

CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE MINUTES

August 26, 2013

The City Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met at 5:30 p.m. in the Conference Room on the 26th day of August, 2013, 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 Castleberry, Heiple, Holman, and Chairman Jungman
TARDY:	Councilmember Miller arrived at 6:00 p.m.
ABSENT:	Councilmember Williams
OTHER COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT	Councilmember Castleberry Councilmember Heiple
STAFF PRESENT:	Mr. Jack Burdett, Engineering Assistant Mr. Angelo Lombardo, Transportation Traffic Engineer Mr. Scott Sturtz, City Engineer Ms. Karla Chapman, Administrative Technician
OTHER GUESTS PRESENT:	Mr. Todd Cochran, Citizen Ms. Janice Oak, Citizen Mr. Walt Strong, Westheimer Airport Ms. Karleen Smith, OU Parking and Transportation

Item 1, being:

CART RIDERSHIP REPORT INCLUDING SAFERIDE AND EXTENDED SERVICE FOR THE MONTHS OF JUNE AND JULY, 2013.

Ms. Karleen Smith, OU Parking and Transportation, said Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART) provided over 1 million riders transportation for FYE 2013.

Councilmember Castleberry asked what the CART fees are and Ms. Smith said CART charges \$0.50 for full fare, \$0.25 for half fare, and the Sooner Express is \$2.25 with free transfers.

Ms. Janice Oak, citizen, asked whether the CART shelters that were removed on the south oval could be placed at Sooner Mall since there currently is not a shelter at that location. Ms. Smith said the shelters removed from south oval have been relocated to the Campus Depot and Brooks Street locations; however, she will talk to Mr. Doug Meyers, OU Parking and Transportation Administrator, about placing a shelter at Sooner Mall.

Items submitted for the record

1. Cleveland Area Rapid Transit Ridership Totals for the Month of June, 2013
2. Cleveland Area Rapid Transit Ridership Totals for the Month of July, 2013
3. Cleveland Area Rapid Transit Newsletter entitled "CART. We connect you."
4. Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART) Route Schedule and Transit Guide, Norman, Oklahoma 2013-2014, updated August, 2013

* * * * *

Item 2, being:

UPDATE ON SIDEWALK MASTER PLAN.

Mr. Scott Sturtz, City Engineer, said Council approved Ordinance No. 1890 in September 1966 requiring sidewalks on both sides of the street for new construction and platting and the City initiated American with Disabilities Act (ADA) sidewalk program in 1990. The City established four (4) sidewalk funding programs in 1997 to include: Sidewalk Program for Schools and Arterials; Sidewalk Accessibility Project; Citywide Sidewalk Project; and Downtown Area Sidewalk Project.

Mr. Sturtz highlighted the current sidewalk projects in the Capital Improvements Projects (CIP) FYE 2014 to include the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) funded projects. He said basically all CIP will include new sidewalks and/or improvement the existing sidewalks, as well as bike routes. He also noted that if a contractor damages an existing sidewalk, it will be replaced with an ADA sidewalk, even if the sidewalk was not ADA previously.

Staff said currently there is not a database for sidewalk issues and there is not a long-range plan for resolving sidewalk issues. Mr. Sturtz said currently Public Works and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) staff have gathered information and created a map for the three (3) major areas needing repairs or placement of sidewalks to include: ADA accessible ramps, sidewalk repairs, and sidewalk gaps. He highlighted the ADA ramp inventory stating there are 9,000 total required ramp locations within the City and 6,800 (76%) have been completed to meet and/or already met ADA requirements. He said 800 (9%) of the existing ramps in the City do not meet current ADA requirements and 1,400 (15%) of locations in the City do not have ramps at all.

The City operates the Citywide Sidewalk Project on a 50/50 cost share program. Mr. Sturtz said sidewalks that need repaired are the responsibility of the adjacent property owner. He said the property owner can use the City's contractor or could decide to hire their own; however, the City will only reimburse up to 50% of the cost that the City's contractor would charge. Chair Jungman asked the process for the Citywide Sidewalk Project and Mr. Jack Burdett, Engineering Assistant, said it is a complaint basis program and the City would then contact the adjacent property owner to let them know the sidewalk is in need of repair. Councilmember Castleberry asked what the typical cost is to install a sidewalk and Mr. Burdett said the costs is \$25 per foot for a four (4) foot wide sidewalk and \$50 per foot to install a driveway.

Mr. Sturtz said sidewalk gaps are sections of sidewalk not present across one or more properties and can occur for several reasons e.g., development infill has not occurred yet; development around existing property is not required to install a sidewalk because the existing property was developed prior to the sidewalk ordinance, etc. He highlighted missing sidewalks and sidewalk gaps in Norman along arterial roads, collector roads, and local roads. Mr. Sturtz said each of the sidewalks and/or sidewalk gap programs would need to be ranked and each factor would have a weight that is compiled to a "total weight." He highlighted the proposed rating/ranking factors to prioritize sidewalk projects as follows:

- Distance to the Attractor destination, i.e., school, shopping districts, etc.;
- The presence of multiple Attractors;
- What is the condition of the site from new to hazardous;
- Whether there is another ADA compliant route available to the Attractor;
- What type of road adjacent to the route from local to arterial;
- What type of street crossings occur from local to arterial;
- Whether there is a CART bus stop location involved;
- Whether the location is a possible development infill;
- Whether this route is specifically an ADA improvement request;
- Has there been an accident at this location;
- Citizen input to the request; and
- The age of the request.

Staff provided a prioritized sidewalk projects request list according to the proposed ranking process, giving the location, description, total weight, cost estimate and cost range, and any project notes, i.e., pending or new request, ODOT funding, and/or not funded. Mr. Sturtz said some of the projects fit the criteria in current sidewalk programs or are eligible for State funding. Councilmember Holman asked if Staff prepared another map that is specific to the downtown area and Mr. Burdett said Staff is currently working on such a map that will include the area(s) just east of the railroad and the north and south neighborhoods branching off of Main Street.

Item 2, continued:

Mr. Sturtz highlighted the total sidewalk program costs as follows:

- ADA Ramps: \$2.2 million total cost; current CIP funding is \$35,000/year and at current funding it would take over 60 years to complete all locations;
- Sidewalk Repair: Complaint driven so total cost and time to complete is unknown; current CIP funding is \$65,000/year; and
- Sidewalk Gaps: \$3 million total current estimate; Current CIP funding is \$70,000/year; ODOT funding is \$250,000/year (if approved); and current projects would take 10 years to complete.

The funding sources for sidewalk projects include Capital Funds; grants; bonds; neighborhood cost sharing; and public/private partnerships. Mr. Sturtz said Council options include:

- Option 1: Leave sidewalk program(s) unchanged
- Option 2: Increase CIP funding in one or more areas
- Option 3: Council can choose to direct Staff in another direction

Chair Jungman asked what percentage of the Capital Budget goes toward sidewalks and Staff did not have that exact figure but felt 1% was approximate. Mr. Sturtz said the City is doing \$620,000 worth of sidewalk projects this year and the projects are being designed in-house. Councilmember Castleberry asked whether Staff could commit to more sidewalk projects if there was more funding and Mr. Sturtz said yes, depending on the size and the scope of the projects. The Committee discussed and felt the City is making good progress regarding sidewalks; however, more funding for sidewalks should be considered.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint Presentation entitled "Sidewalk Master Plan," City Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee, presented by Scott Sturtz, City Engineer, and Jack Burdett, Engineering Assistant, dated August 26, 2013

* * * * *

Item 3, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING A RAILROAD QUIET ZONE FOR NORMAN.

Mr. Angelo Lombardo, Traffic Engineer, said railroad quiet zones are railroad crossings where trains are prohibited from sounding their horns to decrease noise levels for nearby residential communities. He said train horns can be silenced only when other safety measures are used to compensate for the absence of horns.

Mr. Lombardo highlighted the history of Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) rules regarding whistles and stated the FRA rules are as follow:

- Provide localities nationwide with the opportunity to establish quiet zones;
- Federal rule pre-empts all applicable state laws;
- To qualify – communities wishing to establish quiet zones must equip proposed grade crossings with adequate safety measures to overcome the decrease in safety created by silencing the train horns; and
- The additional safety measures must be constructed at the community's own expense and must meet federal specifications.

Mr. Lombardo said there are 17 "at-grade" railroad crossings in Norman and 15 years ago a major expenditure of funds (\$2 million) was used to help modernize crossing controls and surfaces. He said gated protection and active devices are at every crossing and Norman already have a new constant warning circuitry in place.

Item 3, continued:

Staff highlighted a map depicting all the railroad crossings in Norman and said the quiet zone target area is from Robinson Street south to Post Oak Road since the area near Post Oak Road has seen a lot of recent development.

Item 3, continued:

Mr. Lombardo highlighted the process to create a quiet zone as follows:

- Application through the FRA by Public Authority;
- Each highway-rail grade crossing within a quiet zone must be equipped with approved Supplemental Safety Measure or Wayside Horn;
- Quiet Zone Risk Index (QZRI), less than Nationwide Significant Risk Threshold (NSRT); or the Risk Index With Horns (RIWH); and
- The minimum length of a quiet zone is ½ mile.

Mr. Lombardo highlighted each of the quiet zone supplemental safety measures alternatives, giving a brief explanation and cost for each as follows:

- **Four-quadrant gate systems**: \$500,000 – when a train approaches, all roadway approach and exit lanes on both sides of the highway-rail crossing must be spanned by gates;
- **One-way street with gates**: gates installed such that all approaching highway lanes to the public highway-rail grade crossing are completely blocked and crossing must be equipped with Constant Warning Circuitry, Power Out indicator, gates and flashing lights;
- **Gates with medians or channelization devices**: \$45,000 with \$500 annual maintenance costs – must extend at least 100 feet from the gate arm, or if an intersection, at least 60 feet from the gate arm and have a mountable medium. Already located at Duffy Street, Constitution Street (partially), and planned for Cedar Lane Road;
- **Wayside horns**: \$100,000 with \$500-\$1,000 annual maintenance costs – a stationary horn system activated by the railroad highway grade warning system, mounted at the crossing rather than the locomotive, to deliver an audible warning to motorists and pedestrians; simplest way to reduce train horn noise when corridor is not eligible for a quiet Zone; sounds like a train horn and is digitally recorded from actual locomotive; and cycles through train whistle pattern until train reaches the crossing; and
- **Permanent closures**

Mr. Lombardo highlighted the impact of wayside horns and noise reduction percentages which ranged from 86% to 98% noise reduction. He said Norman could consider installing wayside horns because of quality of life issues; economic impact on the area; a train horns every 45 minutes, 24/7 all year long; and train traffic is increasing.

Mr. Lombardo said the key players involved with quiet zones include the City, Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway Company, Amtrak, Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT), and the FRA. He said the timeframe for a quiet zone application is approximately 18 months and includes a railroad agreement, FRA Quiet Order Application, ODOT coordination, and actual application process.

Mr. Lombardo said the City will have to pay for the costs of a quiet zone to include the signal and crossing costs, street modification, utility impact, landscaping, and long term maintenance costs.

Item 3, continued:

Staff highlighted supplemental safety measures and costs for several crossing locations in Norman as follows:

1. Acres Street	Four Quadrant Gate System	\$ 500,000
2. Gray Street	One-Way Street with warning lights and gates (existing)	\$ 0
3. Main Street	One-Way Street with warning lights and gates (existing)	\$ 0
4. Eufaula Street	Four Quadrant Gate System	\$ 500,000
5. Duffy Street	Median with warning lights and gates (completed)	\$ 0
6. Boyd Street	Median with warning lights and gates	\$ 45,000
7. Brooks Street	Median with warning lights and gates	\$ 45,000
8. Lindsey Street	Median with warning lights and gates	\$ 45,000
9. Constitution Street	Median with warning lights and gates (partially completed)	\$ 25,000
10. Cedar Lane Road	Median with warning lights and gates (bond project)	\$ 0
11. Post Oak Road	Median with warning lights and gates	\$ 45,000
TOTAL COST		\$ 1,205,000

Mr. Lombardo said potential phasing exists for quiet zone installation in two (2) phases: North package - from Lindsey Street to Acres Street with a \$1,135,000 cost and a South package - Post Oak Road to Constitution Street with a \$70,000 cost. He said special considerations will need to be considered to include pedestrian safety considerations at Legacy Trail, trespassing problem, multiple pedestrian fatalities have occurred over the last 10 years, and a fence may need to be required. Additional consideration at the Boyd Street crossing include new development whereas driveways are too close to crossing and the potential of four quadrant gate systems having an increased cost of \$455,000.

Staff said the public will need to be involved in quiet zone discussions and process. Mr. Lombardo said public meetings could be scheduled and Staff would utilize newsletters, newspapers, the City web site, etc., for public education regarding quiet zones.

Staff said the next steps include:

- Funding commitment by the City;
- Meeting with FRA to discuss eligibility;
- Conduct diagnostic team inspection with BNSF and FRA to confirm appropriateness of proposed supplemental safety measures;
- Begin process with FRA for a Quiet Zone; and
- 18-24 month long process

Chair Jungman said he understood quiet zones could be costly and felt that some safety issues would need to be addressed. He said for this item to be on tonight's agenda to see if there were any objections regarding railroad quiet zones. Chair Jungman asked Staff whether there might be some expectation that private investments would be donated towards the quiet zone area and Mr. Lombardo said yes that is a possibility because quiet zones are a quality of life issue.

Chair Jungman said he was in favor of trying to incorporate some of the railroad locations into quiet zones in the Capital Budget and the Committee agreed.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled "Railroad Quiet Zones," City Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee, City of Norman, dated August 26, 2013

Item 4, being:

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION.

None.

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

City Clerk

Mayor