



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

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

Thursday, April 23, 2026 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

NO QUORUM

The Community Planning & Transportation Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Regular Session in the Executive Conference Room in the Municipal Building, on Thursday, April 23, 2026 at 4:00 PM, and notice of the agenda of the meeting was posted at the Norman 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

Acting Chairman Peacock called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

PRESENT

Councilmember Ward 2 Matthew Peacock
Councilmember Ward 7 Kimberly Blodgett

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mayor Stephen Holman, Chair
Councilmember Ward 3 Robert Bruce

OTHERS PRESENT

Councilmember Ward 1 David Gandesbery
Councilmember Ward 6 Joshua Hinkle
Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager
Ms. Shannon Stevenson, Assistant City Manager
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit Parking and Program Manager
Mr. Jason Huff, Transit Planner & Grant Specialist
Mr. Scott Sturtz, Director of Public Works
Mr. Clint Mercer, Director of Finance
Ms. Kim Coffman, Chief Accountant
Ms. Katherine Griffith, Administrative Tech III, City Clerk

Councilmember Peacock, announced that Agenda Item No. 2 would be considered first due to pending arrivals.

2. PRESENTATION OF THE MARCH PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT

Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit Parking and Program Manager, presented the March 2025 Transit Report. Mr. Johnson reported that the City is awaiting official notification regarding the grant application submitted to TSET for the EMBARK Well program and staff remain hopeful for its approval.

Regarding ridership, Mr. Johnson stated that the EMBARK Norman fixed route and paratransit system recorded approximately 45,000 rides in March 2026, reflecting an increase from approximately 44,000 rides in March 2025. He indicated that while growth has plateaued compared to prior years, ridership remains steady and is projected to reach approximately 500,000 fixed-route rides for the year.

Mr. Johnson highlighted increased ridership on the West Lindsey route, attributing this to improved service frequency implemented in October 2024. He noted continued positive trends for Saturday service as well.

For Norman On-Demand (microtransit), Mr. Johnson reported approximately 2,730 rides in March 2026 compared to approximately 3,800 rides in March 2025, reflecting a decrease in demand. He noted that microtransit performance would be discussed further during the transit budget agenda item.

Committee members discussed potential impacts of grocery store closures on ridership patterns and inquired about fuel cost impacts. Staff indicated that most transit vehicles utilize compressed natural gas, mitigating immediate fuel cost impacts; however, broader fuel supply constraints may affect City operations in the future.

1. PROJECT UPDATES AND DISCUSSION OF THE ACCESS OKLAHOMA -EAST/WEST CORRIDOR.

Mr. Scott Sturtz, Director of Public Works, introduced Mr. Trent James of the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority, along with project team members, to present updates.

Mr. James provided an overview of ongoing and upcoming work along the Access Oklahoma East/West Corridor (Toby Keith Expressway), including:

- Continued field work, surveying, geotechnical analysis, right-of-way acquisition, and utility relocation activities.
- Progress toward opening a connection between I-44 and I-35 by the end of 2027.
- Planned construction of a diverging diamond interchange at State Highway 37 connecting I-44 and the turnpike.
- Ongoing bridge construction over the Canadian River and Ten Mile Flats, with emphasis on subsurface work.
- Upcoming projects include interchanges, bridge structures, and mainline segments scheduled for bid lettings throughout 2026, with construction anticipated into 2027.
- Roadway design standards were discussed, including pavement composition and structural layers for turnpike versus arterial roadways.

Item 1, continued

Mr. James discussed coordination with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation on frontage road conversions along I-35 and noted there is a public meeting scheduled for May 27.

Acquisition processes were discussed and Mr. James explained that property owners would be contacted by right-of-way agents, provided with certified appraisals, reviewed by licensed professionals, and engaged in negotiations. He noted that timelines vary depending on project schedules, and while the intent is to allow sufficient negotiation time, deadlines compress timelines in certain cases.

Mr. James stated that some advance acquisitions have already occurred where impacts are clear, while other properties will be addressed as design plans are finalized. He acknowledged that some acquisitions will be total takes and that the process can be complex and emotional for property owners.

Updates were also provided on the South Extension Turnpike, including early-stage design progress, ongoing property owner notifications, and anticipated timelines for broader right-of-way outreach by early 2027. Approximately 40 total acquisitions have been identified in initial phases.

Mr. Sturtz noted that the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority has committed to providing more direct and transparent updates to the Committee moving forward, including project data and potentially construction visuals.

Committee members emphasized the importance of transparency and requested ongoing updates regarding land acquisition impacts, including total property takes and housing stock considerations.

3. CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING THE FYE 2027 TRANSIT BUDGET.

Mr. Taylor Johnson presented follow-up information regarding the Fiscal Year 27 Transit Budget.

Mr. Johnson reported a modest increase in projected federal funding (approximately \$98,000) and noted adjustments to expenses, including expanded security services. He stated that without microtransit services, the transit fund would reflect a surplus of approximately 10%.

Mr. Johnson presented a revised microtransit (Norman On-Demand) budget of approximately \$615,502, reduced from the previously estimated \$650,000. Cost reductions include:

- Delaying weekday service start time by 30 minutes.
- Eliminating the final hour of Sunday service.

He reported that the University of Oklahoma has agreed to contribute approximately \$144,000 toward the service, resulting in an estimated City cost of approximately \$457,000.

Item 3, continued

Discussion was held regarding service levels, ridership patterns, and the balance between cost efficiency and service availability. Committee members also explored whether the program could be scaled to focus primarily on accessibility needs; however, staff noted that such a reduction may not be operationally cost feasible at a smaller scale.

Mr. Johnson stated that the City plans to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for microtransit services in the fall to ensure competitive pricing and service delivery.

The Committee expressed general support for continuing the program with the revised budget at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:48 pm.