

CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE MINUTES

October 26, 2017

The City Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met at 4:30 p.m. in the Conference Room on the 26th day of October, 2017, 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: Councilmember Clark, Holman, Karjala, and Wilson

ABSENT: Chairman Hickman

OTHERS PRESENT: Councilmember Castleberry, Ward Three
Mayor Lynne Miller (arrived 4:55 p.m.)
Ms. Susan Connors, Director of Planning and Community Development
Mr. Terry Floyd, Development Coordinator
Ms. Sara Kaplan, Retail Marketing Coordinator
Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager
Mr. Angelo Lombardo, Transportation Traffic Engineer
Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works (arrived 5:05 p.m.)
Mr. Wayne Stenis, Planner II
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 SEPTEMBER 2017.

Mr. Taylor Johnson, Marketing Specialist for Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART), highlighted CART Ridership Reports for September 2017, and said fiscal year-to-date ridership (July to September) had a decrease of 15% over the same period last year. In September CART transported 134,540 passengers that included 817 riders who traveled with bicycles and 328 riders who traveled with wheelchairs.

CARTaccess transported 2,905 riders in September, a decrease of 7% over the same month last year with an average daily ridership of 112 riders. Year-to-date primary zone ridership decreased by 9% while secondary zone ridership increased by 20%.

Mr. Johnson said CART attended an Interim House Study on passenger rail service in Oklahoma at the State Capital on September 6th. He said there is interest in expanding passenger rail further north of Oklahoma City for Amtrak services that could include bus transit passengers embarking or disembarking for the rail service.

Item 1, continued:

Mr. Johnson said the CART Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) discussed route changes; the age minors can ride the bus unattended by an adult; the City of Norman's Americans with Disability Act (ADA) Self-Evaluation/Transition Plan; CART access fares; and Brooks Street Station amenities and access. CART also attended the 13th Annual Touch a Truck event on September 30th displaying the Sooner Trolley.

Mr. Johnson said CTAC felt minors riding the bus without an adult in attendance should be 11 years old or older and asked the Community Planning and Transportation Committee (CPTC) for their opinion. Councilmember Holman suggested children provide a note from parents to ride without an adult, but other members felt such notes could be forged. Councilmember Clark said she has a ten year old and she cannot imagine him riding the bus alone and suggested CART hold an educational event to educate parents and minors about riding the bus alone. Councilmember Wilson asked if there is a lot of 11 year to 18 year old ridership. Mr. Johnson said there have been one or two incidents where a minor rode a bus and although nothing happened, the drivers asked if CART had a policy for minors riding the bus and CART does not. Councilmember Clark said 11 years old seems to be a good minimum age, but there needs to be some rules. Councilmember Holman said if a minor under the age of 11 years old needed to ride the bus for any reason the parent should be required to notify CART to make CART aware the minor will be riding the bus alone. Councilmember Karjala said she likes that suggestion and asked if parental notification would be manageable for CART. Mr. Johnson said it should because there are not a large number of minors riding the bus; however, he feels that CART needs to have a policy in place. Councilmember Castleberry suggested a card be issued once a minor has been approved to ride so they could ride multiple routes if needed. Councilmember Karjala agreed and said the card could even have parent approved routes printed on it. Mr. Johnson thanked the Committee for their suggestions.

Mr. Johnson said CART will be applying for a Clean Air Grant through the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) for the cost difference of purchasing two Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) busses over diesel.

Councilmember Holman said he noticed when the bus is turning onto Alameda Avenue from Triad Village Drive heading west it has to make a wide turn and the stop is right at the intersection so the bus has to turn into two lanes of traffic then stop immediately. Councilmember Clark said that is definitely an issue for traffic on Alameda. Councilmember Holman asked if it was possible to move the bus stop further to the west. Mr. Johnson said the pad for that bus stop used to be further east and a couple of years ago Tyler Media paid to move the pad further west to allow the bus to make that full turn before coming to a stop, but that does not address the close proximity to the intersection so CART will review that further.

Councilmember Clark said some communities offer three months of free bus ride days and she is not suggesting CART offer three months of free bus rides, but suggested CART offer a "Free Ride Fridays" or something similar to encourage people to try riding the bus. She asked if CART has considered an initiative of this type and Mr. Johnson said CART used to offer free rides on ozone alert days and Dump the Pump Day in June, but has never offered anything like free ride Fridays, but that could be reviewed.

Item 1, continued:

Items submitted for the record

1. Cleveland Area Rapid Transit Ridership Totals for the months of September 2017
2. Cleveland Area Rapid Transit Monthly Reports for September 2017

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Councilmember Holman said Staff requested Item 3 be discussed prior to Item 2.

Item 3, being:

PRESENTATION FROM A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GREENBELT COMMISSION REGARDING THE GREENBELT PRIORITY TRAILS PROPOSAL.

Ms. Susan Connors, Director of Planning and Community Development, said CPTC reviewed the Greenbelt Priority Trail (GPT) proposal in 2015, and a resolution accepting the proposal was reviewed by City Council on September 13, 2016, that included a public hearing. The intent was to add the GPT as an addendum to the Greenway and Park Master Plans. Based on comments and concerns during the public hearing, Council asked the Greenbelt Commission to make revisions to the proposal, which is what is being presented tonight by Mr. Mark Nanny, Chair of the Greenbelt Commission. Mr. Nanny said many of the concerns expressed during the public hearing were from property owners along the proposed Little River Trail and the Greenbelt Commission has revised the proposed GPT in response to those concerns.

Mr. Nanny said for those members who are new, the purpose of the Greenbelt Commission is to provide a conceptual plan for the development of essential greenbelt trails that will establish the foundation for a more extensive trail system throughout urban and rural Norman. The Greenbelt Commission identified trails that will form multiple distance loops throughout Norman connecting important points of interest such as neighborhoods; parks; greenways; schools; natural features; and shopping areas. The proposed trails will integrate with current transportation projects as well as the City's Comprehensive Plan and allow pedestrian to travel from Downtown Norman to Lake Thunderbird as well as to southeast Norman, south of Highway 9, and north along Tecumseh Road, which are both locations experiencing new residential growth. He said the priority trails will be a fundamental backbone network of trails that developers and other projects can build off of so eventually there will be more and more trails.

Mr. Nanny said the trail proposed to replace the Little River Trail will be the North Norman Tecumseh Trail that will begin at Ruby Grant Park forming an approximate six-mile loop roughly defined by 36th Avenue N.W., Indian Hills Road, Little River riverbed, and Tecumseh Road. The trail will also extend eastward along Tecumseh Road all the way to the northwest corner of Lake Thunderbird State Park where it connects with the Scissortail Trail that travels southeast Norman to the Dave Blue Creek towards the west shore of Lake Thunderbird. He summarized other trails as South Legacy Trail that will connect with Legacy Trail at its southern terminus just southeast of Downtown Norman continuing southward linking the Duck Pond, apartments along Classen Boulevard with south OU campus and the southeast area of Norman, which then connects to Scissortail Trail. The East Norman Trail is comprised of a network of trails through east rural

Item 3, continued:

Norman providing multiple connections between urban Norman and Lake Thunderbird as well as links between North Norman Tecumseh Trail and Scissortail Trail. The West Lindsey Extension Trail/36th Avenue S.W. Trail connects west Lindsey Street and 36th Avenue S.W. providing a link between west Norman and Lindsey Street. The West Lindsey Extension Trail will connect with the future Canadian River Park, a NORMAN FORWARD Project.

Councilmember Wilson thought the Little River Trail was great, but learned quickly that her constituents did not like the proposal. She asked if easements would need to be acquired for any of the trails and Mr. Nanny said that is unknown at this time.

Councilmember Castleberry asked if the trails will essentially be wide concrete sidewalks and Mr. Nanny said no, some could be eight to ten foot wide paths with crushed gravel that people in wheelchairs could access. Mr. Nanny said by establishing a trail system, more nature style trails could be developed, but until the backbone of trails is developed nothing will happen. Councilmember Castleberry asked if the general public could access trails built within private developments and Ms. Connors said if the GPT becomes a part of the Greenbelt and Park Master Plans, the City could find more opportunities to require development of public trails.

Councilmember Karjala asked when the GPT would be presented to the full Council and Ms. Connors said the second meeting of November.

Councilmember Wilson asked if there is a plan for eminent domain action for any of the trails and Mr. Nanny not to his knowledge.

Councilmember Clark asked what the Planning Department thought of the GPT and Ms. Connors said she thinks it is a wonderful idea to create some type of plan where the City can require trails. She said instead of trails just being a want, they can be a requirement. Councilmember Castleberry asked if the Zoning Code would need to be amended to make trails a requirement and Ms. Connors said no, trails would be requirement in the Greenbelt and Park Master Plans so that incorporates it into the Zoning Code.

Councilmember Castleberry asked about funding and Ms. Connors said that would have to be incorporated into the Capital or Parks Budget. Councilmember Karjala felt there would be grant opportunities and Mr. Nanny agreed.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated October 17, 2017, from Susan Connors, AICP, Director of Planning and Community Development, to Community Planning and Transportation Committee Members
2. Greenbelt Priority Trail Proposal City of Norman Greenbelt Trail System prepared by the Greenbelt Commission dated November 21, 2016, and revised December 26, 2016
3. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Greenbelt Priority Trail Proposal Revision," prepared by Mark Nanny, Greenbelt Commission Chair, and Ward 1 Greenbelt Commission Representative, dated October 26, 2017

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Item 2, being:

PRESENTATION FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION REGARDING THE THREE UNRELATED RULE.

Councilmember Holman said at the last meeting, representatives from the University of Oklahoma (OU) Student Government Association (OUSGA) requested reconsideration of the City's three unrelated person's rule. At that meeting, Chairman Hickman asked them to formally present their ideas at tonight's meeting for discussion by the Committee.

Mr. Dylan Redolf, OU Student Government Association, introduced himself and Ms. Ryleigh Navert and Mr. Adrian Gibbs who serve as Director and Assistant Director for the OU Department of Exteriors. Mr. Redolf said OU students, specifically low income students, feel the three unrelated person ordinance is restrictive, unnecessary, and over broad.

Mr. Gibbs said the main reasons for the three unrelated person rule are noise, parking, and trash, which are valid concerns; however, they are already addressed in City of Norman Codes making these concerns obsolete.

Ms. Navert said OUSGA is not advocating throwing away occupancy limits, but would rather have rules on how many unrelated people can live in a house based on the size of the house, i.e., a four bedroom house with four parking spaces can have four unrelated people living there. If students violate noise, parking, and trash there should be consequences and the Student Living Guide provided by OU clearly outlines student's responsibilities and rights as a tenant.

Mr. Gibbs said OUSGA's suggestion is to increase residential occupancy for quasi-unit quarters from three unrelated person to a number of unrelated persons equal to one person per bedroom up to a maximum of five unrelated persons with the satisfactory completion of the following requirements:

1. The dwelling unit shall have at least one bedroom per occupant. A bedroom is defined in Section 429.8 of the Norman City Code.
2. One parking space per bedroom shall be provided per quasi-unit quarter with a requested increase in occupancy. These spaces must comply with the standards contained in Section 413.5. Not more than two of the required parking spaces may be on-street in accordance with Article V, Parking, or located along the frontage of the adjoining public street and contiguous to the lot. The minimum length of a parking space located on an adjoining public street shall be 18 feet and shall not include curb cuts for driveways.

Mayor Miller said she has quite a bit of rental property in Core Norman and most of it is not close to campus because the property within walking distance of campus is so expensive it would require higher rent so most low income students cannot afford to live there. Mr. Gibbs said he created a rent matrix and there are affordable houses near the campus that are cheaper than apartments in the same area. Ms. Navert said houses on Elm Street, Chautauqua Avenue, and College Street cost approximately \$400 to \$500 per bedroom per month.

Councilmember Holman said most of the houses near campus were built in an era where there may have been five or six members of the family, but only one vehicle per household so a lot the houses may have four to six bedrooms, but the driveway is only big enough for one vehicle. He said that would make it difficult to base occupancy on the number of bedrooms because available parking has to be a standard.

Item 2, continued:

Councilmember Holman said another problem in allowing up to five unrelated people to live in a house is that if those five people have a boyfriend or girlfriend that stays over multiple nights a week and they have a vehicle then there are ten people basically living there with ten vehicles. It is his understanding the three unrelated rule is difficult to enforce because it places the responsibility of proof on the neighbor having the problem. He said it should not be the neighbors responsibility to police the house in violation and the City should be more proactive in enforcing its ordinance.

Mr. Gibbs said many families today with three or four kids generally have multiple cars once the kids become driving age and they have friends that visit that may have cars so he did not feel that is a good argument. Mayor Miller said most families do not have one vehicle per family member and boyfriends/girlfriends do not usually spend the night if the house is occupied by related individuals versus unrelated individuals.

Councilmember Holman felt occupancy should be based on available parking that does not include street parking. He said another problem is narrow streets where people can park on both sides, which is a big problem in Core Norman.

Councilmember Clark would like to move forward with reviewing the ordinance and encouraged the Committee to take the student's suggestions seriously to make them feel they have a City Council that listens. She hates having rules that cannot be enforced and hates putting the onus on neighbors. She said some universities do not allow freshmen to have vehicles and felt OU should move in that direction.

Councilmember Castleberry said lying to a Police Officer is an obstruction of justice. He said the City has an ordinance that can be easily enforced by simply having Police Officers ask residents accused of being in violation if they are related or not. He said responsibility does not have to be put onto neighbors. Councilmember Wilson asked if the City wants Police Officers spending their time doing that and Councilmember Castleberry said if there is a complaint then yes. Councilmember Castleberry said the City chooses not to enforce the three unrelated rule.

Mr. Gibbs suggested an application process through the City of Norman on a case-by-case basis. He said the City could ensure there is enough parking and the house meets all safety requirements for the number of occupants; however, that does make more work for the City.

Councilmember Clark left the meeting at 5:25 p.m.

Councilmember Holman agreed the City needs a better policy than the three unrelated rule and thanked the students for their presentation.

Ms. Marsha McDarris said she has six rental properties in Core Norman and many of the driveways are single lane driveways or shared driveways so when discussing vehicles per bedroom it is really not an option because if there are five bedrooms with five vehicles that equal five vehicles lined up in a single driveway. She said many of the streets are narrow and parking on both sides of the street makes it difficult for emergency vehicles to get onto those streets, which is troubling to her. She said the infrastructure in Core Norman is really old and some houses cannot handle more than one or two people residing within.

Item 2, continued:

Mr. Mark Campbell said the City has no provisions for affordable housing, which they had the opportunity to do when they adopted the Center City Form Based Code (CCFBC) so he questions the sincerity of the City changing the three unrelated person rule. He said if the City changed the ordinance, he would request the home be required to meet modern electrical codes.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Exploring Changes to Norman's 3 Unrelated Rule," presented by OU Student Governance Association dated October 26, 2017

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Item 4, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING ROAD DIETS ON WEST MAIN STREET BETWEEN CREEKDALE DRIVE AND 48TH AVENUE N.W. AND WEST ROCK CREEK ROAD FROM GRANDVIEW DRIVE TO 36TH AVENUE N.W.

Mr. Angelo Lombardo, Transportation Traffic Engineer, said Staff would like feedback from the Committee regarding an opportunity for the City to make improvements to benefit bicyclists in Norman. The City would like to reconfigure the lanes on a segment of Main Street between Creekdale Drive and 48th Avenue N.W. and West Rock Creek Road from Grandview Drive to 36th Avenue N.W. from four lanes to three lanes with the addition of colorized bicycle lanes. He said this proposed change will be consistent with the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CPT) that Council adopted on May 13, 2014, which has an element of a bicycle transportation network that identifies roads that can be viable routes for bicyclists. He said prior to the CPT, if a road was classified as an arterial roadway the requirement was to build a four lane road; however, the CPT offers a menu of possibilities for arterial roadways such as an arterial roadway that does not carry a high volume of traffic and would function well as a two lane divided road with biking facilities or a three lane with biking facilities or a four lane road with biking facilities. He said the section of roadways being discussed tonight fall under those classifications.

Mr. Lombardo said decisions are based on future traffic projections and there are existing or proposed arterial roadways in Norman that do not need to be multi-lane facilities because the traffic volumes will not be there even at full development to justify four lanes of traffic. He said Rock Creek Road between 36th Avenue N.W. and Grandview Avenue is almost fully developed and is currently a four lane road that carries 800 vehicles per day. He said this section is proposed to be reconfigured to a three lane road with colorized bicycle lanes and dedicated turn lanes. Another low traffic volume roadway for consideration for reconfiguration is Main Street between Creekdale Drive and 48th Avenue N.W.

Mr. Lombardo highlighted other potential four lane roads with low traffic volumes that have potential for bicycle lanes as West Main Street between 48th Avenue West and 36th Avenue West; Alameda Street between Classen Boulevard and 36th Avenue East; Rock Creek Road between 12th Avenue West and 12th Avenue East; 60th Avenue West from Tecumseh Road to Indian Hills Road.

Item 4, continued:

Mr. Lombardo said proposed reconfiguration of the roadways will not adversely affect travel times within a corridor and the introduction of a dedicated turn lanes improve traffic operation by separating the through traffic from the slower turning traffic. In corridors such as West Main Street, with numerous access points intersecting streets and driveways, the majority of through traffic tends to utilize the outside travel lanes to avoid being delayed by turning vehicles slowing and stopping in the inside travel lanes. These four lane corridors essentially behave like a three lane road and when four lane corridors are converted to three lanes, they are unlikely to increase congestion.

The primary objective of proposing four lane reconfigurations is to improve safety for all roadway users while increasing livability by creating bicycle and pedestrian friendlier environments. Mr. Lombardo said this is an opportunity for the City to redesign and reallocate roadway space to better meet the needs of all users and is tailored to reflect the needs and desires of the community as articulated in the CPT. He said benefits include slower vehicular speeds for safer pedestrian and bicycle activity; improved livability; safer roadway with dedicated turn lanes at many public road intersections and private driveways; and projects are 100% federally funded.

Councilmember Castleberry asked how wide the lanes will be and Mr. Lombardo said the plan is to have three 12 foot lanes with four foot bike lanes, but if there is a joint gutter the bike lane will be five feet so the joint does not become a problem for bicyclists.

Councilmember Holman liked the proposal, but said he was waiting for feedback from Ward Three constituents and Councilmember Castleberry said his constituents really like the proposals.

Mayor Miller asked if the CPT has bicycle lanes mapped out for the entire City and Mr. Lombardo said yes, the map he is displaying depicts existing and proposed bicycle lanes. Mr. Lombardo said all new transportation improvement projects will include bicycle lanes in the design stages.

Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said if Council approves these two proposals, Staff will want to do more of them so Council is entering into the road diet business with this decision. He said the dollars for this project are bigger than Council can imagine because it is more expensive to construct colorized bicycle lanes. Mayor Miller asked how much it would cost and Mr. O'Leary said \$200,000 to \$300,000 and that is why the grant from the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) for striping is so important. Councilmember Castleberry asked when the project would start and how long the green striping for bicycle would last and Mr. O'Leary said the project is expected to being in March 2018, and the striping should last five to eight years. Mr. O'Leary said Staff and the Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) reviewed several types of striping materials before choosing an epoxy material with recycled glass, which has been used on Cedar Lane and Lindsey Street.

Councilmember Karjala said she receives the complaints about the center part of Norman near OU where people like to ride bicycles and there are no colorized bicycle lanes. She tries to explain there is no room on the street for colorized bicycle lanes so is that the correct response? Councilmember Holman said he would tell them the City is not widening streets in Central Norman.

Item 4, continued:

Mr. O’Leary said the City has a wonderful BAC and they work on these types of requests so even though the City may not be able to widen the street there are tools to make bicycle areas more accessible. Mr. Lombardo said there is a very robust trail system within OU Campus and the City is linking those trails so it is possible to access several bicycle facilities from Legacy Trail. Councilmember Holman said riding in the street in Core Norman is easy because the bicycle routes are on low traffic streets, but becomes more difficult further out in suburban Norman where the traffic becomes heavier and bicycle lanes become more necessary. Mr. O’Leary said Council can refer constituent questions to the Public Works Department who would be happy to answer their questions.

Councilmember Wilson is concerned about the cost of future maintenance and Mr. Lombardo said he would not bring these proposals to Council if he thought City’s ability to maintain the bicycle lanes would be compromised. Mr. O’Leary said newer, better, cheaper, longer lasting products come into the market each year and a product that will last five to eight years is the a good value and will probably become cheaper in the future years as more colorized bicycle lanes are constructed across the country.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, “Bicycle Transportation Improvements on West Main Street,” City Council Community and Transportation Committee dated October 26, 2017

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Item 5, being:

MISCELLANEOUS PUBLIC COMMENTS.

None

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The meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor