Making Tulsa Transit the Method of Choice

In Tulsa, we want to foster a generation of residents who utilize the greatest network of public transportation this city has ever seen. By having world-class transit options, all Tulsans will have improved access to health care, education and job opportunities. Doing this ensures a better quality of life for all residents and breaks down the silos that have historically divided this city and created barriers to opportunity.

Though our bus routes now run seven days a week, a lot of Tulsans still don’t utilize them as their transportation method of choice. That’s why we decided to make our transit system faster, more easily accessible, more sustainable and more inclusive to all residents. Last year, Tulsa Transit conducted its first comprehensive study in 15 years to review and improve its local route network. In September, it launched more efficient routes while implementing a policy where riders will no longer be able to flag down a bus anywhere on the street. Improvements include 24 percent shorter travel times, grid-like route structures, the creation of sub hubs where two more buses meet within 15 minutes, improved Saturday schedules and simplified nighttime and Sunday services.

In July, Tulsa Transit was awarded a $2.9 million Low or No-Emissions grant to purchase new electric buses and charging infrastructure. The new facility, opening later this year, is coming in under budget at approximately $42 million dollars. The new FJC will increase the total square footage from the current 8,300 to 151,000. This expansion will provide space for more courtrooms, jury rooms, re-entry programming, training facilities, and state of the art security.

Besides the increase in size of the facility, it’s important to recognize that over the years the types of services which juveniles and families need from the juvenile justice system has changed dramatically. Because of that, the new facility has been designed to provide the latest state of the art intervention services. The new facility will have additional space for the Department of Human Services, offices for mediation services, separate victim advocacy office areas, forensic observation rooms, more programing space for juveniles in detention, and extra classrooms and library space.

In addition to the court related services, the juvenile court is also responsible for a juvenile detention center which it is necessary to provide shelter services to juveniles. The new detention facility is a 24-hour-a-day secure custody operation for temporarily holding youth pending court hearings or other placements. Youth are required to attend school classes offered by Tulsa Public Schools while in detention. The detention center has a full-time Registered Nurse and a part-time physician to attend to the capacity of 10 youth.

There is a very important reason why the new facility is named the Family Justice Center. Inside the walls of the new FJC aren’t just children who may have caused trouble but who may be the victims. Children, who through no fault of their own, are in a dysfunctional and sometimes dangerous family that can cause abuse and neglect. Children who need protection and families that need support, help, and the intervention of the professional staff at the FJC.

At the end of 2018 there were approximately 1,150 active deprived cases involving more than 1,800 children. Ninety-four percent were removed from the home due to abuse or neglect. The average age is six years old. At the new FJC there will be a Family Treatment Court (FTC) which is a partnership with the Dept. of Mental Health, Centers for Therapeutic Interventions, and DHS. FTC is a non-adversarial, parallel specialty court that combines judiciary aspects with treatment, social services and education.

The opening of the new Family Justice Center is just another example of the citizens of Tulsa showing their support for the youngest and most vulnerable of our citizens when they need us. So, thank you Tulsa County voters for making this possible.

Tulsa County Family Justice Center is Under Budget

It has been 69 years since the Tulsa County Juvenile Court first occupied its current facility. In 1950 a court was built to house the courts and the programs for the juvenile justice system. For almost five decades, the facility remained overcrowded and the juvenile justice system has changed dramatically. The new Family Justice Center (FJC) is a part of that, the new facility has been designed to provide the latest state of the art intervention services. The new facility will have additional space for the Department of Human Services, offices for mediation services, separate victim advocacy office areas, forensic observation rooms, more programing space for juveniles in detention, and extra classrooms and library space.

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