

CITY OF NORMAN

State of the City
2022



Mayor Larry Heikkila



MAYOR

Larry Heikkila

*61st Mayor of Norman,
Oklahoma*

Larry Heikkila was elected as the 61st mayor of Norman in 2022. Previously, he served the citizens of Norman with 17 years of service as an employee of the City of Norman. As an employee he served as the City of Norman Street Supervisor, then as a Personnel Analyst, and finally as the Safety Manager. He retired from the City of Norman in April, 2014. He also retired in 2010, after 26 years of service in the United States Navy. During his service, he served four years in the Submarine Force, and twenty two years as a US Navy Seabee. He retired as the Command Master Chief, 9th Naval Construction Regiment. Prior to his election as mayor, he served as the Chairman of the Excise Board and Equalization Board, Vice-Chair of the Tax Roll Correction Board and as a Member of the Industrial Authority for Cleveland County. He is a member of the Norman Chamber of Commerce. In 2022 he was named one of Cleveland County's Men of Influence. Mayor Heikkila earned a Bachelor of Science with Honors in Business Management from the University of Phoenix. He is also a graduate of the U.S. Navy Senior Enlisted Academy, Class 122-Gold. In addition, he holds many technical certifications in Disaster Relief Operations, Occupational Safety, and Construction. He serves at the Cleveland County Detention Center and at Mission Norman as a Chaplain endorsed by the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. He also serves as an ordained Deacon and Sunday School Teacher at a local church. Mayor Heikkila is a pro-business, pro-growth, avid supporter of Norman's Police and Fire Departments. Norman voters selected him to lead a transformation of our community. To achieve this transformation, the management of it must be pragmatic, productive and visionary, and must redefine Norman into a city of excellence. He and his wife Janet were married in 1976, and moved to Norman from Tulsa in 1978. Mayor Heikkila and his wife have two adult children.



2022 NORMAN CITY COUNCIL

Mayor Larry Heikkila

Ward 1 Brandi Studley

Ward 5 Rarchar Tortorello

Ward 2 Lauren Schueler

Ward 6 Elizabeth Foreman

Ward 3 Kelly Lynn

Ward 7 Stephen Holman

Ward 4 Helen Grant

Ward 8 Matthew Peacock

“We, the people of the City of Norman, in order to secure the benefits of home rule, to encourage efficient and business-like methods in the transaction of municipal affairs, to promote civic advancement and general welfare and to protect the human rights and personal dignity of all persons do ordain and establish this Charter for the City of Norman.”



BUSINESS RELATIONS

COMMUNITY & BUSINESS RELATIONS:

- Partner agency leadership, to include the City of Norman, have come together to support business needs and increase communication with industry professionals through monthly meetings and on-site visits. Facilitating the efforts of businesses allows Norman to thrive. Advocating for business-friendly practices and procedures through local government will continue, especially as the city prepares for a transition to the SEC - a move expected to increase population, tourism and economic development.
- The City's Information Technology Department is in the process of implementing the CityView Suite, which will replace a legacy technology system and ease and automate various procedures for residents and the business community - including procedures related to Permits, Inspections, Utility Billing, Plan Submission, Resident Reporting and more.



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

PLANNING & ZONING:

- Updated and simplified Center City Form Based Code.
- Updated the Historic Preservation Guidelines – 3 Designated Historic Neighborhoods.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITY:

- Entered into Housing Authority Partnership Neighborhood Alliance Engagement, creating opportunity for affordable housing, beautification and education.
- CDBG funds awarded to assist more than 250 households with rental funds and nutrition programs.

IN-THE-WORKS:

- Updating 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan, supporting and updating other community plans and Strong Towns Initiative.
- Implementing new permit management software and preparing for move into new Development Center.



PARKS & RECREATION

NORMAN FORWARD – QUALITY OF LIFE ITEMS:

- Upward of \$60 million worth of improvements are currently happening through voter-approved Norman Forward projects. Projects to be completed in 2023 include the Senior Wellness Center, upgrading health and wellness outlets for older residents; the Young Family Athletic Center, set to be a premiere youth sports venue complete with aquatics, volleyball, basketball and a sports performance center; James Garner Avenue Phase II, providing a new pathway to and from the Downtown area; Reaves Park and Griffin Park, improving and creating new space for soccer, baseball, softball and tee-ball.

IN-THE-WORKS:

- Updating Parks Master Plan, creating Tree Canopy Plan, ongoing revitalization and upgrades to existing neighborhood parks.



COMMUNICATIONS

COLLABORATIVE COMMUNICATION:

- Creation of the City of Norman Citizen's Academy, creating personable spaces to build positive relationships with residents and share knowledge about City services and operations.
- Renewed outreach efforts through community partnerships by way of voter registration drives, internship involvement, student collaborations.
- Established professional communications network within Norman and metro area for strategic planning and preparedness efforts.

NEW PROGRAMMING:

- Launch of On West Gray, a 5-star City of Norman podcast, highlighting specific operations, events or officials.
- Launch of Service Spotlight video series, educational overviews of projects/departments.

ANALYTICS & INSIGHT:

- Consistent audience growth across all digital media platforms; percentage of new subscriptions to Norman News has more than doubled each quarter this calendar year.



NORMAN FIRE

TOPMOST ISO RATING:

- The Norman Fire Department carries the best dual rating in the State of Oklahoma - 1-City, 3-Rural - landing among only 388 Class 1 ISO rated fire departments in the nation. This rating reflects the ability to protect and serve a community, and maintains low insurance premiums for residents.

BENCHMARK ORGANIZATION:

- Years worth of restructuring and organization have earned a top tier ISO rating in addition to replication honors at the State level. Plans review and permitting processes, rural response and urban deployment is so efficient and successful that it is used as a model for neighboring jurisdictions.

HONORS:

- Assistant Fire Chief Joel Chesser accepted a nomination to serve on the 2022 Oklahoma Homeland Security Regional Advisory Council.



NORMAN POLICE

PENDING GRANTS:

- More than \$225,000 of combined competitive and formula grants are pending that will allow for forensic capability improvements, national mobilization efforts, upgraded fingerprinting equipment, and expanded victim advocacy partnerships.

UNIT DEVELOPMENT:

- Launch of Unmanned Aerial Systems Unit (“Drone Program”), increasing efforts to create a safer community in the deployment of drones to a variety of events including: search and rescue, critical incidents and injury collisions.

IN-THE-WORKS:

- Groundbreaking of the new Emergency Communications & Operations Center slated for January 2023.

HONORS:

- Three police officers were honored this year with the NPD Medal of Valor for acts of bravery, along with one police officer awarded with the NPD Police Shield for significant injuries sustained while searching for a wanted fugitive.



PUBLIC WORKS

COMPLETION OF MAJOR PROJECTS:

- Robinson Street & I-35 (\$5 million, TIF Agreement Project)
- Porter Ave & Acres Street (\$3.3 million, Bond project)
- CNG furling facility expansion upgrades (\$501K, North Base)
- Transit/Public Safety & Parks Maintenance North Base Facility (\$10.7 million)

TRANSIT & PUBLIC SAFETY:

- Norman's bus transit system scored 32% above the national average in collective customer satisfaction categories.
- Secured grants in the total amount of \$1.8 million for new CNG buses and paratransit vans.
- Upgraded lighting system at Campus Corner; completed branding and instructional signage as part of Wayfinding Master Plan.

IN-THE-WORKS:

- Alameda Street project completion in May 2023 – the seventh of eight projects within the 2012 Transportation Bond Program.
- Expected completion of 2-way Gray Street Conversion Project in January 2024 – the third of 19 projects in 2019 Transportation Bond Program.
- Construction of City's first Traffic Management Center.
- Update of City's Comprehensive Transportation Plan and EMBARK bus routing system.



PUBLIC UTILITIES

COMPLETION OF MAJOR PROJECTS:

- Water Treatment Plant Solar Project, offsetting approximately 21% of electricity used at plant. Companion project at the Water Reclamation Facility will offset approximately 36%.
- Household Hazardous Waste Facility opened February 2022 and has - to date - collected more than 38,000 pounds of material that has been responsibly recycled, swapped out or disposed of.
- Interstate Drive Waterline Replacement Project replaced 7,500 feet of failing ductile iron water lines and was completed in December 2021.

GRANT AWARDS:

- \$700,000 for Indirect Potable Reuse project, for which full report on preliminary results will be obtained this quarter.
- \$148,000 for Lake Thunderbird Predictive Lake Level Optimization Tool.
- \$2 Million for Advanced Metering Infrastructure - 1 of 14 projects to receive WaterSMART funding nationwide.

HONORS:

- Solid Waste Collection Manager Bret Scovill is set to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Keep Oklahoma Beautiful organization as he is recognized for his outstanding contributions in environmental sustainability efforts in November.



For such a time as this!