

CITY COUNCIL  
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION  
COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 3, 2020

The City Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met at 4:03 p.m. met in a virtual meeting hosted in the Council Chambers on the 3rd day of September, 2020, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted in the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT:	Councilmember Hall and Chairman Holman
ABSENT:	Councilmembers Bierman, Peacock, and Petrone
OTHERS PRESENT:	Mr. Shawn O’Leary, Director of Public Works Mr. Chris Mattingly, Director of Utilities Ms. Beth Muckala, Assistant City Attorney Mr. David Riesland, Traffic Engineer Ms. Kathryn Walker, City Attorney Ms. Syndi Runyon, Administrative Technician IV

Item 1, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING ON-STREET PARKING RESTRICTIONS ON LINCOLN AVENUE, IOWA STREET, AND ACRES STREET.

Mr. David Riesland, Traffic Engineer, said local residential streets are 26 feet wide and residential collector streets are 34 feet wide. He said on-street parking requires eight feet of lane width with a minimum nine feet of lane width for moving traffic. He said the overwhelming majority of residential streets in Norman with on-street parking restrictions are local streets with less than 200 vehicles per day (generally located near the University of Oklahoma (OU), a public school, or a highly used neighborhood park). When parking is allowed on both sides of the street, the remaining roadway width available for moving traffic is ten feet (one lane) for local streets that have a low volume of traffic (less than 200 vehicles per day) and 18 feet for collector streets (two lanes), which is necessary for streets that have a higher volume of traffic (500 to 1,000 vehicles per day).

Mr. Riesland said Section 20-807(1) of the Code of Ordinances state that no person shall park, stop, or stand a vehicle where it is prohibited by sign and there is also language in Public Works Procedure 3-001 (Procedure 3-001) that is used to manage parking restrictions established Section 20-807(1). He said Procedure 3-001 has been used for more than 50 years and was formalized in 1996. It is neighborhood driven requiring a petition signed by 60% of the residents on the street; however, that process can be contentious and is rarely unanimous among neighbors. Procedure 3-001 was amended in 2008, with a new provision that enables City Council to establish a parking restriction when considering certain factors and adopting the restriction by resolution.

Mr. Riesland said Staff received ten to twelve formal inquiries this year regarding on-street parking restrictions with seven requests in 2016; two requests in 2017; one request in 2018; and eight requests in 2019. Any request for designation of an area as a no parking zone will be made to the City Transportation Engineer's office with the initial request generally being made in writing or verbally. The City Transportation Engineer, or his designee, will review the physical layout of the area and provide guidance to the requesting party. The guidance provided will include a map of the area showing the effected units, the number of living units affected by the request, and whether the City will consider the request. Further processing of the request will be withheld until a petition signed by at least 60% of the residents affected by the "No Parking" designation has been received by the City Transportation Engineer's office. Upon receipt of the petition, the City Transportation Engineer, or his designee, will verify that the proper numbers of signatures are affixed to the petition and that addressed of the petitioners are within the limits of the affected area. If 60% or more of the affected residents signed the petition, the signs delineating the requested parking restrictions will be fabricated and installed. Alternatively, if the petition does not contain signatures of at least 60% of the residents affected, the City Council may decide to impose the requested parking restrictions by adoption of a resolution upon consideration of the several factors including street type classification; housing density on the affected street(s); property owner input; public safety issues; and traffic volumes on the affected street(s).

Mr. Riesland said since 2018, Council adopted one resolution for on-street parking restrictions on Symmes Street (100 Block West), Apache Street (100 Block West), and Jenkins Avenue (between Apache Street and Duffy Street).

When a citizen contacts Staff, codified restrictions are discussed with the citizen and if the problem involves a violation of a codified restriction, then the Police Department is contacted for follow-up enforcement. If no Code regulation is being violated and the citizen wishes to have more restrictive on-street parking, Procedure 3-001 is used. The citizen is provided with a copy of Procedure 3-001, an aerial photo of the areas highlighting the properties eligible to sign the petition, and a copy of the petition using ownership information from the Cleveland County Assessors website. If the petition is returned, signatures are validated and percent support is calculated. When support meets or exceeds 60%, establishment of on-street parking restriction is authorized and installation of signs scheduled. A press release is issued and notification to the Police Department is made for follow-up enforcement. The process is also used when citizens want to remove or modify an existing restriction.

Mr. Riesland said signatures must be from residents who reside or own property on the side of the street targeted for the on-street parking restriction. He said the property owners or tenant can sign the petition; however, if both sign, the property owner's signature overturns a tenant's. He presented examples of petitions from Monnet Avenue and Wyandotte Way stating Wyandotte Way did not garner enough signatures.

Mr. Riesland said current requests include the 1300 block of Lincoln Avenue (east side), 1200 through 1700 block of West Iowa Street (north side), 100 through 300 block of East Acres Street (both sides), and 200 block of East Acres Street (north side).

Mr. Riesland said Lincoln Avenue, between Farmer Street and Lindsey Street, has low traffic volume of less than 1,000 vehicles per day with minor traffic operational problems. He said no petition has been submitted and parking is already restricted on the west side and this is the only segment of Lincoln Avenue without a parking restriction. He said on-street parking restrictions on both sides will impact OU commuter students who park on the street for free. He said Staff recommends the new restriction.

Iowa Street, between Sherry Avenue and Berry Road (north and south side), has moderate traffic volume of just over 1,600 vehicles per day with minor traffic operational problems. Mr. Riesland said no petition has been submitted and parking is already restricted in some areas and area residents who lack sufficient parking spaces in their garages or driveways would be impacted. He said Staff recommends a formal petition with 60% of the property owners signatures be submitted for review.

Mr. Riesland said EMBARK requested no on-street parking on Acres Street (both sides of the street), between Jones Avenue and Porter Avenue, which has moderate traffic volume of less than 4,500 vehicles per day and is on the designated City transit route with a designated bicycle route. He said Acres Street is used for access to the Central Library and Longfellow Middle School and has significant operational problems, such as forcing drivers to drive left on a double yellow stripe, including EMBARK and school busses. He said a petition has been submitted with 60% signatures on two of the three blocks and on-street parking restrictions will impact residents. He said Staff recommends restriction of on-street parking in the 100 through 300 blocks of Acres Street on both sides.

Chairman Holman asked if parking restrictions are currently in place are both sides of the street or one side on Iowa Street and Mr. Riesland said there is a mixture. Chairman Holman said he would definitely like to see a circulated petition on this street, but would be interested in restricting parking to one side of the street and being consistent throughout the corridor regardless of happens with a petition.

Chairman Holman said on Lincoln Avenue, OU is constructing two large parking lots so there is no good reason to deny no parking on either side of the street.

Councilmember Hall said Lincoln Avenue seems to be the most straight forward choice for no parking on either side of the street because there will be ample parking for students in the new parking lots. She did not feel there would be a negative impact to property owners.

Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said the citizens requesting changes on Lincoln Avenue and Iowa Street did not want to go through the petition process so that is why Staff is bringing this before the Committee.

Councilmember Hall said she agrees with Chairman Holman regarding Iowa Street because she has driven that street many times and would like to see consistency in on-street parking restrictions along that corridor. She did believe the citizen requesting the change should try the petition process first to get neighbors involved.

Councilmember Hall said she remembered the amendment in 2018, giving Council the ability to designate streets as no parking, which would have a huge impact in Core Norman. She said in 2019, there were eight requests and asked how many were granted and Mr. O'Leary said he thought three of the eight were granted by Council with the others going through Procedure 3-001.

Councilmember Hall asked if there have been any requests to reverse a Procedure 3-001 decision and Mr. Riesland said there has been at least one time where someone tried to start that process, but never completed the process. Councilmember Hall said the turnover of occupancy in Core Norman could spark requests to change on-street parking restrictions. She said if a tenant can sign the petition, what happens if seven people live at one address and Mr. Riesland said one signature would be needed per address.

Councilmember Hall said she supports the Acres Street restriction and researched the area to make sure everyone along the three blocks have an option for parking other than on-street and found one unique property that does not have property parking access in the 200 block. She has spoken to Staff about the house that was constructed in 1896 at the corner of Acres Street and Peters Street, but was moved around 1916, to its current location on Acres Street. She said there is no available parking on this parcel and is concerned about the property owner because she has parked on Acres Street for decades and has no other option. She said Staff has been trying to find a solution, but this is a unique situation when talking about restricting on-street parking where the property owner has no other option. The property owner owns two vehicles and has disability issues so that compounds the problem. She said there is a drainage channel on the east side of the property with a very narrow alley and the west side has very little setback. She asked what options the City can offer in this situation and Mr. O'Leary said this is a rare case and Staff would love to find an option the property owner would be comfortable with, but Staff becomes a little uncomfortable talking about spending public dollars on private property. He would like to see an option from the property owner to see if Staff could help make that option work. Councilmember Hall said she spoke with the property owner who has a lot of concerns about the proposal for restricting on-street parking because the property owner is accustomed to parking on the street. The property owner said there is a retaining wall on the south and east side, but not the north side and asked if the City would consider closing the alley and Mr. O'Leary said vacating the alley could be done at the request of the property owner, but is generally not Staff driven. He said Council has the authority to initiate that, but the property owners in the notification area have a fair amount of authority to oppose the proposal. Mr. O'Leary said Staff has looked at the alley and seems to be used by other property owners. Councilmember Hall said the alley is constructed on a very old drainage channel that runs from Acres Street to Hughbert Street, but seems narrower than other alleys in Norman. She said there is also a small wooden footbridge in the middle of the alley over the drainage channel that allows access to property on the east side of the drainage channel so that needs to be considered because it may be that property owners only access to their property. She would like to look at the option of closing the alley because it seems to be the best option for parking access for the property. She would like Staff to talk with the property owner because there may be an option of a curb cut on Acres Street for parallel parking on that portion of the street. She understands the need for the restriction and is happy to have a bus route to the Central Library, but would like to find a reasonable accommodation working with the property owner before finalizing the on-street parking restriction.

Councilmember Hall said there are currently no parking restrictions on Beal Street and anyone in the 100 to 300 blocks of Acres Street would not have an option to park on Beal Street.

Chairman Holman said perhaps the City can make an exception for this property this one time and construct inset parallel parking on Acres Street for the property and Mr. O'Leary said his concern is if the City does that then every property owner along Acres Street will want that. Chairman Holman said he would not be opposed to the on-street parking restriction.

Chairman Holman said there has been some discussion regarding restricting on-street parking on West Symmes Street. Councilmember Hall said West Symmes Street from the 100 through 400 blocks has no parking on the north side of the street with the exception of game days and the 500 to 800 blocks have no parking on either side. She said the 100 block is generally packed with vehicles and the 300 and 400 block rarely has any vehicles parked in the street. She has not heard any complaints from the neighborhood with the street parking in the 100 to 400 blocks and asked if Staff has had complaints and Mr. Riesland said no. Councilmember Hall said it was a hot topic two years ago, but if there have been no recent complaints then she will leave it alone unless she or Staff begin receiving complaints. She said she would like an update on how emergency vehicles are affected by the restrictions and how it may impact James Garner Avenue improvements.

Chairman Holman said he would like parking restrictions to be consistent throughout the West Symmes Street corridor, either allow on-street parking only on the north side or the south side instead of the current block by block mixture. Mr. O'Leary said Staff will follow-up on that and update the Committee.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "City of Norman On Street Parking Restrictions," presented by Shawn O'Leary, P.E., Director of Public Works, and David Riesland, P.E., Traffic Engineer, dated August 27, 2020

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Item 2, being:

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS.

Chairman Holman said he would like Staff to update the full Council on the status of the Cedar Lane Road and 36th Avenue Project in a study session or conference to bring new Councilmembers up-to-date and Mr. O'Leary said he can provide an update to Council next month.

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The meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m.