



Legislation Text

File #: O-1617-23, **Version:** 1

CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCE O-1617-23 UPON SECOND AND FINAL READING: AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, CLOSING THE PORTION OF RIGHT-OF-WAY KNOWN AS OKLAHOMA AVENUE LOCATED BETWEEN ENID STREET AND CLASSEN BOULEVARD IN THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION THIRTY-TWO (32), TOWNSHIP NINE (9) NORTH, RANGE TWO (2) WEST OF THE INDIAN MERIDIAN, NORMAN, CLEVELAND COUNTY, OKLAHOMA; AND PROVIDING FOR THE SEVERABILITY THEREOF.

BACKGROUND: The spacing of access for driveways and streets is an important element in the planning, design, and operation of roadways. Access points are the main source of accidents and congestion. Their location and spacing directly affect the safety and functional integrity of City streets. Too many closely spaced street and driveway intersections, for example, increase accident potential and delays, and preclude effective traffic signal coordination.

Despite the importance of access spacing for driveways and streets, it has often been overlooked in past roadway and site planning efforts because of a lack of sound spacing standards. In response, the City's Subdivision regulations and Engineering Design Criteria have been amplified over the years to better manage access. For instance, the City's Subdivision Regulations now requires that subdivision streets not open onto an arterial street except at an average interval of not less than one-quarter mile, measured from the centerlines. It also requires that minor streets be laid out so that their use by through traffic is discouraged. Similarly, the City's Engineering Design Criteria now establishes minimum spacing between driveways and corner clearance from intersections along arterial roadways.

The segment of Oklahoma Avenue, between Classen Boulevard and Brooks Street, has been the subject of considerable scrutiny over the past several years. Staff has received numerous complaints regarding cut-through traffic and speeding on this segment of roadway, including the one received in April of 2006 from three residents who wanted a traffic calming project and the closure of Oklahoma Avenue at Classen Boulevard (see attachment No. 1).

Oklahoma Avenue has been located within the current right-of-way and was annexed into the Corporate City Limits in 1955. The existing triangular property bordered by Classen Boulevard to the west, Enid Street to the north and Oklahoma Avenue to the east is currently considered as park land and is maintained by the City. With this closure this small piece of property and the closed right of way for Oklahoma Avenue could be transferred to the developer of the property to the east eliminating this small property and its maintenance.

Planning Commission, at its meeting of March 9, 2017, recommended to City Council the rejection of Ordinance No. O-1617-23.

DISCUSSION: The properties near this location have been going through a redevelopment transition in recent years, including the removal of several commercial structures from the site adjacent to the proposed street closure right-of-way. In addition, to the south of this area across Lindsey Street, there has been construction of a multi-story residential development. As a result of the proposed development east of Classen Boulevard and adjacent to this road closure, the City of Norman has an opportunity to improve the transportation network and traffic circulation in the area by eliminating an unnecessary intersection and reducing the cut-through traffic that has plagued the residents of Oklahoma Avenue, between Classen Boulevard and Brooks Street. Over the years, the City has considered an improved layout of the Classen Boulevard, Oklahoma Avenue and Enid Street intersection area to improve the traffic flow and safety.

From the most recent traffic counts collected, the total two-way volume is 444 vehicles per day. There are only 25 homes with frontage along Oklahoma Avenue, between Classen Boulevard and Boyd Street. Based upon Institute of Transportation Engineers nationally recognized trip rates, 25 single family residential homes should generate 294 trips on an average weekday. This means that the remaining 150 trips (444-294=150) are cut-through trips, which equates to nearly 35 percent of the traffic currently using Oklahoma Avenue. The closure of Oklahoma Avenue at Classen Boulevard will eliminate one of two closely spaced intersections along Classen Boulevard and discourage cut through traffic in the neighborhood. The traffic that needs to utilize Oklahoma Avenue will continue to have convenient access via the existing

east-west streets between Classen Boulevard and Oklahoma Avenue, such as Enid Street. The cut-through traffic will likely seek more appropriate routes to reach their destinations, like Brooks Street or Boyd Street.

The area that surrounds the proposed Classen Landing Addition was developed many years prior to the adoption of the City's current access management regulations. As such, it is totally out of compliance with current access standards. For instance, there are four subdivision streets (Brooks Street, Chickasha Street, Enid Street and Oklahoma Avenue) that open onto an arterial street (Classen Boulevard) within one-quarter of a mile, where the current Subdivision Regulations limit the number to one. The layout of the Classen Boulevard and Oklahoma Avenue intersection is also problematic because it invites through traffic to use Oklahoma Avenue instead of discouraging it as required in the Subdivision Regulation.

As for the number of driveways that access Classen Boulevard, between Lindsey Street and Brooks Street, current regulations limit the number to seven and there are currently twenty five. Seventeen of these driveways are also in violation of the corner clearance requirements outlined in the Engineering Design Criteria.

Re-development of the property for the proposed Classen Landing Addition offers the City an excellent opportunity to eliminate unnecessary driveways and public roadway intersections. The preliminary site plan reduces the number of driveways to the property from seven to three. Additionally, the site plan calls for the closure of a 150-foot long segment of Oklahoma Avenue, between Enid Street and Classen Boulevard, and the elimination of the Classen Boulevard and Oklahoma Avenue intersection, which was suggested by City staff during preliminary discussions with the applicant. The elimination of this intersection reduces the number of intersections within one-quarter of a mile from four to three, where the current standard allows only for one. These access modifications are an important element of the access management plan for an area that is expected to have a higher traffic demand due to the redevelopment of the Classen Landing Addition area.

Traffic collision records show that there have been eight injury collisions along Classen Boulevard, between north of Lindsey Street and south of Brooks Street, during the last thirty months (October 16, 2014 to December 31, 2016). The unusually high number of driveways and public road intersections along this segment of roadway, coupled with the higher traffic demand that will be brought about by the Classen Landing development, will increase the potential for accidents and reduce the quality of traffic in the area without a pro-active access management strategy.

The layout of this intersection makes it a good candidate for closure. As shown on the attached location plan, the intersections of Enid Street and Oklahoma Avenue with Classen Boulevard are very close to each other and neither is at a right angle, which is the required intersection geometry. Oklahoma Avenue intersects at an angle that allows cars going northbound on Classen Boulevard to veer slightly to the right onto Oklahoma Avenue without slowing down. This makes it an easy cut through point through the neighborhood instead of utilizing the arterial roadways. Another concern is the close proximity to the Classen Boulevard and Enid Street Intersection. When measured along the east right of way of Classen Boulevard there is less than 230 feet between the centerlines of the intersections. This proximity does not meet the current spacing of $\frac{1}{4}$ mile between public road intersections along arterial roadways specified in the Subdivision Regulations for a major arterial like Classen Boulevard.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends adoption of Ordinance No. O-1617-23 for the closure of Oklahoma Avenue, between Enid Street and Classen Boulevard, to improve traffic safety and circulation in the area of the proposed Classen Landing Addition.