

CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE MINUTES

September 24, 2013

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a study session at 5:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building Conference Room on the 24th day of September, 2013, 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, Heiple,
Holman, Griffith, Kovach, Miller,
Williams, and Mayor Rosenthal

ABSENT: Councilmember Jungman

PRESENTATION OF THE CITY OF NORMAN SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING PLAN BY THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT AND THE PROJECT TEAM.

Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said the Norman Signage and Wayfinding Plan (Plan) is the result of a partnership between the City of Norman, the Norman Convention and Visitors' Bureau (NCVB), and the Norman Chamber of Commerce (Chamber). He said the goals and objectives of the Plan is to design an easily understood user-friendly distinct navigational system guiding visitors to and from City destinations; promote tourist, historical, and cultural destinations as well as support and assist the local retail market; build upon existing identity for the City; reflect in the wayfinding components and in overall marketing; and identify potential funding sources for future wayfinding implementation.

Mr. O'Leary introduced Mr. Karl Stickle, Guernsey Engineers, and Ms. Kelly Kolar, Kolar Designs, and said representatives from the NCVB and the Chamber are in attendance as well. Ms. Kolar said the Project Committee and partners examined benchmark cities to create a first class welcome to Norman that will celebrate what is unique to the City of Norman as well as add to the quality of life. She said Norman's gateways were discussed and a strategy exists with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) due to the I-35 renovation. Ms. Kolar said because of this unique timing; she felt Norman should celebrate its connections to the major highways in the area, the overall unique character identities of the neighborhoods, and honor the City's heritage.

Ms. Kolar said signage connects the assets of a City through an integrated approach and a comprehensive collection of signs were studied to help determine how the City could better connect visitors and others. She highlighted the sign criteria and said they were broken down into three categories:

- Major Destinations: Destinations that have the largest attendance figures, draw from a national and regional audience, and meet all ODOT requirements;
- Primary Destinations and Districts: Appear on primary streets leading from highway and destinations that have a large attendance figures and draw from a regional audience; and
- Secondary/Tertiary Destinations: Street Trailblazing and Pedestrian Signage – appears on primary streets within districts and corridors.

Ms. Kolar highlighted the *major destinations* as US Highway 77 (southbound only) –Max Westheimer Airport and Downtown; Tecumseh Road - Norman Healthplex, University North Park, and Max Westheimer Airport; Robinson Street - Cleveland County Fairgrounds, Norman Regional Hospital, University North Park and Max Westheimer Airport; Main Street - Campus Corner, Downtown, and University of Oklahoma (OU); Lindsey Street - Norman Welcome Center, OU, and OU Memorial Stadium; and Highway 9 – Lake Thunderbird State Park, Lloyd Noble Center, Museum of Natural History, and the National Weather Center.

The *primary destinations* and districts include: Tecumseh Road - Norman Conference Center at University North Park; Robinson Street - Griffin Park at Cleveland County Fairgrounds, Norman Conference Center at University North Park; Griffin Hospital and Westwood Park at Max Westheimer Airport; Main Street - Courthouse, City Hall, Public Library, Santa Fe Depot, and Sooner Theatre at Downtown; and Highway 9 - Norman Center for Employee Development (NCED) Conference Center at the National Weather Center.

Ms. Kolar said a master list of destinations within Norman was developed and evaluated based upon ODOT criteria for highway signage. The majority of potential destinations met ODOT criteria; therefore, the project team developed additional criteria and recommended one, two, or all of the following categories for inclusion in Norman's program to include:

- Publically owned;
- Not-for-profit organization;
- Educational institution serving over 400 attendees;
- Providing services to the general public with capacity of over 200 visitors;
- Annual attendance – minimum 10,000;
- Regional significance; and
- Host to major events

Ms. Kolar highlighted potential future additions to the system to include: building ID, parking ID/regulatory, transit system, neighborhood ID, and pedestrian sign types, i.e., directional, map, kiosk, and posting kiosk.

Ms. Kolar said the Project Team was charged with looking very specifically at the roadway signage system and after a series of meetings the Project Team began to understand and create a "kit of parts," of the sign design i.e., City and OU flags, existing identities, ODOT color palette (ODOT blue and ODOT red), the typography, e.g. frutiger and times new roman, and the pattern of ODOT prairie grass. She said the final recommended "kit of parts," is only a design concept stage and she said there will be a future phase of design, development, and execution for the final Plan. She said from a conceptual standpoint the Project Team began looking and polling the City of Norman icon (gear and sun) knowing that other icons could be added to it and create an element that could become the ornamental topper on the signage system. Ms. Kolar said the integrated approach of combining the assets include the City of Norman flag element (gear and sun) which is existing and recognizable, along with the introduction of the Chambers logo (slight arch element meaning "always looking along the horizon." She said the remaining part of the signage is purely functional. Ms. Kolar highlighted elements and examples for the sign family in comparison to highway signage to include vehicular directional, parking directional, transit location, bus stop, neighborhood gateway and university districts, neighborhood street signs, and pedestrian directory, which could all celebrate Norman. She said the primary signage type is a modular system that can be added to and built over time and can also be revised for the potential future application and expansion.

Mr. O'Leary said the NCVB and Chamber have formerly adopted the Plan and a pilot project for Main Street is proposed. He said the signs have not been designed yet, but the preliminary opinion is that the Main Street pilot program is estimated to be \$80,160 as follows:

• Small: (1)	\$2,700 each	\$2,400 installation each	\$ 5,100
• Medium: (5)	\$3,300 each	\$2,400 installation each	\$28,500
• Large: (2)	\$4,200 each	\$2,400 installation each	\$13,200
• Design Fee Allowance			\$20,000
• Contingency – 20%			<u>\$13,360</u>
		TOTAL	\$80,160

Mr. O’Leary said the costs do not include freeway signage; assumed cost share with ODOT; and signs are classified as follows: small: two or fewer destinations, medium: three destinations, and large: four or more destinations.

Mr. O’Leary said the Plan implementation process will include administrative actions to include:

- The City, NCVB, and Chamber should update the partnerships’ Memorandum of Understanding (MOI) to address roles and implementation;
- A standardized signage code to regulate public and private signs should be developed and enforced;
- A standing committee should be established to review signage applications and to monitor the Wayfinding Program; and
- Following a successful Pilot Project, the full scope of Phase I of the Plan project could be implemented for approximately \$256,000.

Mr. O’Leary said the funding strategies options include Capital and General Funds, as well as sponsorships by entities included on signage to contribute to installation and maintenance expenses. He said districts may work with the City to develop iconography and specific plans for district attractions. Mr. O’Leary said special funding mechanisms can be utilized such as special improvement districts, etc. He said grant funding may also be available, e.g., Federal Highways/Transportation Enhancements; Community Development Block Grant (CDBG); Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation; and Oklahoma Arts Council.

Mr. O’Leary said Phase I includes coordination with ODOT for signage along southbound and northbound I-35. He said now is the time to interject with the replacement of signs on I-35 what the new signs would say/read. Phase I would also include northern tier signage at Norman Healthplex, Max Westheimer Airport, and Cleveland County Fairgrounds, central tier signage for locations north of Robinson Street and south of Lindsey Street, and southern tier signage for areas south of Lindsey Street. Mr. O’Leary said the estimated costs for the NSWP Phase I of the Plan do not include freeway signage; assumed cost share with ODOT; and costs assume prior installation of Pilot Project signage. He said each sign will have a \$2,400 installation fee and additional costs are as follows:

<u>North:</u> \$72,000		
• Small (8)	\$2,700 + Installation	\$40,800 each sign
• Medium (2)	\$3,300 + Installation	\$11,400 each sign
• Large (3)	\$4,200 + Installation	\$19,800 each sign
 <u>Central:</u> \$42,900		
• Small (1)	\$2,700 + Installation	\$ 5,100 each sign
• Medium (2)	\$3,300 + Installation	\$11,400 each sign
• Large (4)	\$4,200 + Installation	\$26,400 each sign
 <u>South:</u> \$73,500		
• Small (7)	\$2,700 + Installation	\$35,700 each sign
• Medium (2)	\$3,300 + Installation	\$11,400 each sign
• Large (4)	\$4,200 + Installation	\$26,400 each sign
• Design Fee Allowance:		\$25,000
• Contingency (20%)		<u>\$42,680</u>
	TOTAL	\$256,080

Mr. O'Leary said by implementing the Plan, the partners and community stakeholders can increase the value and recognition of Norman's brand and meet the goals set forth for the initiative. He said future steps include:

- Council consideration for adopting the Plan by resolution;
- Coordination with ODOT regarding I-35 signage;
- Development of Pilot Project (design and implementation), including final design of sign elements;
- Explore grant opportunities for wayfinding;
- Pursue public/private partnerships for project funding; and
- Development of Phase I signage (design and implementation)

Councilmember Kovach asked if adopting the Plan would commit the City to completing projects beyond the pilot project. Mr. O'Leary said the resolution adopting the concept would need to address particular principles of the Plan, but going forward the Plan will be a capital project budget issue, general budget issue, and/or grant application issue. He said he does not foresee the resolution committing to any specific practice or funding.

Councilmember Kovach asked whether the City, NCVB, Chamber, or a Committee would operate the public/private partnership program and sell space on the signage. Mr. O'Leary said that particular topic will still need to be worked out and felt one option is the partnership between City, NCVB, and Chamber could request a citizen committee to be Council appointed.

Mr. O'Leary said once the signs are up they must be well-maintained and Ms. Kolar said the Project Team made sure to design a responsible and sustainable signage system that could be maintained and continued over time by in-house City Staff.

Councilmember Kovach said he is supportive of a Main Street pilot program, but felt like more details needed to be researched regarding the infrastructure of the program as well as how the program will work. He said he supports a list of signs to be submitted to ODOT and encouraged Staff to separately pursue building some sort of infrastructure together on how the program will be handled.

Councilmember Castleberry asked about the Plan timeframe and Mr. O'Leary said it would be approximately three (3) years if funding is not an issue. Councilmembers Castleberry and Miller supported moving forward with a partnership with NCVB and the Chamber and asked if NCVB and the Chamber had any funding commitments. Mr. O'Leary said Staff can draft a resolution that adopts the NSWV concept for Council consideration. He said the next step for Council consideration will be the Main Street pilot project, whether it will be part of budget process or part of a grant application.

Mr. John Woods, President, Norman Chamber of Commerce, said the Main Street pilot program Phase I meets universal criteria for business partnerships regarding directional signage, e.g., Campus Corner, Lindsey Street Corridor, Downtown, etc. He felt interstate signage needed to be address with ODOT immediately.

Mayor Rosenthal said she supports adopting the sign code design concept, i.e., family of signs, designations of major, primary, and secondary signs; however, not a neighborhood sign system at this time. She said adopting the Plan design concept at this time will allow Staff and the Project Team to begin discussions with ODOT regarding I-35 signage. Mayor Rosenthal asked whether the signage proposals for the "Norman Welcome Center" at Lindsey Street will be the right/future NCVB location and suggested making certain before the City submits it to ODOT. She felt the Community Planning and Transportation Committee could work through the Plan details and particulars.

City Council Conference Minutes

September 24, 2013

Page 5

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled "City of Norman Signage and Wayfinding Plan Presentation to the City of Norman City Council," dated September 24, 2013

Participants in discussion

1. Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Public Works Director
2. Mr. Karl Stickle, Guernsey Engineers
3. Ms. Kelly Kolar, Kolar Design

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor