

CITY COUNCIL  
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION  
COMMITTEE MINUTES

April 25, 2012

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 25th day of April, 2012, 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 Gallagher, Kovach, Lockett, and Chairman Dillingham

ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Mayor Cindy Rosenthal  
Councilmember Jim Griffith, Ward Six  
Councilmember Dave Spaulding, Ward Five  
Ms. Susan Connors, Planning and Community Development Director  
Mr. Terry Floyd, Development Coordinator  
Mr. Angelo Lombardo, Traffic Engineer  
Ms. Leah Messner, Assistant City Attorney  
Mr. Shawn O’Leary, Director of Public Works  
Mr. Mike Rayburn, Staff Engineer  
Mr. David Riesland, Traffic Engineer  
Ms. Karla Chapman, Administrative Technician

OTHER GUESTS PRESENT: Ms. Jeanette Coker, Concerned Citizen  
Mr. Doug Meyers, OU Parking and Transportation Administrator  
Ms. Veronica Mills, OU Grad Student  
Ms. Chris Nanny, Chair, CART Disability Advisory Committee  
Ms. Janice Oak, Progressive Independence  
Mr. Walt Strong, Westheimer Airport

FOLLOW-UP REPORT ON RADAR SPEED FEEDBACK SIGNS.

Mr. Angelo Lombardo, Traffic Engineer, provided a summary of the City's Traffic Calming Program (TCP) as follows:

- FYE 2003: Pilot TCP began in Cambridge Addition with trying several types of calming devices to include three traffic circles;
- FYE 2004: TCP projects started on a “first come, first serve” basis; five traffic circles were built;
- FYE 2005: Prototype speed tables built near Truman School on Parkside Road;
- FYE 2006: 30 speed tables and four traffic circles were constructed;
- FYE 2007: Rapid build-up of project requests; TCP projects had to be prioritized; 24 speed tables and one traffic circle built;
- FYE 2008: 22 valid petitions from neighborhoods throughout Norman; Council increased the TCP budget to \$400,000; 100 speed table built;
- FYE 2009: Complaints of “too rough” and “too many” speed tables; qualifying criteria change made by Council; three radar speed feedback trailers purchased and deployed for short-term speed fixes. 10 “rough” tables modified and 41 new speed tables built;
- FYE 2010: Council directs less physical traffic calming; Traffic Division studies the effectiveness of a speed feedback signs;
- FYE 2011: Council chooses not to fund Traffic Calming Capital Improvements; six permanent solar-powered Radar Speed Feedback Signs were permanently installed on Walnut Road, Cherry Creek – Western View, and Northcliff Avenue using balance of funds for FYE 2010; and two Radar Speed Feedback Signs integrated with school beacons installed on Gray Street as part of Jefferson-Longfellow Safe Routes to School project.

Mr. Lombardo said in 2009 Council made qualifying changes to the TCP to include the increase of petition eligible area; increase the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed – changed from seven (7) to eight (8) miles per hour (mph) over the posted speed limit; and the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) changed from 500 vehicles per day to 600 vehicles per day. He said the criteria regarding the number of reported speed-related accidents on road in three-year period is greater than five accidents can be used as a substitute criterion in lieu of either the speed or volume requirements did not change.

Mr. Lombardo said obtaining any traffic calming measure begins with traffic data collection and if a requested neighborhood streets meets the qualifying criteria a Speed Feedback Trailer is deployed to the location for about one week. He said in order to evaluate the lasting effects of the SFT, the City will conduct a second traffic data collection and follow-up study, as well as engage the neighborhood. If the neighborhood street still qualifies after the second study, Staff will meet with the residents to discuss traffic calming options and eligible residents must pass 60% minimum support petition to get traffic calming project when funding becomes available.

A Speed Feedback Sign Study (SFSS) was conducted in December 2009 to explore the effect of speed trailers over time, i.e., will citizens disregard the speed trailers after they have been deployed at a particular location for a period of time. A Radar Speed Feedback Sign was deployed to Northcliff Avenue for a four week period because the street was long and straight, had a vacant area to place the unit, and it was being considered for a TCP project. Two major objectives were to determine the influence of the feedback trailer in regard to 1) the distance from the trailer and 2) time of deployment. Determining effects of speeds downstream of the trailer were also analyzed, i.e., to what speeds do drivers speed up at 400 feet and 800 feet distances from the speed trailer. Traffic and trailer data was gathered weekly including statistics whether drivers speed up in a shorter distance from the trailer over time and how will long term speed feedback installation continue to slow down drivers. The conclusion found that speed feedback trailers are excellent in reducing speeds, but like other calming devices, drivers speed up after passing the device. The SFSS also determined that in order to “calm” a corridor, feedback signs should be spaced 300 feet to 400 feet apart.

Mr. Lombardo said speed feedback signs would need a power source to keep them operating; therefore, more maintenance costs are a possibility. However, he said the City purchased six radar sign permanent solar powered speed feedback units which are maintenance free with the FYE 2010 balance from the Traffic Calming Project funds. Mr. Lombardo said the speed feedback units were installed on three neighborhood collector streets that had qualified for the TCP in February 2011, but these neighborhoods were not able to get the 60% required signatures on support petitions and include Walnut Road, Cherry Creek/Western View Corridor, and Northcliff Avenue. Mr. Lombardo said speed hump(s) cost approximately \$3,000 to install while the speed feedback units cost approximately \$6,700 each. He said each unit displays the vehicles speed and also collects daily traffic data which can be used as a tool in notifying the Norman Police Department about problem areas that may need to be patrolled. The Traffic Division evaluated the data to determine the longtime effectiveness of the units to reduce speeding and comparable reports from Minneapolis and Bellevue, Washington, indicated a minimum 4% speed reduction was still apparent after three (3) years.

Mr. Lombardo said the conclusions of the six speed feedback trailers on Walnut Road, Cherry Creek/Western View Corridor, and Northcliff Avenue are as follows:

- ✓ Radar Speed Feedback Units seem to have some sustaining presence in slowing traffic;
- ✓ 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds and number of excessive speeders driving greater than 35 mph have dropped at all sites – and have stayed down for 11 months;
- ✓ As expected, numbers tend to increase downstream of the units and would need to be placed in series to “calm” streets;
- ✓ Data suggests that units can be a valuable addition to the traffic calming toolbox; and
- ✓ Manufacturers also integrate feedback units into traditional school zone beacons which is another good safety application of the units.

Chairman Dillingham asked Staff how many neighborhoods requests are pending the City and Mr. Lombardo said the requests have slowed down considerably, but there are currently six requests waiting for assistance. Councilmember Kovach asked what Staff time goes into deploying a speed feedback unit and Mr. Lombardo said Staff deploys the unit on Mondays, monitoring the unit all week; Staff will turn the unit around in the middle of the week, and remove the unit on Fridays. Mr. Lombardo said Staff has done a very good job of working the speed feedback unit deployment process into

their daily work schedule. Councilmember Kovach said he would like to see funding in the budget for speed feedback trailers and Chairman Dillingham asked what would be a reasonable amount for FYE 2013-2014. Mayor Rosenthal said this is encouraging data, but felt Staff should continue monitoring the speed feedback units since the trend does show the speeds/speeders eventually start "creeping" back up and Mr. Lombardo felt the speed feedback trailers should be utilized as the first traffic calming device for neighborhoods that qualify for the calming program; with the option of utilizing more physical methods, i.e., speed humps etc., if needed and/or necessary. He said the speed feedback trailers would be a good intervention if Council did not feel comfortable opening the floodgates of the traffic calming program at this time, but should the trend change; the option would still be available. Mayor Rosenthal asked Staff to bring back cost figures for speed feedback trailers for the six neighborhoods who requested traffic calming assistance.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled "*City of Norman, Effect of Radar Speed Feedback Signs,*" Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee, dated April 25, 2012

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE INTERSECTION EVALUATION AT PORTER AVENUE AND ACRES STREET.

Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said Staff evaluated the Porter Avenue and Acres Street intersection which has a high volume of pedestrian traffic, to include children who attend Jefferson and Longfellow Schools. He said the comprehensive review found some interesting challenges and a number of options that Council can consider. Mr. O'Leary said if any of the options are acceptable, they can be incorporated into the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) discussion in a couple of weeks.

Mr. David Riesland, Assistant Traffic Engineer, said an in-pavement lighted crosswalk system was installed across Porter Avenue at Acres Street in the early 2000's, but the system is prone to water entering the light cans and shorting out the system. He said because of persistent maintenance issues, Staff began to look at other solutions and a SmartStud system was installed in 2011, which is better. He said these types of systems still are problematic and Staff continues to look at new and improved systems.

Mr. Riesland said the Porter Avenue at Acres Street Safe Route to School Project increased motorist awareness of school zones by locating the school flashers overhead on mast arms. He said the increased awareness tends to lower speeds of vehicles at the in-pavement lighted crosswalk; however, the scope of the project could/did not address the maintenance and security issues with the crosswalk. Mr. Riesland said one of the primary uses of the crosswalk at Porter Avenue and Acres Street is for students traveling to and from Jefferson and/or Longfellow Schools. He said attendance zones for these schools do not extend very far west of Porter Avenue and Staff requested information from Norman Public Schools (NPS) regarding where the existing students lived in order to help determine where they cross Porter Avenue. Mr. Riesland said traffic signals exist at Gray Street and Johnson Street along Porter Avenue and give more protection to pedestrians crossing Porter Avenue.

Mr. Riesland said an intersection evaluation was conducted in September 2011, and both vehicles and pedestrians were counted between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Mr. Angelo Lombardo, Traffic Engineer, said Norman must show a Signal Warrant has been met in order to receive federal funding and a Signal Warrant 5 for School Crossing was satisfied by the existing conditions. He said Signal Warrant 1B for Interruption of Continuous Traffic would likely be met when Daws Street is closed to install future traffic signals. Mr. Riesland said to satisfy Signal Warrant 5 for School Crossings there must be at least 20 children crossing during the busiest hour. He said 20 children crossed Porter Avenue at Acres Street from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and this portion of the warrant was met. Mr. Riesland said to satisfy Warrant 5 for School Crossings there must also be inadequate gaps for the children/students to cross safely and a Gap Study was conducted on Porter Avenue. He said the Gap Study determined the average walking time across Porter Avenue is 17 seconds; therefore, to satisfy Warrant 5, there must be fewer than 60 gaps in traffic at least 17 seconds in length. Mr. Riesland said during the 8:00 a.m. hour on November 29, 2011, there were only four (4) gaps that measured longer than 17 seconds and Warrant 5 met the gap criteria.

Mr. Riesland highlighted five (5) options to Improve Porter Avenue at Acres Street crossing to include:

- ❖ **Option 1: Utilizing a NPS Crossing Guard - \$3,000 annually paid by NPS**
  - positions have been very difficult to keep staffed in the past;
  - provides no protection for pedestrians crossing during “non-school” hours; and
  - NPS would pay \$3,000 annually;
- ❖ **Option 2: Encourage Crossing at Other Locations – Approximate cost \$30,000**
  - encourage school children to cross Porter Avenue at improved intersections located at Johnson Street to the north or Gray Street to the south;
  - if this option chosen, improvements to curb ramps, driveway ramps, and sidewalks along Gray Street and Johnson Street will need to be made;
- ❖ **Option 3: Install Mid-Block Signal – Approximate cost \$60,000**
  - A suitable location must be created and could be problematic if a future traffic signal is installed at Porter Avenue and Acres Street because of vehicular traffic volumes;
  - Midblock signal should be no closer than 100 feet from intersecting street or driveway, according to MUTCD, therefore a mid-block crosswalk would be installed 100 feet north of the alley to the north of Tonhawa Street;
  - there are no locations with 200 feet of frontage along Porter Avenue between Gray Street and Johnson Street;
  - Requires closing Daws Street on both sides of Porter Avenue;
  - Requires cubing in front of Van’s Pig Stand;
  - Driveway would need to be eliminated for Dave’s Pharmacy (formerly Ardella’s Flowers), the business would have an Acres Street access driveway;
  - Install upright with mast arm on each side of Porter for vehicular signals; and
  - Pedestrians would push buttons on each pole
- ❖ **Option 4: Signalize Porter/Acres – Approximate cost \$1,000,000**
  - Intersection currently meets school warrant and will likely meet a vehicular warrant once Daws Street is closed;
  - For safety reasons, the Daws intersection with Porter is problematic, the portion east of Porter should be eliminated and a cul-de-sac should be constructed on the portion to the west;
  - For safety, resulting from the misalignment of the north and south legs of Porter, some widening will be needed to provide exclusive left turn lanes for movements onto Acres;
  - Full pedestrian access possible with this solution; and
  - 70% to 80% would be right-of-way (ROW) acquisitions
- ❖ **Option 5: Roundabout at Porter/Acres – Approximate cost \$1,850,000**
  - The east leg of Daws Street will need to be closed to construct the roundabout;
  - 150-foot diameter is considered the minimum for two-lane roundabout;
  - ROW acquisitions include Posh Pets Grooming Salon and Grand Bargains, with impact to Phillips 66 Station;
  - Daws Street could also be cul-de-saced to the west for a four-legged roundabout, but more ROW would need to be acquired; and
  - Center of island roundabout could be used for landscaping or art

Chairman Dillingham said a lot of the concern is pedestrians, mostly children, crossing the intersection in order to go to school and also with the City’s goals for Safe Routes to Schools program; children should be able to cross the street safely. Councilmember Kovach asked Staff how effective Option 3 would be and Mr. Riesland said Option 3 would be effective but only a short-term solution. Mr. Riesland said at the current/continued growth rate Porter Avenue and Acres Street could be signalized in four to five years and Mr. O’Leary said the signalization may likely qualify for federal funding. Councilmember Griffith said Option 3 would serve as an interim until a signal was installed at Acres Street and Staff said yes. Mayor Rosenthal felt Option 2 needed to be done regardless because the sidewalks and gaps needed to be repaired for accessibility purposes and said the City would need input from the area business regarding Option 3. She said she is concerned that Option 3 meant spending money that the City may not be able to recoup at a later time and Mr. O’Leary said the ROW acquisitions could go up as well. Councilmember Kovach agreed about the need for sidewalk improvements and also felt some discussion with the property/business owners concerning Option 3 would be needed. Chairman Dillingham also agreed the corridor needed improved sidewalks and would also like to explore with the area business owners to determine their take on Option 3.

Mayor Rosenthal asked if Option 3 was chosen, where would Dave's Pharmacy, formerly Ardella's Flowers, access if both Daws Street and their entrance on Porter Avenue were closed and Mr. Riesland said the business can currently be accessed from Acres Street. Councilmember Lockett asked how many parking spots would Van's Pig Stand lose and Staff said approximately six (6), but Van's has recently built a sizeable parking lot behind their business. Mr. Riesland said Option 3 is not perfect but there are not any other existing locations within reason to install a mid-block signal. Van's Pig Stand and Dave's Pharmacy is the only location that has the most existing curb; therefore, this particular location made most sense. Councilmember Griffith felt it was also the closest location for school children to cross and Staff agreed.

Ms. Jeanette Coker, concerned citizen, felt Option 3 is not too expensive and/or outrageous and she, as well as other property owners in the area, have been asking for signalization on Porter Avenue for 10 years. Ms. Chris Nanny, concerned citizen, agreed and said sidewalk and ramps are desperately needed along the Porter corridor.

Mr. O'Leary said Staff will include Option 3 in the CIP and determine the impacts for both Option 2 and Option 3. He felt the \$60,000 figure for Option 3 is fairly low, assuming full cooperation from the business owners for ROW acquisition. Chairman Dillingham asked Staff to determine the costs to improve the sidewalks and curbing along Porter Avenue as well as a close estimate for ROW acquisitions and bring back to Council.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint Presentation entitled "*Intersection Evaluation: Porter Avenue at Acres Street,*" City Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee, dated April 25, 2012

CART RIDERSHIP REPORT INCLUDING SAFERIDE AND EXTENDED SERVICE.

Chairman Dillingham said Mayor Rosenthal, Mr. Doug Meyers, OU Parking and Transportation Administrator, and herself met with Norman Regional Hospital (NRH) Board on Monday, April 23, 2012, to discuss and request NRH provide \$50,000 funding to the Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART), which will assist the City in restoring the original funding level to CART. She said there seemed to be a lot of misunderstanding about the available CART services and there was a lot of assumption about duplication of services, i.e., Full Circle and Kiwanis vehicles, etc. Mayor Rosenthal said CART provided a breakdown of rides to and from Norman Regional Health System facilities and Mr. Doug Meyers, OU Parking and Transportation Administrator, said in 2011, 2,962 citizens relied on CART services for transportation to NRH facilities at Tecumseh Road, Porter Campus, as well as the various doctors that are affiliated with NRH. Mr. Meyers said CART ridership increased 10% and over the past quarter the CART ridership has increased up to 15%, so the need continues to grow. Mr. Meyers said if the requested funding is received, CART's plans are to resume Saturday service, as well as extend current hours for the West Norman Link. He said CART will place brochures advertising CART transportation services at Embassy Hotel located at University North Park and both hospital campuses. Chairman Dillingham said she is hopeful that NRH will support CART and felt \$50,000 is an appropriate request. She suggested the Committee and/or anyone who supports CART to contact and encourage NRH to assist.

Items submitted for the record

1. Cleveland Area Rapid Transit Ridership Totals for the Month of March 2012

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION.

None.

The meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.