

CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE MINUTES

June 25, 2015

The City Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met at 4:00 p.m. in the Conference Room on the 25th day of June, 2015, 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:	Councilmember Holman and Chairman Jungman
ABSENT:	Councilmembers Allison, Miller, and Williams
STAFF PRESENT:	Mr. James Briggs, Park Planner Mr. Jeff Bryant, City Attorney Ms. Susan Connors, Director of Planning and Community Development Mr. Jud Foster, Director of Parks and Recreation Mr. Terry Floyd, Development Coordinator Ms. Jane Hudson, Principal Planner Ms. Leah Messner, Assistant City Attorney Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works Mr. Wayne Stenis, Planner II Ms. Kathryn Walker, Assistant City Attorney Ms. Syndi Runyon, Administrative Technician IV
OTHER GUESTS PRESENT:	Mayor Cindy Rosenthal Ms. Karlene Smith, Marketing Specialist for Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART) Mr. Roger Gallagher, 1522 West Boyd Ms. Chris Nanny, 1815 Lakehurst Drive Mr. Mark Nanny, Greenbelt Commission Member Mr. Carl Rambo, Greenbelt Commission Member Mr. Colin Zink, Greenbelt Commission Member Mr. Fred Jungman, 1804 Maple Street, Oklahoma City Ms. Wendy Jungman, 1804 Maple Street, Oklahoma City

Item 1, being:

CART RIDERSHIP REPORT INCLUDING SAFERIDE AND EXTENDED SERVICE FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY, 2015.

Ms. Karlene Smith, Marketing Specialist for Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART), highlighted the CART ridership report for March, April, and May 2015. She said CART began running a Campus Corner Shuttle on May 11, 2015, per a request from the Research Campus to connect the Research Campus with Campus Corner. The Research Campus is paying for the route which is open to the public at no charge and only runs during the lunch period of 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Stops in the Research Campus include the National Weather Center; Stephenson Research Center; Two Partners Place; Stephenson Life Sciences Research Center; and Five Partners Place. Campus Corner will be served by one stop at Debarr Street and Boyd Street on the southeast corner of Campus Corner Market. The shuttle will be on a 20 minute schedule allowing it to make six trips each weekday. To ensure a timely route, passengers will be picked up and dropped off only at the stops listed above. She said CART's goal is to maintain this schedule once school starts again.

Item 1, continued:

Ms. Smith said beginning August 17, 2015, the Main Street and Alameda Street routes will be 30 minute routes and the long range transportation plan goal is to have 30 minute service on all routes. She said the 30 minute service will be done for the peak times of 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. This service will not be provided on Saturday because CART is currently struggling with staffing and vehicles.

Ms. Smith said CART has two new Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) busses scheduled to arrive in July and these buses are not expanding services, but are replacing existing busses that are being retired.

CART's year to date ridership for the fixed route service has been consistently increasing and is up 6% from last year while CARTaccess is up 3%. Since January, 100 CARTaccess riders have requested CART identification (ID) cards to ride free on the CART fixed route.

Ms. Smith said CART is continuing to monitor bike racks and bike repair stations to see how they are being utilized. Chairman Jungman asked if there has been any initial feedback on the repair stations and Ms. Smith said yes, the biggest response has been from the Norman Public Library. She said CART placed a small clipboard on the stations and invited comments or suggestions and all the people that visit the library seem to be positively commenting. There have been no problems with any of the stations CART is aware of.

Dump the Pump Day was held on June 18th and the event was well attended with 2,000 riders. Even with students gone there were 600 to 700 additional riders. CART is trying to participate more within community events and participated in the Earth Day Festival and Bike to Work Day. CART has also participated in outreach meetings with Rose Rock Villa Senior Cottages of Norman; McFarlin's Senior Options Fair; Norman Advocates for Accessible Transportation Solutions; United Way's Disability Coalition; and McFarlin's Senior Options Fair.

Councilmember Holman has had requests from constituents for benches at Webster Avenue and Apache Street, Webster Avenue and Main Street, Berry Road and Denison Drive, and Berry Road and Dorchester Drive. He has noticed riders sitting on the curb and grass at Berry Road and Denison Drive, but there has also been Facebook comments regarding the other stops not having a bench. He said riders have offered to buy the bench themselves and he told them it was more complicated than just buying a bench and setting it there. Ms. Smith said CART has wanted to place a bench at Berry Road and Denison Drive, but believes there is some code language that restricts that and Ms. Susan Connors, Director of Planning and Community Development, said the contract with CART restricts benches in some locations, but the contract can be modified. Ms. Smith thought the regulations had to do with advertising and Councilmember Holman asked if the bench has to have advertising and Ms. Smith said no, but CART would like to install an advertising bench, but if that is not possible a simple bench can be installed. She said there is a bit of a gray area on non-advertising benches regarding who is responsible for maintaining the area and contracts with Tyler Media require Tyler Media to maintain the areas. She feels Tyler Media might maintain the area without an advertising bench, but that is something that will need to be discussed with them.

Ms. Smith said CART is working with East Main Center, across from Sprout's Market, to install a non-advertising bench. The current stop is at Main Street and Park Avenue and CART hopes to move it closer to the activities riders access the bus for. A new stop is going in at the Millennium (Millennium) Apartment Complex that includes a shelter. CART is looking at other bus stop changes in order to ensure safer service for riders. Councilmember Holman asked if the Millennium will impact the existing bus stop in front of Springfield Apartments and Ms. Smith said no, they are a little close, but CART does not believe there will be a problem. Ms. Chris Nanny, 1815 Lakehurst Drive, asked if Millennium is helping to pay for the shelter and Ms. Smith said some apartments help subsidize the cost, but Tyler Media is putting the stop in as well as installing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements and Millennium is doing all the sidewalk improvements.

Item 1, continued:

Ms. Joy Hampton, The Norman Transcript, said the people renting at the Millennium are not underprivileged and do not have to ride the bus, yet they are getting a sheltered bus stop while there are bus stops where underprivileged people do not have benches, do not have shelters, etc., and she believes that is why Ms. Nanny asked that question. Does Millennium get a sheltered bus stop because they are helping pay some of the costs and Ms. Smith said yes, Millennium and Tyler Media are covering the costs, but CART is also trying to place amenities at bus stops where there is are those needs.

Items submitted for the record

1. Cleveland Area Rapid Transit Ridership Totals for the Month of March, April, and May 2015
2. Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART) Monthly Report, March, April, and May 2015
3. Flyer advertising Campus Corner Shuttle (Route 41)

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Item 2, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING AN UPDATE OF THE 2025 LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION PLAN.

Ms. Connors highlighted the 2025 Land Use and Transportation Comprehensive Plan (2025 Plan). She said while every comprehensive plan is unique, all of them address existing conditions, goals and objectives, implementation strategies, and future land-use maps. She said some of the items unique to Norman are plans adopted in the City such as the Porter Corridor Plan, Storm Water Master Plan (SWMP), Greenways Master Plan (GMP), and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PMP). She said these plans need to be mentioned in the 2025 Plan, are subordinate to the Plan, and need to coordinate with the Plan. Community health and sustainability are an important part of many comprehensive plans. Districts, corridors, and urban design can also be part of the comprehensive plan.

During the last update of the Plan, the City had created a Norman Future Committee of 278 people, which is difficult to manage and be successful, but Mayor Rosenthal said it worked. Mayor Rosenthal said the committee started out as a small group and Council was divided over who would guide the Plan update so they opened up applications and received close to 300 applicants. She said there was regular attendance by about a 140 to 150 people organized around small tabletops tasked with topic exercises and believes that was the strength of the Plan at the end of the day.

Ms. Connors said the City could look at creating a Steering Committee with topic committees formed over specific topics to create vision, goals, and objectives, which worked well in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) discussions. Also, the City plans to hire a consultant to assist in the process and consultants usually have their own ideas of how they want to work through the elements of the Plan to get where they are going; however, there will be some type of City process or committee system that will be utilized.

Ms. Connors said all data collection and processing will be done by the consultant as well as City Staff. Within the Plan preparation is the valuation of alternatives, public meetings, meeting with property owners, etc., and creation of implementation plans that includes funding sources, effectiveness of alternatives, and adoption of the Plan.

The Plan is useful for budgeting priorities, business plans, economic development, growth, development standards, zoning, and subdivision regulations.

Item 2, continued:

Ms. Connors said on July 1st the City's FYE16 Budget will be approved and Staff will begin putting together the Request for Proposal (RFP) to send to various consultant groups. A comprehensive plan process can take anywhere from 18 months to two years once you have the consultant in place. By the end of the year, the City should be ready to begin the process. She said the Plan should be looked at as new work, not just updating the previous Plan because we need to look at the City in a more futuristic and different manner. Chairman Jungman felt approaching the Plan as a new work is the right thing to do.

Mayor Rosenthal asked if the Steering Committee would be part of the RFP or would Staff recommend that the Council appoint a committee. Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said, by policy, the CTP had a selection committee of five consisting of three City Staff and two outside members. Chairman Jungman asked how the outside members would be chosen and Mr. O'Leary said the CTP Steering Committee included people within the community that had an understanding of the process and planning efforts.

Mayor Rosenthal suggested the RFP be brought back to this committee before it goes out to consultants. She said many things have changed since the last update such as the Center City Visioning Plan, people's attitudes about walkability, transportation, and housing diversity.

Ms. Connors said Staff will bring the RFP back to this committee to make sure the City is asking for the right things. Mayor Rosenthal said the community has high expectations of what the public participation process looks like and what the consultants recommend.

Items submitted for the record

1. The Elements of a Comprehensive Plan
2. Norman 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan

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Item 3, being:

PRESENTATION BY A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE GREENBELT COMMISSION REGARDING A PROPOSAL FOR DEVELOPING THE CITY OF NORMAN GREENBELT TRAIL SYSTEM.

Mr. Mark Nanny, Greenbelt Commission Chair, said the Greenbelt Commission has been discussing ways to implement the Greenbelt Trail System Master Plan (Trails Master Plan). The Greenbelt Commission identified essential greenbelt trails to develop that will establish the foundation for a more extensive system of trails through urban and rural Norman. The Master Plan will also connect and provide access to "green" areas, such as parks, greenways, and natural features, with points of interest and neighborhoods. The Greenbelt Commission planned to integrate the Trails Master Plan with existing trails, the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), current transportation bond projects, and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) projects.

Mr. Nanny said the Greenbelt Commission is proposing three trails that will have interactive educational/informational kiosks, plaques, and art work highlighting distinctive ecological and historical/cultural features as follows:

- The Little River Trail - starts at Ruby Grant Park along the Little River to Lake Thunderbird then connects with Griffin Park. The trail will feature aquatic ecosystems, role of rivers and creeks in central Oklahoma, and preservation and conservation of watersheds, stream beds, and water resources.

Item 3, continued:

- The Scissortail Trail – starts in southeast Norman and will follow along Highway 9 to the west side of Lake Thunderbird connecting at the Alameda Bridge to form a loop. The trail will feature flora and fauna of central Oklahoma (seasonal wildflowers, wildlife and bird identification, their behaviors and habitats) and unique ecological features of meadows, creek beds, and forested areas of central Oklahoma.
- The South Legacy Trail – a continuation of Legacy Trail to connect the southeast Norman south of Highway 9 and will feature history of Norman and central Oklahoma with historical contributions of under-represented groups

Mr. Nanny highlighted challenges and development of each trail. One challenge to the Little River Trail is the I-35 crossing. Using the flood control structure beneath Franklin Road and I-35 could facilitate the ability to cross I-35 safely; however, it will require some modifications, such as painting, lighting, etc. The biggest challenge will be acquiring right-of-way along the Little River; however, there are creative ways for the City to help those that are subdividing land into small units for development in such a way the landowners will allow access or provide easements for the trail system. He said the City could also collaborate with Thunderbird State Park to develop trails along the west side with trailhead/parking at the Alameda Drive Bridge. He said the Little River Trail could serve as the “backbone” for building the whole Little River as a recreation area.

Scissortail Trail will need to extend beyond ODOT’s upgrade at 36th Avenue S.E. to approximately 1/3 mile east of 60th Avenue S.E. to reach Dave Blue Creek. To acquire right-of-way there could be provisions and exemptions to landowners who desire to divide property into small units for development in return for greenbelt trail access. Again, the City could collaborate with Thunderbird State Park to develop trails along the west side with trailhead/parking at the Alameda Drive Bridge.

South Legacy Trail will need to integrate with the Cedar Lane upgrade and connect Cedar Lane to Jenkins Avenue with a pedestrian/bicycle path with bridge of Bishop Creek. Crossing Highway 9 could be done by using an intersection with traffic lights and pedestrian crossing infrastructure. Trail access from East Duffy Street to East Brooks Street could be accomplished with a trail along the west side of the railroad tracks leading to Brandt Park (a/k/a Duck Pond). The City could coordinate with the University of Oklahoma (OU) for a trail on East Constitution, which is critical for student/pedestrian safety getting to campus. Ten inch pedestrian sidewalks already exist along Jenkins Avenue north of Highway 9 which could be continued to Cedar Lane if a pedestrian/bicycle bridge is constructed over Bishop Creek. South Legacy Trail will also need an improved pedestrian crossing at North Flood Avenue and West Robinson Street so perhaps extra space on the railroad bridge could be utilized for a pedestrian walkway over Robinson Street. When planning South Legacy Trail, the commission did not include the Griffin State Hospital property because they had no idea what will occur on the property since the State plans to sell a portion of the property. He said it would be nice to plan the trail through the property to Robinson Street where a traffic light exists for safe crossing.

Councilmember Holman said the proposal for extending James Garner Boulevard would take Legacy Trail over Robinson Street. He said when the underpass was constructed it was designed to accommodate extension of Legacy Trail so that could address one challenge with South Legacy Trail.

Mr. Nanny said the next steps include obtaining right-of-way along Little River and Dave Blue Creek; collaborating with Thunderbird State Park on trails along the west side of the lake; identifying the Greenbelt Trail System as a transportation development issue for urban areas for State and Federal funding; integrating with Norman Forward Initiative efforts; integrating with new and future subdivision and apartment developments, especially in southeast Norman; addressing maintenance and security issues; and promotion to the public. He said the proposed trails have the potential to provide safe transportation from north to south Norman.

Item 3, continued:

Chairman Jungman believes some of these proposed trails are in the Norman Forward proposal and asked how much of that matches up with the proposed Trails Master Plan and Mr. Jud Foster, Director of Parks and Recreation, said Legacy Trail is included in the Norman Forward that includes Ruby Grant Park south to the Little River. Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said Highway 9 between 24th Avenue and 72nd Avenue is included in ODOT projects. Chairman Jungman asked if there are any proposed trails already in another plan that might get acted on and Mayor Rosenthal said the long-term water supply plan envisions Dave Blue Creek for reuse and wetlands. She said North Texas has a huge wetland which is quite an attraction with trails, wildlife, etc. Mr. O'Leary said some trails are included in the Cedar Lane bond program regarding upgrades to Cedar Lane. Mayor Rosenthal said there may be strategic pieces not included in the Trails Master Plan that could be integrated with other projects and there is not enough funding in the Norman Forward proposal to seize those opportunities. She said the Norman Forward proposal for Canadian River Park could be an opportunity to connect some trails. She said according to the Parks Master Plan (PMP) people want trails more than anything else.

Councilmember Holman said the bond project widening 24th Avenue east from Lindsey Street to Robinson Street will have multi-modal sidewalks, which could be an important piece. There is a lot of student growth in southeast Norman and Constitution Avenue has incomplete sidewalks with no shoulder or curb and gutter and is a high speed street. He said there is also a real desire and need to connect Cedar Lane to the west possibly as an emergency route for people to get out of the neighborhood.

Chairman Jungman asked if the trails are in the Greenway Master Plan or and Mr. Nanny said most of the trails are already in the Greenway Master Plan, but there are some sporadic disconnections. Ms. Connors said the maps in the Greenway Master Plan are appendices and were not adopted as part of the Greenway Master Plan, but the appendices could be modified. Chairman Jungman said the Greenbelt Commission uses these maps for new developments and it would be nice if they were officially part of the Master Plan. Mr. Nanny said that is correct and if a trail is not proposed to be put in at the time of the development, the Greenbelt Commission tries to make sure space is kept open for a future trail. He said the problem with that is the trails are piecemealed and all it takes is one missing link in the chain to keep the whole trail system from connecting. He said that is why the Greenbelt Commission has identified the key foundation trail system that developers can use. Mayor Rosenthal felt adopting all the trails may not be necessary, but adopting the key trails could be an important step.

Chairman Jungman asked members if it would be reasonable to have the Greenbelt Commission develop this trail system a little further so Council can incorporate the key trails into the Greenway Master Plan and Councilmember Holman said yes. Ms. Connors said the trails would need to be coordinated with the PMP as well to ensure they all work together.

Councilmember Holman has always liked the idea of Legacy Trail going as far south along the railroad tracks as possible, but there was a problem with right-of-way and Mayor Rosenthal said there was not enough room along the railroad tracks to put in a trail. Mr. Foster said the right-of-way is not wide enough for comfort from Duffy Street to Lindsey Street and the railroad would not allow use of the right-of-way. Mr. Nanny said the trail could be developed through parts of the neighborhood using alleyways instead running parallel to the tracks.

Ms. Connors said acquiring right-of-way and identifying alignment is the key to the trail system, but that will take time. She said even if Council adopted something that generally identified the trail alignment there might need to be some modification as the City moves forward with actually trying to identify land that is available and property owners that are willing to work with the City. Mayor Rosenthal said Council would need to adopt the concept rather than the exact alignment and Ms. Connors said the Greenway Trail System could be adopted as a concept plan (map with criteria) that works with the PMP and Greenbelt Master Plan.

Item 3, continued:

Councilmember Holman asked if there are plans for a trail along Highway 9 from 24th Avenue west to 24th Avenue east and Mr. O'Leary said there is no adopted plan; however, ODOT's long range transportation plan calls for widening of Highway 9 from 24th Avenue to 60th Avenue over the next 10 to 20 years and Staff's expectation is to work with ODOT regarding a trail.

Chairman Jungman said the PMP has trails and the Greenway Master Plan has trails as well and asked if coordination is sufficient to get on the same page or would there value in some of these trails migrating into the PMP. Mr. Foster said there is some coordination and the same consultant worked on both plans so that was advantageous to the City. He said the PMP mainly deals with trails within existing park property.

Mayor Rosenthal said the Little River/I-35 piece may be a "fatal flaw" in the plan because it may not even be realistic and, if not, the Greenbelt Commission might want to think of another route just in case. Mr. O'Leary agreed and said it is unrealistic to use a major drainage structure for a trail because drainage systems are not friendly for walking or bicycling as seen during the recent rainfall. He said a crossing at the Tecumseh Road Bridge would make more sense and Mr. Nanny agreed that would be a better solution for connecting the area.

Councilmember Holman asked if there will ever be an interchange crossing I-35 at Franklin Road and Mr. O'Leary said there is a corridor project developing over the next 10 to 20 years that includes a bridge over Franklin Road within the scope of the project. Councilmember Holman would like the City to plan a pedestrian bridge at the very least over I-35 at Franklin Road if a full bridge is not planned.

Chairman Jungman said some proposed trails are being integrated in new developments, but as development gets closer the Little River the City sees less and less trails so there may need to be acquisition of easements or right-of-way. Mr. Nanny said there is no trail along Little River at this point, but there is a proposed development near Little River that will have trails that can be connected to a Little River Trail if it is ever developed. He said north Norman is being developed with any real recognition of trails and Chairman Jungman said if a development came forward the City could ask the developer to incorporate a trail. He said if a development does not come forward what would it take to have a trail in a location that is unplatted and not owned by the City and Ms. Connors said the City would prefer purchasing property needed. Mr. O'Leary agreed and said there are property owners that will not be willing to negotiate that, which leaves the City with taking the land needed and that is not very positive. He said the City has reviewed three developments near the Little River so development is moving that way. Mayor Rosenthal said Staff may want to try to negotiate right-of-way in the planning process if this concept is adopted.

Chairman Jungman said the Greenbelt Commission having recommendations on plats coming to Council is working fairly well so keep doing that. He said the next step will be for the Greenbelt Commission to develop a map with criteria for priority trails as addenda to the PMP and Greenway Master Plan. Chairman Jungman asked Mr. Nanny to bring that back to the Committee for review prior to going to Council.

Mr. Colin Zink, Greenbelt Commission, said the Trails Master Plan gets trails and access into areas of Norman that are currently underserved by these services. The plan integrates Norman and provides something that is looking to the future and will be utilized by the public as well as encourage the public to get out and walk or ride their bicycles.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Proposal for developing the City of Norman's Greenbelt Trail System," Community & Transportation Committee, June 25, 2015

Item 4, being:

MISCELLANEOUS PUBLIC COMMENTS.

None

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The meeting adjourned at 5:14 p.m.