

CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE MINUTES

February 28, 2019

The City Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met at 4:08 p.m. in the Conference Room on the 28th day of February, 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 Bierman, Clark, Holman, and
Chairman Hickman

ABSENT: Councilmember Scott and Wilson

OTHERS PRESENT: Mayor Lynne Miller
Ms. Carrie Evenson, Stormwater Program Manager
Mr. Terry Floyd, Development Coordinator
Mr. Kris Glenn, Director of Cleveland Area Rapid
Transit (CART)
Ms. Jane Hudson, Interim Director of Planning and
Community Development
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Planner and Grant Specialist
for Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART)
Ms. Beth Muckala, Assistant City Attorney
Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works
Ms. Mary Rupp, Interim City Manager
Ms. Kathryn Walker, Interim City Attorney
Ms. Syndi Runyon, Administrative Technician IV

Item 1, being:

CLEVELAND AREA RAPID TRANSIT (CART) RIDERSHIP REPORT INCLUDING SAFERIDE.

Mr. Kris Glenn, Executive Director of Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART), highlighted CART Ridership Reports for January 2019, and said fiscal year-to-date ridership (July to January) had an increase of 6% over the same period last year. In December, CART transported 102,206 passengers that included 433 riders who traveled with bicycles and 146 riders who traveled with wheelchairs.

CARTaccess transported 2,615 riders in January, a decrease of 3% over the same month last year with an average daily ridership of 119 riders. Year-to-date primary zone ridership increased by 0.23% while secondary zone ridership decreased by 6%.

Item 1, continued:

Mr. Taylor Johnson, Planner and Grant Specialist, CART highlighted January activities and said CART provided fixed route and CARTaccess service on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day to provide a better opportunity for people to attend the annual Mayor's Interfaith Breakfast. CART is continuing the preparation of the Recipient Information Request for its Federal Transit Authority Triennial Review (audit).

Councilmember Clark asked how many riders used the service on Martin Luther King Jr. Day for the Mayor's Interfaith Breakfast and Mr. Glenn said six people on CARTaccess because destination records are kept; however, it is more difficult to determine how many people rode the fixed route for that purpose.

Mr. Glenn said CART will be making a presentation on March 12th to update Council on the transfer of the CART System to the City of Norman.

Items submitted for the record

1. Cleveland Area Rapid Transit Ridership Totals for the month of January, 2019
2. Cleveland Area Rapid Transit Monthly Report for January, 2019

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Item 2, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING PARKING REGULATIONS.

Ms. Jane Hudson, Interim Director of Planning and Community Development, said in June 2018, the Community Planning and Transportation Committee (CPTC) discussed parking regulations. She said Staff provided information regarding the City's parking regulations, specifically, why big box retail establishments seem to have excessively large parking lots. She said Norman's Zoning Ordinance currently requires a minimum number of parking spaces determined by specific uses, which is a standard used in many cities. She said off-street parking standards are an attempt to minimize spillover parking on public streets and ensure safe and efficient movement of traffic by making sure the amount of parking at the site of the development is adequate enough to meet demand. While parking minimums require a certain number of parking spaces for a specific land use, there are other alternatives to the traditional minimum parking requirement, i.e., minimum requirements combined with maximum parking requirements limits the total number of spaces that would be allowed by a single use. This strategy can effectively minimize over parking and has been applied in several cities.

Ms. Hudson said establishing a maximum standard can be an effective tool for communities interested in maximizing green space, managing stormwater runoff, increasing densities, and utilizing sustainable land development management tools, while meeting transportation and parking demand throughout the community.

Item 2, continued:

A parking minimum combined with a parking maximum standard can limit the number of parking spaces supplied while providing adequate parking. Maximum standards can be applied in several ways including basing the maximum parking requirement on a reduced square footage of building area for the parking calculation or setting a minimum parking ratio per number of square feet of building area to a maximum ratio of building area allowed per use. Another strategy is to increase the landscape and impervious coverage requirements that can naturally decrease the space available for parking.

Ms. Hudson said in the June 2018 meeting, Councilmember Wilson had suggested allowing temporary pop-up retail shops in the larger parking lots or placing a shipping container in the parking lot for people to lease and use for short-term sales.

Ms. Hudson said a 2011 study conducted by the University of California estimated an average of 3.4 parking spaces per vehicle around 800 million existing parking spaces and that equated to 25,000 square miles of land occupied by parking spaces.

Councilmember Holman said all of the Campus Corner area could fit into the parking lot at Big Lots, which is hugely underutilized.

Councilmember Bierman said Crest Food Store's parking lot is a perfect example of how parking can be out of control because the parking lot is not utilized at full capacity even around holidays. She visited the east side Walmart and University North Park businesses on Black Friday and every large parking lot still had tons of parking available.

Councilmember Clark said the continuing trend of online shopping will only contribute to more empty parking lots so this is an excellent time to look at this issue.

Councilmember Holman said Legacy Park needs Americans with Disabilities (ADA) parking, but when people complain about no parking at Legacy Park he reminds them there are more parking areas near Legacy Park than anywhere else in Norman excluding the Lloyd Noble Center.

Ms. Hudson said in the June 2018 meeting, the Committee expressed interest in the Tulsa, Oklahoma, parking ordinance; however, Tulsa has six public parking garages so Norman needs to be careful in following the guidelines of Tulsa. She said if Norman utilized Tulsa's parking requirements, the Crest Food Store, for instance, could have between 168 and 224 parking spaces compared to 512.

Ms. Hudson said there are several owners of Hastings parking lot and it was developed over a 15 to 20 year period with multiple plats versus being platted as one development. She said if someone wanted a pop-up retail or retail container unit on the property, the City would have to be careful as to where that is located as to not infringe on property owners that may not want that. Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said Target had looked at constructing a restaurant in the front of their parking lot, but because of the way the development was platted, they ultimately decided not to do that. He said each development may have its own unique set of circumstances.

Item 2, continued:

Chairman Hickman said if the City lowered its minimums, this would allow businesses to add greenspace or another building with shared parking. He would like to create that flexibility by lowering the standards and incentivizing new development on existing parking lots. Ms. Hudson said lowering the minimums then adding a maximum would help meet that goal; however, the City needs to be careful not to impact businesses that are knowledgeable about how many parking spaces they need. She would like to do more research and find a fair balance.

Chairman Hickman said developers have asked Council for relief on the parking minimums through Planned Unit Developments stating they do not need the number of spaces required and, to his knowledge, the requests have been approved. He would rather have to approve a request for additional parking spaces than a request for less so even if maximums are put into place, businesses will still have an outlet to request more. Councilmember Bierman agreed and said the City needs to have a mechanism for someone who may be developing next to a building that already has a significant amount of parking and have the opportunity for shared parking.

Councilmember Holman asked if businesses on Main Street in Downtown Norman are allowed to commandeer parking spaces in front of their business with a cone or sign and Ms. Hudson said no, unless the spaces need to be reserved for construction purposes.

Chairman Hickman said the goal is to have a minimum parking requirement with a maximum allowed combined with increased landscape and impervious coverage requirements that would limit the over parked commercial parking lots.

Chairman Hickman said his only concern about not having a minimum parking requirement for restaurants would be if the restaurant was near a residential area where people would park on the residential street if suitable parking is not available at the restaurant. He said in the Plaza District in Oklahoma City, cars park along neighborhood streets because there is not sufficient parking for the venues held in the area. He said this unintended consequence is something the City should keep in mind. Councilmember Bierman said the City could lay the groundwork for that by limiting the number of parking spaces if a business is within 300 to 500 feet from any public parking facility, whether that facility is a garage or lot.

Ms. Hudson said in Tulsa, a restaurant requires no parking for the first 5,000 square feet so she would like to research that more. Councilmember Bierman said some fast food restaurants, such as donut shops, Chinese food, etc., do more take out or delivery business than indoor dining and would not require much parking. Chairman Hickman said the amount of parking needed in Norman would depend upon the location and whether or not the business is near a residential area or parking facility. Councilmember Holman agreed and said his goal is to have flexibility to look at the different situations throughout the City and not be so rigid.

Chairman Hickman asked if Staff can have language ready for review in 60 days and during that 60-day period, he would like Staff to visit with the business community for input.

Item 2, continued:

Councilmember Bierman asked if property owners with significant parking lots have the ability to do something on their lot without coming to Council for approval, such as hosting a food truck event or antique car show. Ms. Hudson said food trucks need a license from the City, but she does not believe anything else would be required.

Ms. Hudson said if the City allows businesses to reduce their parking areas, which would create more greenspace, would the business be required to be landscaped and have an irrigation system? Mayor Miller said she would like to encourage xeriscaping and Committee members concurred. Mayor Miller said Fire Station No. 9 is a great example of xeriscaping and felt beautiful landscaping can be created using rocks, cactus, native grass, etc. Councilmember Holman said he is all for using native grass because trees can be labor and resource intensive. Councilmember Bierman said she supports anything that moves away from irrigated or fertilized landscaping. Ms. Hudson agreed and said there is a financial impact to irrigating or replacing trees and shrubs in order for businesses to have their landscaping bond refunded.

Chairman Hickman asked what is required in commercial lots as far as landscaping and Ms. Hudson said a five, ten, or even twenty-foot buffer is required if the commercial lot is adjacent to another property or street. She said based on the number of parking spaces, one tree per forty linear feet is required with additional sodding, shrubs, and automatic irrigation system as well as landscape islands. Chairman Hickman said, if possible, he would like to require less of these regulations if the property owner develops best management practices from a stormwater standpoint, such as bio swales.

Mayor Miller said Council has many other issues, such as the Center City moratorium, and wondered if those discussions should be completed before finishing parking. Ms. Hudson said Center City is pretty much developed; however, it is possible that a developer could want to clear out a block and put in a commercial development that would trigger parking requirements. She does not know if it would be a benefit to wait, but that is Council's decision.

Chairman Hickman asked if Staff could have parking regulations prepared for the Committee to review on April 25th and Ms. Hudson said yes.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated February 28, 2019, from Jane Hudson, Interim Director, Planning and Community Development, to Community Planning and Transportation Committee Members, with Exhibit A, Section 431.4, Off-Street Parking Requirements from the City of Norman Zoning Code; Exhibit B, Chapter 55, Parking from the Tulsa, Oklahoma Zoning Code; Exhibit C, Planning, Special Issue on Transportation, The Safest Streets/Parking Innovations/Road (Funding) Rage; Driverless Cars Ahead; Takes on Tolling from The Magazine of the American Planning Association dated May 2015; and Exhibit D, Sustainable Transportation Toolkit – Parking Annotated Bibliography
2. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Review of Off-Street Parking Requirements, Section 431.5," Community Planning and Transportation Committee dated February 28, 2019

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Item 3, being:

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS.

None.

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The meeting adjourned at 5:07 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor