-year period ends and the bond is released there are no inspections or enforcement for ensuring the landscaping is being maintained. She said the original thought was that landscaping would be established and acclimated after three years, but many times the property owners do not replace trees or shrubs that have died and the parking lots look barren so that needs to be reviewed. Chairman Holman said that is a good point because when he was first elected he received a complaint about a new apartment complex that was built on a previously lush, wildlife habitat greenspace and part of the construction agreement was for the apartment complex to put in specific landscaping as a buffer to an adjoining neighborhood. He said the trees put in place as a buffer began to die and the property owner removed the trees and did not replace them, which caused an issue with the neighborhood. He said it was difficult to address that issue because the apartment ownership had changed since its construction and the owners lived out of state. He said he prefers Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) because they give the City control over these types of issues. Ms. Evenson said part of the LID manual will include requirements for long-term maintenance of GI/LID.

Ms. Jane Hudson, Interim Director of Planning and Community Development, asked if Staff should bring the RFQ to the Committee or full Council and Councilmembers felt CPTC should review the RFQ first.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated August 16, 2019, from Janay Greenlee, Planner II, to Community Planning and Transportation Committee Members, with Exhibit A, Section 431.5 – Off-Street Parking Requirements; Exhibit B, Chapter 55/Parking of Tulsa Zoning Code; Exhibit C, The Magazine of the American Planning Association entitled “Planning: Parking, Special Use Transportation, The Safest Streets/Parking Innovations/Road (Funding) Rage/Driverless Cars Ahead/Takes on Tolling”; Exhibit D, Sustainable Transportation Toolkit – Parking Annotated Bibliography from Maryland Office of Smart Growth dated June 27, 2005; Exhibit E, and Massachusetts Low Impact Development Toolkit
2. PowerPoint presentation entitled, “Parking/LID Study,” Community Planning and Transportation Committee dated August 22, 2019

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Item 4, being:

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS.

None

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The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor