



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

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

Thursday, February 27, 2025 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

The Community Planning & 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 27th day of February, 2025, at 4:00 PM, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and the City website at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

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

PRESENT

Councilmember Ward 2 Matthew Peacock
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman

ABSENT

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

OTHERS PRESENT

Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 8 Joshua Hinkle
Ms. Shannon Stevenson, Assistant City Manager
Mr. Rick Knighton, City Attorney
Mr. Anthony Purinton, Assistant City Attorney II
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager
Mr. David Riesland, Transportation Engineer
Mr. Scott Sturtz, Director of Public Works
Mr. Tim Miles, City Engineer
Ms. Kathy Hammans, Admin Tech III, City Clerk

AGENDA ITEMS

1. PRESENTATION OF THE JANUARY PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT.

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

Mr. Johnson said the City Council approved a contract amendment as of January 28, 2025, with EMBARK to provide security services at the Norman Transit Center. Coverage was originally scheduled for Monday through Friday from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. and was changed to provide coverage during the busier time from 12 pm to 8 pm.

Mr. Johnson, said the total ridership for EMBARK Norman in January 2025 was 40,182 compared to 30,295 in January 2024, with the average daily ridership being 1,545. Total ridership is 291,954 year-to-date, which is a 29.14% increase system wide.

The fixed route service transported 38,258 passengers in January 2025, compared to 28,544 in January 2024. Passengers with bicycles or other mobility devices totaled 764 and 379 passengers with wheelchairs were transported in January 2025.

Norman On-Demand completed 3,272 rides in January 2025, compared with 3,372 for December 2024, representing a 3.06% decrease.

Six (CNG) Compressed Natural Gas vehicles are on order and will be used to replace the six paratransit vehicles sometime in March 2025.

A meeting for the Central Oklahoma Long Range Plan was held on January 14, 2025, and the transit budget for the 25-26 FY will be approximately \$500,000.

Chairman Holman said the overall ridership has increased 29% and it is important to share the information with the community so they can see that transit is important to Norman.

Councilmember Grant asked about the Mobility Plus ridership and if it is catching those who ride and have a scooter or wheelchair with them.

Mr. Johnson said they have added a mobility fixed route to meet the requests of the community that it be more user friendly.

Chairman Holman asked if the plus system is expensive to operate and would it be better for people to use fixed route buses?

Mr. Johnson said they implemented wheelchair attachment devices on the buses three years ago, allowing riders with wheelchairs to use the bus instead of EMBARK Plus when necessary. EMBARK Plus covers the entire city even though Norman is not required to do so.

Chairman Holman said with the continuation of On-Demand services there will need to be budget discussions that include raising rates; how ridership will be impacted; will a

transit tax increase be needed to cover the fixed route; how does the Plus Service impact revenue and will OU need to increase their contribution.

Mr. Johnson said that he has been looking at models to compare charges, demand impact and what transit costs will be. There is a possibility that a subsidy may not be needed for the next FY.

Councilmember Peacock asked if the rates need to be raised to only recoup costs. Chairman Holman said they would look at how much the budget can handle before making that decision

Councilmember Grant asked what the future of the Transit Program will be if the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) passes, will On-Demand fit in the RTA Plan? Chairman Holman said the RTA will be a multi-transit system, not just a rail system.

Mr. Johnson said they are working on this now and looking at more On-Demand areas as part of the RTA as it will be an all-encompassing transit program. More will be known over the next year as work on the transit plan and the needs of RTA are identified for the county election ballot.

2. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE STATE HIGHWAY 9 SAFETY UPDATE AND JAMES GARNER BOULEVARD AT ACRES.

Mr. David Riesland, Transportation Engineer, provided a presentation on State Highway 9 Safety and James Garner Boulevard at Acres Street to the committee.

Mr. Riesland said Highway 9 is finished to 108th Street East. Centerline and edge line rumble strips were built into the yellow and white lines to limit crossover and run off collisions. Grading eliminated many severe vertical and horizontal curves and wide shoulders provide better areas for breakdowns and non-serious collision investigations.

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) has agreed to sponsor a Road Safety Audit of State Highway 9 between 24th Avenue SE and 96th Ave SE, with the City of Norman being an official stakeholder in the Road Safety Audit.

Staff will continue to work with ODOT for scheduling future Road Safety Audits once widening of the unimproved sections/locations are completed.

Councilmember Hinkle asked about collision data for the construction area and Assistant City Manager Shannon Stephenson asked, what the total volume of cars was, by year, for the area. Chairman Holman asked if data for I-35 to 24th Avenue was included. Mr. Riesland said this was not included in this presentation, but it could be provided at a later date.

Mr. Riesland said the study included "at-a-glance data from years 2014 through 2024. The data shows 48th Avenue appeared on seven annual list, while 36th Avenue SE appeared on three annual lists, with both included in the Road Study Audit ODOT has agreed to conduct.

72nd Avenue SE appeared on six of the annual lists and 60th Avenue SE appeared on three. Both are included in the footprint of the area for the Road Safety Audit ODOT will conduct.

156th Avenue SE appeared on seven of the annual lists. This intersection has been included in discussions to make it a signalized intersection in the future widening plans for the area because of the casino and the Absentee Shawnee Tribal Clinic. Staff will continue to work with ODOT and try to persuade them to include this signal in their plans.

108th Avenue SE appeared on six of the annual lists, while 120th Avenue SE appeared on three annual lists. Staff will continue to monitor both post widening for a potential Road Safety Audit in the future.

Councilmember Hinkle asked if there is something that can be done to reduce traffic issues on 48th Avenue SE. This intersection is where the Highway 9 median ends, could signage be installed. Chairman Holman asked if this would be a good place for a roundabout, would rumble strips or cable barriers help. Mr. Riesland said nothing can be done without the approval of ODOT, but this would warrant signalization.

Chairman Holman said Council would support anything that makes this road safer. Councilmember Peacock asked if it would help if Council were to become individually involved.

Mr. Scott Sturtz, Director of Public Works, stated that Staff meets regularly with ODOT to discuss road needs in Norman city limits, they have this power point information and Staff will continue to bring these concerns to them.

Mr. Riesland went on to discuss James Garner Boulevard, (from Flood Avenue to Acres Street). Since James Garner Boulevard opened in September, reports show one collision at Flood, one vehicle struck a power pole between Flood Avenue and Acres Street, with three non-injury collisions and one injury collision at Acres.

Mr. Riesland said people have requested a four-way at Acres Street and James Garner Boulevard, but staff believes this would further impede traffic. Chairman Holman asked if this would be a good spot for a roundabout and another one at Jones & Acres or possibly a signal light.

Mr. Sturtz said it would be very expensive to install a signal, based on the cost for the light added to the Gray Street and Main Street project. Councilmember Grant asked how much the roundabout would cost, and Mr. Sturtz said approximately \$500,000, plus having to close the road down in both directions.

The September 2024 traffic counts show 4,244 vehicles per day used James Garner Boulevard. The January 2025 count shows 5,651 vehicles, an increase of 33%.

Mr. Sturtz said overall, this has been a very successful project. Chairman Holman said it is good to hear that James Garner Boulevard is being used and has made a difference to so many people.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 pm.