

## CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

August 21, 2012

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a study session at 5:38 p.m. in the Municipal Building Conference Room on the 21st day of August, 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 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT: Councilmembers Castleberry, Gallagher, Griffith, Jungman, Kovach, Lockett, Spaulding, Williams, Mayor Rosenthal

ABSENT: None

Item 1, being:

### DISCUSSION REGARDING A PROPOSED RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE APRIL 2012 GREENWAYS MASTER PLAN.

Ms. Susan Connors, Director of Planning and Community Development, said the first draft of the Greenways Master Plan (GMP) was interconnected with the Storm Water Master Plan (SWMP). She said the GMP was reviewed by a sub-committee of the Greenbelt Commission then by the Greenbelt Commission which included public meetings. The Greenbelt Commission approved the plan on February 20, 2012, and the Planning Commission held a public hearing on April 12, 2012. At that public meeting, concerns were raised by the development community regarding the resolution and statements in the plan so the Planning Commission suggested a Study Session be held on May 14, 2012, to further discuss those concerns. At that meeting the Greenbelt Committee was asked to work with the development community to draft a resolution that would satisfy both the Greenbelt Commission, development community, and Staff. Ms. Connors said a resolution was developed and approved by the Planning Commission on July 12, 2012. She said the main portion of the GMP is a policy document that provides a framework for trail design and construction. She said a large portion of information is included in the Appendices, which can be used as guidelines for further implementation of the plan, but the Appendices are not being adopted as part of the plan. She said a great deal of work went into identifying each waterway that flows through the urban and rural areas of Norman.

Ms. Connors described the four sections of the GMP and its three appendices. The four sections include key points about Norman; Introduction and Purpose of the Plan; Guidelines and Designs Standards; and Implementation Strategies. She said key elements of the plan include the types of trails - regional trails; sidewalk trails; neighborhood trails; parkway trails; and nature trails with definitions of where and how they connect in the system. She said the purpose of the plan dates back to the Norman 2020 Land Use and Transportation Plan where citizens identified a desire for trails that was carried forward into the Norman 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan. She said the GMP goal is to facilitate the movement of citizens in a safe and efficient manner and to allow Norman to be a pedestrian friendly community by linking locations and neighborhoods together.

Guidelines and Design Standards include information on greenway users; possible trail types for Norman; trail design standards – width, surface, access points, and amenities; possible design and construction of pedestrian corridors along roadways; trailheads; recommended amenities – benches, drinking fountains, restroom facilities, maps, etc.; trail material recommendations – asphalt, concrete, natural gravel; and identifies potential future corridors.

Implementation Strategies identify who will possibly implement the plan such as City developers or State and Federal entities through different programs. She said it also identified corridor acquisition/ preservation, funding sources, and maintenance of greenway corridors and trails. She said the plan provides identification and detailed information to proceed in the future with trail location, acquisition and construction as well as guidance of how to begin to identify the framework for a citywide trail system.

Ms. Connors highlighted the Appendices as follows:

- Appendix A – Implementation Guide of Trails and Open Space
- Appendix B – Action Plan for Completion of the Greenways Master Plan
- Appendix C – Summary of Public Input

Ms. Kathryn Walker, Assistant City Attorney, said the resolution adopting the GMP will be on City Council's agenda of August 28, 2012. She said the resolution does not adopt the Appendices, but accepts them as resource material. The resolution does not impose any new regulations, identifies the plan only as a guide for the future, and confirms that the City is guided in its pursuit of trails and green space by the applicable constitutional and statutory provisions. She said adoption of the plan as a guide does not empower the City of Norman, City Staff, City Boards, Commissions, or Committees to enforce any provisions of the resolution or the revised 2012 GMP. Councilmember Gallagher asked if the GMP is only a guidance document, how will it be used, if adopted? Ms. Walker said, if adopted, it will not enact regulations as the plan will just be available if the City wanted to create a new trail or trail system. She said Council will have the ability to look at different sections of a proposed trail and change the location if needed and this will also allow them to work with affected property owners. Mayor Rosenthal said the plan is also a resource to developers who may wish to construct trails and provides guidance on the best location of trails and how to construct them. Ms. Walker said the plan could help developers decide where to position a trail based on where the trail might connect to another trail in the future.

Ms. Walker said the GMP does not require any property owner to donate or otherwise contribute land, property, improvements, or money for any trails(s), greenways, or riparian corridors. She said the City, in its pursuit of trails or other green space, shall at all times be guided by the United States Constitution, the Oklahoma Constitution, and all applicable Oklahoma Statutes.

Mayor Rosenthal acknowledged Ms. Jane Ingels, Chair of the Greenbelt Commission, and Mr. Harold Heiple who worked with Staff on the Greenbelt Commission on final language.

Councilmember Kovach said the plan is an important step for the community. He said there are many parts of Norman that need sidewalks for connection to other neighborhoods. He said he has been to other communities that have trails, sidewalks, and connectivity that are well used, which pays off in a lot of ways such as taking congestion off the road and contributing to a healthy lifestyle. He applauds the direction of the plan and feels it is an aspirational tool that will help guide Norman in the future.

Councilmember Gallagher asked which cities were used as models and Ms. Connors said much of the plan was developed by Halff and Associates for the City of Norman. She said Staff worked on the plan to make it appropriate for Norman, but Staff did not look at other community documents. Councilmember Gallagher asked if Staff looked at any other models regarding costs to construct trails and Ms. Connors said there are dollar figures for each trail piece in Appendix A. Councilmember Gallagher said most of the costs in Appendix A are trails in agriculturally zoned land that is nowhere near a subdivision and he was wondering about costs of new sidewalks, remodeling sidewalks, and amenities as well as man power and maintenance. He asked if Staff was envisioning funding would come from sales tax or General Obligation Bonds and Ms. Connors said Staff and the Greenbelt Commission only considered general funding ideas, nothing specific. Councilmember Gallagher asked if Staff had an idea of how many miles the trail pattern would cover in east Norman versus west Norman as well as total miles and Ms. Connors said she did not have that at this time, but could get the information.

Mayor Rosenthal said she has spent time in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where quite a number of walking trails had been developed that are very accessible in the immediate urban area. She said she does have concerns about overdeveloping nature trails with eight to twelve foot widths with water fountains. She said Santa Fe has relatively narrow trails and people carry their own water. She said the Santa Fe trails wind through neighborhoods and are quite attractive and well used. She said trails are hugely popular and according to Halff and Associates, trails significantly increase property values.

Mr. Evan Dunn, 1014 Missouri Street, said it sounds like the City relied on the Halff and Associates report for much of the program and asked about information on Halff and Associates such as how much experience they have and what models they used. Mayor Rosenthal said they helped with the Parks Master Plan so the City has worked with them prior to the GMP and were very impressed with the firm, especially with their public input process. Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said Halff and Associates is an established parks, recreation, trails, greenways consultant firm based in Austin, Texas. He said Halff and Associates worked with PBS&J on Norman's Storm Water Master Plan (SWMP) and the GMP became a sub-part of the SWMP to maximize storm water corridors where trails might be available. He said Halff and Associates considered similar plans in college communities within the Oklahoma football conference.

Councilmember Gallagher said he is familiar with Wichita, Kansas, which has quite an extensive system that links parks and residences. He asked how long it took to develop that system and Mr. O'Leary said, having lived in the area for many years, he knows that Wichita had taken a serious view of greenbelts, trails, and public art. He said the planning probably dates back thirty years and funding came from bond elections and sales tax. He said there was also support from the development community so private funds could have been used as well.

Councilmember Castleberry asked how much the City has invested with Halff and Associates for the GMP and Mr. O'Leary said approximately \$100,000.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated August 21, 2012, from Susan F. Connors, Director of Planning and Community Development, to Mayor and Members of Council
2. Resolution No. R-1112-119
3. Key Guiding Principles of the Greenway Master Plan accepted by City Council with Resolution No. R-0910-68
4. Resolution No. R-1910-68 with Storm Drainage Master Plan Overview and Storm Drainage Master Plan Priority Study Areas
5. Greenways Master Plan – Concerns Most Frequently Expressed prepared by Jane Ingels, Chair of the Greenbelt Commission
6. Greenbelt Commission minutes of February 20, 2012
7. Norman Planning Commission minutes of April 12, 2012, Norman Planning Commission Study Session minutes of May 17, 2012, and July 12, 2012
8. City of Norman Greenways Master Plan – Greenways into the Future, dated April 2012
9. City of Norman Greenways Master Plan – Appendices – Greenways into the Future, dated April 2012
10. PowerPoint presentation entitled “Greenways Master Plan,” dated August 21, 2012

Participants in discussion

1. Ms. Susan Connors, Director of Planning and Community Development
2. Ms. Kathryn Walker, Assistant City Attorney
3. Mr. Evan Dunn, 1014 Missouri Street, asked questions
4. Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works

The meeting adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

ATTEST:

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City Clerk

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Mayor