

**Comprehensive Transportation Plan Citizen Visioning Committee
Visioning Workshop Meeting Notes
Wednesday, November 15, 2011**

The Comprehensive Transportation Plan Citizen Visioning Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met at 3:00 p.m. in the Multi-Purpose Room, 201 West Gray, on the 15th day of November, 2011. Notice and Agenda of the meeting were posted in the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and on the City of Norman website 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT: Councilmembers
Mayor Rosenthal
Carol Dillingham
Roger Gallagher
Linda Lockett

ABSENT: Mr. Nick Hathaway, OU VP for Admin and Finance
Mr. Marion Hutchison, ONTRAC board
Mr. Doug Myers, Director-CART
Mr. Tom Sherman, Chair - Chamber Transportation Committee
Mr. Walt Strong, Administrator- Westheimer Airport
Mr. Larry Walker, Chair - Public Art Board

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Chris Applegate, Red Earth Group, Sierra Club
Mr. Roger Brown, Norman Public Schools
Ms. Teresa Capps, Chair-SVSC
Mr. Harold Heiple, Norman Developer's Council
Ms. Chris Nanny, Chair- CART Disability Advisory Committee
Ms. Janice Oak, Progressive Independence
Ms. Renee O'Leary, United Way-Seniors Council, Positive Aging Initiative
Ms. Helen Robertson, Representative - bicycle community
Mr. Joe Sparks, Chair- NCVB
Mr. Chuck Thompson, Chair - Central OK Regional Advocacy Alliance
Mr. Brad Worster, Commercial Realtor/ Norman Next

OVERVIEW OF TRANSPORTATION PLAN COMPONENTS

Mr. O'Leary welcomes the committee for the third meeting and states that Mr. Schwinger will be giving an overview of the past three weeks to include comments from the committee. The committee was asked to focus on the purpose and goal of the committee and to determine whether Norman should have a Comprehensive Transportation Plan, and if so, what should be included. Mr. O'Leary explained that this determination should include the information received from the ward meetings, the survey results and other suggestions from the Norman community. Mr. Schwinger continued by commending City staff and City Council as a representative of the community for the inclusion of the community as a whole in this process. Mr. Schwinger emphasized that this is just the beginning and that there is much work to be done. It was noted that meetings with each of the eight wards were held to include citizens of Norman and that each

ward meeting featured very different concerns. In addition to the ward meetings, Mr. Schwinger added that comments were received by the committee on the community wide survey that have been incorporated into the draft survey to be presented to City Council in the Study Session on November 15, 2011 at 5:30 p.m. Mr. Schwinger explained that if the Council determines to move forward with the Community Survey, the survey will be sent out to members of the community with results expected in early January 2012. Mr. Schwinger asked for general comments from the committee.

Mr. Heiple stated that he had inquired to several citizens in the community on what they believe the focus or purpose of this committee to be including whether a survey was needed and expressed his dissatisfaction on the outcome of the ward meetings. Mr. Heiple then asked for comments from the committee on what they believe the focus is of the committee.

Mr. Thompson remarked that he believed the goal of the committee is to make sure that certain components are included. Mr. Thompson added that the City of Norman does not have good transportation options to move from one side of the city to the other side in an efficient time frame. In addition, it was stated that he would like more discussion on regional transportation methods in order to connect with other cities. Mr. Thompson finished by stating that an east-west traffic corridor would be a positive impact on Norman's traffic flow. A study of these possibilities should be included in the plan, but not necessarily in the scoping.

Ms. Capps asked the committee how each would be assured that a vision for the community is addressed and that all aspects of the citizens' needs are included. Ms. Robertson added that she understood the vision to include more of how the citizens would want to Norman to look. Ms. O'Leary expanded to what she believes to be the purpose of the committee. Mr. Schwinger asked for additional comments. Mr. O'Leary concluded by remarking that the process includes the listening stage and that the committee is entering the visioning stage with the Council understanding that the scoping process would be complete by January 2012 in time for the next budget process that will begin in March 2012. It was added that the Council would be in a position to make the decision as to whether a comprehensive transportation plan is in their next budget. Mr. O'Leary expanded by clarifying that the focus at this meeting is to move into the direction of completing the visioning process by January 2012. The goals for the committee were again summarized by Mr. O'Leary. Mr. Schwinger reiterated and discussed the guiding principles and that these principles should be common aspirations or values to include why the study is being done, what will be done to provide better mobility throughout Norman and how the goal can be accomplished and implemented. Mr. Schwinger reviewed the presentation with the committee to include:

- Integration of Existing Plans and Policies
- Federal, State, and Regional Framework
- Existing Conditions Assessment
- Future Conditions
- Policies
- Implementation

Mr. Kokes explained what the committee's focus would be in each group discussion to include the following Guiding Principles:

- Special Place to Live
- Mobility
- Maintain and Preserve Infrastructure
- Fiscal Stewardship
- Enhance Economic Vitality

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS: NORMAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING GOALS AND STRATEGIES

During this time, the committee was divided into five groups to review and discuss the list of draft Norman Transportation Guiding Principles and Goals. The group discussions lasted thirty minutes.

SUMMARY OF SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Special Place to Live -The first group was given a draft of three goals and possible strategies:

Ms. Capps begin by stating that the group reviewed the goals and the possible strategies and it was agreed to remove the word 'protect' from the second goal listed in order to provide flexibility in the plan to make changes where appropriate. Ms. Capps referenced the first goal to include 'be compatible with' in place of 'enhance'. It was suggested to remove the first strategy of widening existing roads in established neighborhoods to relieve congestion. The second strategy was changed to include consideration of widening existing roadways if they are compatible with the character of the area. The last suggested change was to reword the last strategy to include construction of future street improvements using compatible design standards based on the character and use of the surrounding area. Ms. Capps suggested that aesthetics should be made a part of the strategies including trees, parks, public art, peoples, spaces, green spaces and streetscapes.

Mr. Worster commented that certain corridors should be designated to be east or west or north or south traveling, and that certain areas should still be considered to be widened if it is compatible. Mr. Applegate agreed and Mr. Heiple made additional comments in regards to the suggested changes. A brief group discussion ensued on the thoroughfares through Norman.

Mobility – The second group was given a draft of three goals and possible strategies:

Ms. Robertson stated that changes were suggested on accessibility within the region that should be expanded beyond Norman. Ms. Robertson made the suggestion to use zoning to make the area more compact, easier access to the university, more wayfinding signage improvements with access across the river. Additional suggestions from the group were made including improvement of 12th Avenue for easier access to Highway 9. Discussion ensued in referencing the strategies and Mr. Heiple added his comments about adding truck routes to improve the access both south and west across the river and provide for bike and pedestrian safety for all modes of transportation. Additional discussion in regards to the suggestion for zoning and improvements for easier access to OU.

Maintain and Preserve Existing Infrastructure – The third group was given a draft of three goals and possible strategies:

Mr. Schwinger read over the group suggestions to include the addition to the guiding principle to add ‘providing balance between the transportation needs of the community and the needs of the neighborhood. It was suggested to modify one of the goals on the traffic control center to be able to change the traffic signal timings from a computer terminal. It was noted that two additional goals should be added to include a significant focus on preservation and health of businesses during construction. Group discussion continued regarding Norman neighborhoods and balancing neighborhood needs versus community needs.

Fiscal Stewardship- The fourth group was given a draft of four goals and possible strategies:

Mr. Worster discusses the goals and gives the following comments: The first suggestion for identifying and pursuing long term and stable revenue sources is given to prioritize the projects that help the highest number of citizens first in order to receive the most return for a public as a whole. In addition, Mr. Worster recommended the need to explore possibilities to match funds either through private or public investments and opportunities to create partnerships with land owners. This concept was explained to include the possibility of someone owning a piece of land that could be developed differently who might be willing to pay for a road or highway to be constructed on part of the land. Mr. Worster explained further to suggest the possibility of using opportunities with emerging technologies such as recycled rubber roads which would not only benefit the company, but would also benefit the City. In addition, another way for a stable revenue source of funding would be accomplished by creating a way to have some type of advalorem or property tax for transportation improvements. It was added that some public lands owned by the City could be leased on a long-term basis to provide ongoing income. Commercial corridors could have TIF districts specific to the corridors for increased sale taxes to be invested back into street or highway maintenance. Possible toll facilities could include a southern loop.

Mr. Worster referenced the fourth goal and remarked that a relationship with ACOG and ODOT needed to be maintained for future possibilities to keep dialogue for an outer loop. In addition, it was suggested to limit the impact that the railroad has though the City of Norman. Mr. Worster noted the fourth goal and that he would recommend seeing more transparency in the wording specifically related to ‘oversight’ in order to avoid a project from moving forward. Mr. Worster asked for any suggestions from the committee for prioritizing the goals in this area of focus and suggested to allow the citizens to vote on the goals, but to only give a percentage of that vote to prevent a project of occurring. It was proposed to continue with the social media ideas to provide access to update the public and keep them involved.

Specific to goal three, Mr. Kokes asked Mr. Worster if providing transparency and meaningful ongoing community involvement in the development and implementation processes is the direction he was leading by removing some oversight opportunities. Mr. Worster asked for suggestions on who should have some oversight. Mayor Rosenthal gave comments about limiting the impact of the railroad and how beneficial it might be in future needs of access to the BNSF right of ways for some type of future computer rails. Mr. Worster and Mayor Rosenthal gave additional comments about the impact of the railroad and some future possibilities for growth in Norman. Councilmember Dillingham commented that she liked the idea of some sort of mechanism for additional citizen input and response on an annual basis specifically related large projects such as the transportation plan and the storm water plan.

Enhance Economic Vitality: The fifth group was given a draft of three goals and possible strategies:

Ms. O'Leary began by focusing on the guiding principles to include fiscally sound efforts intended to achieve a diverse, vibrant local economy with a strong tax base. Suggestions were given to remove 'reducing the future fiscal burden on residents' to 'an adequate revenue stream to provide City services'. Ms. O'Leary stated that their group agreed with the goals presented in this area and did not see any need for revisions. Ms. O'Leary moved onto the strategies and suggested that the first goal which included 'facilitating new growth should be changed to 'support planned growth'. Discussion ensued about the change in wording and it was decided to change the wording to 'encourage' instead of 'support compatible growth'. Mayor Rosenthal suggested 'public and private partnerships that support growth compatible with infrastructure investments'. Additional comments from Mr. Heiple and Mr. Thompson. Ms. O'Leary suggested the change of the strategy to 'determine appropriate public-private partnerships for infrastructure investments that facilitate new growth' to replace 'infrastructure investments' with 'services'. Additional comments from the committee. An additional strategy was added to build regional public and private partnerships that would enhance the economic well-being of Norman citizens. Mr. Thompson made a recommendation to include the wording 'state and federal funding' in this strategy.

NEXT STEPS

Mr. Kokes brought discussion back to the Transportation Plan Components inquired at the ward meetings and that strong opinions had been given. The questions were discussed and the committee agreed that Norman should be the leader in the regional transit discussion. Additional considerations from Heiple to include whether Norman's plan could contemplate the widening of the arterials or section lines in core Norman were compatible with the surroundings. Ms. Nanny made the suggestion that Norman's plan should consider or contemplate road widening, section lines road, and arterials in core Norman where compatible with the surroundings. Discussion ensued. Additional comments and Ms. Nanny made suggestions in regards to bike lanes and more pedestrian access to more areas in Norman. Mr. Kokes concluded the meeting by reviewing the committees focus and completion of the community survey in order to come back to discussion with the committee in January, 2012.

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION

None.

The meeting concluded at 5:10 p.m.

City Clerk

Mayor