



CITY OF NORMAN, OK CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Municipal Building, Executive Conference Room, 201 West Gray, Norman,
OK 73069

Thursday, March 27, 2025 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

The Community Planning & Transportation Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, will meet in Regular Session in the Executive Conference Room of the Norman Municipal Building, on the 27th day of March, 2025 at 4:00 PM, and notice and agenda of the meeting was posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and on the City website at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Holman called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councilmember Ward 7 - Stephen Holman - Chairman
Councilmember Ward 2 Matthew Peacock

ABSENT

Councilmember Ward 1 Austin Ball
Councilmember Ward 3 Bree Montoya
Councilmember Ward 5 Michael Nash

OTHERS PRESENT

Councilmember Ward 5 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 6 Joshua Hinkle
Ms. Shannon Stevenson, Assistant City Manager
Mr. Anthony Purinton, Assistant City Attorney II
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager
Mr. Jason Huff, Transit Planner and Grants Specialist
Mr. David Riesland, Transportation Engineer
Mr. Scott Sturtz, Director of Public Works
Mr. Tim Miles, City Engineer
Mr. Larry Wyatt, EMBARK Operations Specialist
Ms. Kathy Hammans, Admin Tech III, City Clerk

AGENDA ITEMS

1. PRESENTATION OF THE FEBRUARY PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT.

Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager, presented the February 2025 Public Transit Report.

Four of the Six (CNG) Compressed Natural Gas busses ordered, arrived on March 26, 2025, leaving just three of the original fleet to be replaced.

In recognition of Transit Appreciation Day, EMBARK sponsored a lunch for staff and local Transit staff handed out cookies as “Thanks” to staff for supporting the program.

The February ridership numbers were not as high as anticipated, but may be a direct result of the recent extreme winter weather experienced, as people do not tend to get out in bad weather.

The total ridership for EMBARK Norman in February 2025 was 37,386 compared to 35,374 in February 2024, with the average daily ridership being 1,589. Total ridership is 329,340 year-to-date, which is a 25.96% increase system wide.

The fixed route service transported 36,008 passengers in February 2025, compared to 33,569 in February 2024. Passengers with bicycles or other mobility devices totaled 705 and 349 passengers with wheelchairs were transported in February 2025.

Norman On-Demand completed 2,551 rides in February 2025, compared with 3,272 for January 2025, representing a 22.04% decrease.

Staff anticipate the ridership numbers to plateau out at some point and not experience large increases and/or decreases as reflected over the last year.

Due to software changes made, the above numbers are short three days of service. Chairman Holman said that the 10.8% increase compared to last year is great as it exceeded expectations and the 41% increase in the fixed route service is definitely a pleasant surprise and he is sure to talk about Transit whenever he is speaking about city services.

Mr. Johnson said the program has become a good means of transportation to get to work, shopping, medical, social, etc. for all who use it. He said restoring Saturday service was also a good decision for the program.

Chairman Holman asked if it looks like Transit will need a FY26 subsidy, to which Mr. Johnson said staff is trying to reduce unnecessary expenditures to limit the amount of subsidy needed. He said the total operation runs approximately \$760,000, with fares bringing in less than \$10,000 and OU Cost Share being \$121,000.

Chairman Holman suggested looking at a fare increase to possibly a \$5.00 flat fee. Mr. Johnson said Council cannot anticipate a fair increase will lead to more revenue as the ridership may decrease. He has already notified Via of anticipated fare increases. He also cautioned Council on decreasing services as it causes damage to the program that takes years to recover from.

Chairman Holman asked how the Transit Center security is working out. Mr. Johnson said there have been a few incidents, but security was there to de-escalate the issue before anything got out of control.

2. DISCUSSION REGARDING A CEDAR LANE ROAD EXTENSION FROM JENKINS AVENUE TO HALF A MILE NORTH.

Chairman Holman said there was a problem entering and/or leaving the Eagle Cliff and Cobblestone developments due to recent tornado damage blocking the only road in and out. New homes are being built in the area and access is necessary not only for the safety of the current residents, but for the success of additional housing development planned in the area.

Mr. Tim Miles, City Engineer gave a presentation on the Cedar Lane Road extension. He said there has been extensive talks over the past year on the need to extend Cedar Lane and there was interest in creating a Tax Incremental Finance District (TIF) to help fund the road expansion to support the area.

A bridge will be needed to cross Bishop Creek and will be costly. There is varied amounts of right-of-way, (ROW) available for this road project, but all segments of the road project will require additional ROW.

Cedar Lane Road from Jenkins Avenue to the end of improved section has a 66-foot statutory right-of-way (ROW),

the north half from end of improved section to 12th Avenue SE has a 33-foot statutory ROW,

the south half from end of improved section to 12th Avenue SE - has a 50-foot ROW, and

Jenkins Avenue is a two-lane rural road with a 66-foot ROW. Both Cedar Lane and Jenkins are classified as Minor Arterial Roads, Urban in the (CPT) Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

Councilmember Holman asked if a multimodal path would be best for this project. Mr. Scott Sturtz, Director of Public Works, said there are currently bike lanes on Cedar Lane, but the public prefers bike paths.

Chairman Holman said that this road extension would positively impact new housing development in the area. Mr. Sturtz said while reviewing the Sooner Village project, he had seen a preliminary plat has gone to council for approval and the developer was told they will be responsible for changes to Jenkins and Cedar Lane needed to support the development.

Chairman Holman asked if Cedar Village will contribute to the road project as well, to which Mr. Sturtz said that the private builder will be putting in half of the cost for their segment. Chairman Holman asked about the back fences at Eagle Cliff, as they are 20-50 feet over the ROW. Mr. Sturtz said the fences will not have to be moved for this project.

Mr. Sturtz said there were sewer, water and electric services near the ROW of both roads that will impact the project. The Highway 9 and Jenkins Avenue intersection has several issues, which include roads entering at odd angles and site distances that will require coordination and approval with Oklahoma Department of Transportation, (ODOT).

Mr. Sturtz said the bridge crossing Bishop Creek will require a flood plain permit. The bridge cannot cause a rise in the base flood elevation and will have to pass the 100-year flood event. The estimated size of the bridge will be 170' long by 50' wide. The bridge and road would need to be built together for continuity and affordability.

Mr. Sturtz said there is an active oil tank in the area that may require the road to be offset or may require the tank to be moved. Councilmember Peacock asked if there might be money available from the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board, (OERB) to help move the tank or the Federal Emergency Management Agency, (FEMA) due to the disaster impact on the area. Councilmember Grant asked about the possibility of a transportation bond.

Mr. Sturtz said he does not see the project being eligible for OERB or FEMA funds. He also said this is not going to be an easy road to construct and the preliminary cost estimate is \$24,400,000.

The current transportation bond, passed in 2019, and will not expire until 2029 and due to cost and inflation rates, a new one may not pass. The current Bond project can be renewed in 2029 and a decision can be made then on what projects will be included in the bond.

Chairman Holman said street enhancement bonds were issued in 2005, and renewed in 2012 and again in 2025, increasing the City of Norman's bond capacity each time. Mr. Sturtz said the 2019 Bond was for \$140 million, not quite 50/50, but is the preferable funding mechanism for projects of this type and size.

The scoring changes made by Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, (ACOG) is limiting what projects get funded. The maximum ACOG fund is capped at \$7.5 million and an entity can only submit ten applications in a cycle. City of Norman projects will be submitted based on what will gain the highest score for funding.

Councilmember Grant said she was given an estimated TIF revenue for the area of \$1-2 million and could see ways to phase it in to help fund the project.

Mr. Miles said TIF funds are a small amount versus a Bond, and Councilmember Peacock said costs will only go up as they wait for TIF funds to come in. Staff is looking at other funding solutions for road projects.

The committee recommendation is to continue working on the project plans and funding sources.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:48 pm.