



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

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

Thursday, April 25, 2024 at 4:00 PM

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## MINUTES

*The Community Planning and Transportation Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma met in Regular Session in the Executive Conference Room of the Norman Municipal Building, on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2024 at 4:00 p.m., and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray 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, Chair  
Councilmember Ward 8 Matthew Peacock  
Councilmember Ward 5 Michael Nash  
Councilmember Ward 2 Lauren Schueler  
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant

### ABSENT

None

### OTHERS PRESENT:

Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager  
Mr. Scott Sturtz, Interim Public Works Director  
Mr. Joseph Hill, Streets Program Manager  
Mr. Brandon Brooks, Staff Engineer  
Ms. Kathryn Walker, City Attorney  
Ms. Beth Muckala, Assistant City Attorney  
Ms. Shaakira Calnick, Internal Auditor  
Mr. Lamar Hammon, EMBARK Operations Specialist

## AGENDA ITEMS

### ITEM 1: PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT.

Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager, provided the transit report to Council.

Mr. Johnson provided an update on the vehicle procurement. He said the five Ford paratransit vehicles will be in service in the next week or two. There were a few things to work out with the vendor, but they are really close to getting the vehicles into the fleet, looking forward to getting them into service and retiring some of the older vehicles.

Mr. Johnson said Staff will be bringing an authorization to purchase, to council, for the six cut away buses funded last summer on a FTA Grant. These vehicles will further overhaul the current transit fleet.

The preliminary budget has been approved with an increase to Route 112 and Staff will work on full implementation over the next year.

Chairman Holman, said Dan Munson also asked during the Budget Hearing, why there was an increased budget for vehicle maintenance. Mr. Scott Sturtz, Interim Director of Public Works said there has been no significant increase in maintenance based on multi-year average comparables. He said Staff has actually seen a decrease in bus maintenance, but there has been a significant rise in the cost of parts, leading to increased budget projections.

Councilmember Schueler asked about the cost on gas versus electric vehicles. Mr. Sturtz said the electric buses do not have routine preventative maintenance, but the parts are more expensive as they are not as readily available and the transit budget allowed for this.

Chairman Holman said Mr. Munson also expressed the possibility of charging fares for the use of the bus. What are the pros & cons? Will the program still need funds from the General fund next year to operate?

Councilmember Schueler said when council was doing the analysis for transit, one of the questions was, charge or not charge. The long range plan was to make sure the buses had the ability to charge and collect the fare from riders. She asked if charging fares is still being considered.

Mr. Johnson said the buses were wired for the fare boxes, but an analysis found that it would not be cost effective to install the boxes. The "Electronic Fare" boxes take both cash and cards, but EMBARK prefers that you use the mobile app or buy a card at the transit center to use.

The cost to purchase the electronic system for fare collection ranges between \$15,000 and \$20,000. The collected fares would not be enough to recoup the cost of the equipment, upgrades and the cost of additional staff to pick up daily receipts from buses, process collections and deposit in the bank. The Fleet Division would also have to hire someone to handle the maintenance of the electronic collection system. Operating costs would increase with very little return from fares.

*ITEM 1: (continued) PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT.*

Mr. Johnson, said the total ridership for EMBARK Norman in March 2024 was 33,836 compared to 32,539 in March 2023, with the average daily ridership being 1,301. Total ridership 303,003 year to date, which is a 26.39% increase system wide.

The fixed route service transported 31,961 passengers in March 2024, compared to 30,515 in March 2023. Passengers with bicycles totaled 747 and we transported 523 passengers with wheelchairs or other mobility devices in March 2024.

Saturday service totaled 3,300 in March 2024, compared to 2,706 in March 2023, a 21.95% increase, averaging 14.99 riders on each route per service hour.

Norman On-Demand completed 2,662 rides in March 2024, with 26 wheelchair accessible vehicle requests for a total of 18,532 riders since August 2023. There are currently 984 active accounts that have completed more than five rides each.

Items submitted for the record

1. EMBARK Norman Performance Report for March 2024

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*ITEM 2: DISCUSSION REGARDING BRIDGE STANDARDS*

Chairman Holman said with the voter approved Bridge Maintenance Bond Program several bridge repairs are underway.

Mr. Sturtz discussed the program with the Committee members. He introduced Mr. Joseph Hill, Streets Program Manager, who provided a brief history of the Federal Highway Program. The foundation of the City of Norman bridge program is the Federal Highway Administration National Bridge Inspection Standards that were originally published in 1971 and it is the uniform coordination for bridges on both the federal highway system and any other public roads. This establishes standardized procedures, reporting, etc., for bridges.

Chairman Holman said most of the bridge and highway systems were built prior to 1971, and he is amazed that a national interstate highway system and bridges were built with no coordinated inspection program.

The foundation where everything starts with the City of Norman's inspection process is with Oklahoma Department of Transportation, (ODOT). ODOT implements and manages the (NBIS), National Bridge Inspection Standards inventory within the State of Oklahoma and all reporting goes to them and through them.

Inspection consultants are vetted by the state first and then the city receives a list of preselected consultants from the state to select from, via a local interview process every two years. The City of Norman's current bridge consultant is Consor Engineering and they were selected for the upcoming cycle.

ITEM 2: (continued) DISCUSSION REGARDING BRIDGE STANDARDS

Inspections are done every two years, but there are some bridges that are on a rapid cycle, with upcoming inspections in May. Once the inspections are completed, the City of Norman receives updated reports detailing the condition and ratings of our bridges.

Mr. Sturtz said these reports help Staff identify deficient bridges in the City of Norman and it helps them determine ones missing from the priority lists that need to be added to the bridge pool. A bridge pool of already identified and inspected bridges help speed up the process for work on the bridges and allows them to have projects ready for additional funding resources.

Mr. Sturtz went on to discuss more about bridges and bridge designs. In order to understand bridges, you need to understand what defines a bridge, *“a structure carrying a pathway or roadway over a span of 20’ or greater over a depression, a water way, a creek or obstacle”*. The most common type of bridge construction in Norman is the box structure.

The City of Norman bridge design standards and guidelines meet the Federal Highway Administration, American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials and Oklahoma Department of Transportation standards.

The Public Works Department has an established project management manual that sets detailed process for project planning, organization, consultant selection, design, utility coordination, construction procurement and contract administration. This manual meets the American Public Works Accreditation and is how the City of Norman manages their projects.

Staff does not have the expertise to design bridges, so we hire consultants that are bridge professionals that have the knowledge and expertise in structural requirements for bridges. All bids include the language *“Bridges shall be designed in accordance with AASHTO/ODOT criteria”*.

Mr. Sturtz said with \$1 million dollars allocated annually for the CIP Bridge Maintenance Program, the City of Norman is able to perform general maintenance at all bridge locations within the next 5 years.

With this approach and funding, bridges and surrounding ground that were listed as structurally deficient have been repaired, are now sound and no longer deficient.

The Bridge Maintenance Bond Program has a \$50 million dollar, 20-year bond, 10-year construction cycle, with year one projects shovel ready and scheduled for bid in early May, while designs are underway on upcoming projects.

ITEM 2: (continued) DISCUSSION REGARDING BRIDGE STANDARDS

Chairman Holman asked for an update on Constitution Street Bridge. Mr. Sturtz said it was started this week and Staff is working to repair the bridge approach, using the bridge maintenance program.

Chairman Holman thanked staff for providing information on the roads and bridges.

Items submitted for the record

1. "Bridge Standards" dated April 25, 2024

An update on RTA will be provided at the meeting next month

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:48 p.m.

ATTEST:



City Clerk



Mayor