



City of Lawton

City Transit Trust

Meeting Minutes

Lawton City Hall
212 SW 9th Street
Lawton, Oklahoma
73501-3944

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

2:00 PM

Lawton City Hall

"Official action can be taken only on items which appear on the agenda. The Transit Trust may adopt, approve, ratify, deny, defer, recommend, or continue any agenda item. The Transit Trust may also propose and enact floor amendments to any matter presented before them. When more information is needed to act on an item, the Transit Trust may refer the matter to the City Manager or the City Attorney. Under certain circumstances, items are deferred to a specific later date or stricken from the agenda entirely."

Call To Order

Roll Call

Present	Council Member Mary Ann Hankins Council Member Linda Chapman Council Member George Gill Council Member Allan Hampton Council Member Bob Weger Council Member Sherene Williams Council Member Randy Warren
Absent	Council Member Kelly Harris

Also Present:

John Ratliff, City Manager
Tim Wilson, Acting City Attorney
Donalynn Blazek-Scherler, City Clerk
Ryan Landers, Lawton Area Transit System

New Business

1. Receive a presentation on the final draft Lawton Transit Master Plan and hold a public hearing for comments and take action as deemed necessary.

[24-1262](#)

Attachments: [Final Draft Master Plan](#)

Ryan Landers, Lawton Area Transit System, presented the draft Transit Master Plan. This report is available in the City Clerk's Office.

During the presentation, Landers outlined the objectives of the Transit Master Plan (TMP) without any bias, emphasizing its role in providing guidance for enhancing public transportation, determining a preferred concept for the Transfer Center and O&M Facility, and serving as an educational tool for informing City officials and residents. He provided an

overview of the ridership data from the past five years, acknowledging a decline during the COVID-19 pandemic but noting a positive trend toward recovery. Landers highlighted that a significant portion of ridership comes from Lawton Public Schools.

Regarding Paratransit and Fort Sill, Landers mentioned a slight decrease in Paratransit ridership during COVID-19, which has since rebounded, while the Fort Sill Shuttle service remained stable.

Landers also discussed the current annual budget of approximately \$3.6 million, with about 58% of funding sourced from the federal government.

Visual aids depicting current facilities were presented, including the maintenance building, operational facility leased by LATS since 2007 or 2008, and the aging transfer center lacking passenger amenities.

In terms of the existing fleet, Landers noted a predominance of diesel transit buses and paratransit vehicles, with around half of the fleet exceeding its useful life.

In 2021, LATS initiated public engagement efforts for the TMP, incorporating feedback through meetings, news coverage, and surveys. Public input informed route planning, with particular interest noted in the industrial park area, which the plan aims to address in due course.

Landers detailed the identified capital, transit operation, administrative, and technology needs to inform the TMP. These include enhancing the transfer center, extending service hours, improving community perception, and implementing real-time tracking technology.

Regarding the proposed Transfer Center and Operations and Maintenance Facilities, Landers emphasized that the presented concepts are not final and invited public feedback. The chosen site, approved south of the new police station and north of the Creamery, spans over 5.5 acres and consolidates various transit functions.

A timeline for the Transfer Center construction, from grant applications to completion in Spring 2027, was outlined.

The redesign of the Fixed Route System aims to optimize routes along main roads for safety and accessibility, with plans to increase coverage, frequency, and reliability, including night and Sunday services and improved access to schools and businesses.

Operational costs were discussed, including existing and proposed services, with an outline of estimated expenses for night, Sunday, and Micro Transit services, with an emphasis on further expansion to include Fort Sill and the Industrial Park.

Landers reviewed additional capital costs, particularly for new hybrid electric vehicles, and highlighted the need for federal funding before implementation, targeting a potential rollout in 2026.

The presentation concluded with plans for public input meetings to finalize route designs and accommodate community feedback.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED.

Leann Enderle, 316 NW 32nd Street, Lawton, OK, questioned if cost analysis was done for changing from diesel or petrol to hybrid.

Landers stated that while diesel buses are cheaper, federal grant money is only given to low or zero emission vehicles. This leads to City having to pay less in it's matching fund, like it did in 2017 or 2018.

Enderle asked what the plan is if federal grants are not received.

Landers explained that transit was given \$3.5 million in CIP funds and that was used for 6 new diesel buses. There is still \$800,000.00 left from those funds and \$2.5 million in other funds from Lawton Public Schools, the State Revolving Fund, and advertising revenue. All of those funds could be used as a local match. He stated there isn't a whole lot we can do without the federal dollars.

Hansley Harris, 6932 SW Cherokee Street, Lawton, OK, asked who owns LATS.

Landers stated LATS is just a marketing name. The City Transit Trust is the body that owns all of the equipment.

H. Harris asked how much money the City of Lawton receives from the bus company, if any.

Warren stated Landers just went over everything in his presentation. The City provides about 33% of the money.

H. Harris expressed his disagreement with the location of the new transfer station. He stated many surveys have shown it should be at the old police station, and he believes we should leave the buses where they are.

Enderle asked if anyone has done any research on electric vehicles. She went over studies that showed the risk of the vehicles catching fire and the weight of vehicles on City roads. She believes there are too many problems with electric vehicles and electric hybrids.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED.

Chapman mentioned that about a month ago, the Transit Trust discussed the differences between electric, hybrid, and diesel vehicles in a meeting due to grant requirements. We ended up opting for hybrids. She hopes any questions about this were already answered in that meeting.

Warren asked Landers what action he was seeking from the trustees.

Landers clarified that he didn't need any immediate action. He just wanted their input for the final plan he'll present later.

Gill pointed out that we've been working on this project for years, with many public meetings. Despite a lot of talk about the old police station, it's not big enough.

Williams asked about the farthest route heading west.

Landers explained that currently, it goes up to 82nd Street and stops at 67th and Lee when going south. They're planning to expand it with on-demand transportation.

Williams mentioned concerns from constituents about the large neighborhood at 67th and Bishop lacking transportation.

Landers acknowledged this was discussed during the route redesign and said the new plan allows an opportunity for on-demand transit services to be considered for that area.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN.

No action taken

Adjournment

MOTION by Gill, SECOND by Chapman, to adjourn the Transit Trust meeting of March 12, 2024. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Council Member Hankins, Council Member Chapman, Council Member Gill, Council Member Hampton, Council Member Weger, Council Member Williams, and Council Member Warren

Nay:

Absent: Council Member Harris

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:25PM.

The City of Lawton encourages participation from all of its citizens. If participation at any public meeting is not possible due to a disability, notification to the City Clerk at (580) 581-3305 at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting is encouraged to make the necessary accommodations. The City may waive the 48 hour rule if interpreters for the deaf (signing) is not the necessary accommodation."