



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

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

Thursday, May 22, 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 in the Municipal Building, on Thursday, May 22, 2025 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

Chairman Stephen Holman opened the meeting at 4:00 PM.

Members Present:

Chairman Stephen Holman
Councilmember Matthew Peacock
Councilmember Helen Grant

Members Absent:

Councilmember Austin Ball
Councilmember Bree Montoya
Councilmember Michael Nash

Other Attendees:

Ms. Shannon Stevenson, Assistant City Manager
Ms. Beth Muckala, Assistant City Attorney III
Mr. Anthony Purinton, Assistant City Attorney II
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit, Parking & Program Manager
Mr. Bryant VanFossen, Permit Manager, Planning & Community Development
Ms. Jeanne Snider, Assistant City Attorney II
Ms. Jane Hudson, Planning & Community Development Director
Ms. Janita Hatley, Code Compliance Supervisor
Ms. Whitney Kline, Admin Tech IV
Mr. Scott Sturtz, Director of Public Works
Mr. Joseph Hill, Streets Program Manager
Ms. Katherine Hammans, Admin Tech III / City Clerk

AGENDA ITEMS

1. PRESENTATION OF THE APRIL PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT.

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

The total ridership for EMBARK Norman in April 2025 was 45,838 compared to 35,367 in April 2024, with the average daily ridership being 1,850. Total ridership for the 2025 YTD is 420,447, compared to the 2024 YTD of 330,659.

The fixed route service had a great month, transporting 43,699 passengers in April 2025, compared to 33,311 in April 2024. Passengers with wheelchairs or other mobility devices totaled 313, compared to 407 for April 2024. Passengers with bikes or other mobility devices totaled 1,101 compared to 815 for April 2024.

Norman On-Demand completed 3,724 rides in April 2025, compared with 3,838 for March 2025, representing a 2.97% decrease.

The fares for all transit routes increased in the 2026 budget, except the Social Security route. Ridership is running 20 riders per service hour, and On-Demand use is up, with 38,721 riders to date, this fiscal year.

Talks with VIA is projecting a 10-month service calendar instead of the 12-month, August to August service for riders. Previous council talks included a fare increase of \$3.00, but the budget revenue projection was based on \$1.00. Council also recommended decreasing the number of free rides from six to two and when the fall semester starts decrease to zero.

These changes are projected to increase the Plus revenue to \$84,000 and eliminating the free rides should reduce the amount of ridership fraud linked to user accounts.

EMBARK staff met with participants at the Adult Wellness and Education Center (AWE) to discuss their ridership issues. Drivers will be provided additional program software training to help address some of the issues.

Mr. Johnson asked for Council clarification on continuing the Plus service for another year. It was the consensus of members present unanimously agreed to continue the service and Ms. Shannon Stevenson, Assistant City Manager, said a budget amendment would be done for the service to continue.

2. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE VISITABILITY PILOT PROGRAM.

Mr. Bryan Van Fossen, Permit Manager, presented information on the Visitability Pilot Program for the City of Norman.

The definition of a Visitable dwelling is a home that has features that allow mobility impaired and aging in place individuals to live in or visit with fewer constraints than most dwellings.

2. (continued) DISCUSSION REGARDING THE VISITABILITY PILOT PROGRAM.

In early 2019 the Citizen Ad Hoc Committee met, discussed and drafted the Norman Visitability Program based on the Fair Housing Act Design Manual and Council approved it by resolution on June 22, 2021. The program became effective on August 1, 2021, for a two-year term and was extended for an additional two-years in 2023.

As of May 16, 2025, 67 homes have enrolled in the program, ten completed the program and received a credit, 47 withdrew or did not pass the program requirements and 10 remain enrolled in the program.

Some of the reasons for the limited success of the program are due to the energy credit program being easier to participate in and qualify for the credits. One reason builders do not enroll in the Visitability program is, lot features make the required no step entry a challenge due to drainage issues, large elevation changes and the cost to modify the custom ornate doors they use on their newly built homes, making development cost prohibitive and the home ineligible for the credit.

Other than the cost to the City for the credit, there is essentially no negative aspect to the program. The rebate could encourage builders and developers to consider the benefits of creating affordable and accessible housing options in future developments.

The proposed source of the credit would be generated from the 14 cents per square foot Building permit fee charged to the builder. This is a pass/fail program and enrolled homes that pass the Visitability requirements will receive a 100% rebate of the permit fee. While this may not seem like a significant incentive, a lot of the characteristics of a VISIBLE home can be achieved without significant changes to a properties floor plan or cost increases.

As energy codes evolve over time and get more stringent, it is possible more builders will see the benefit to the Visitability Program, as these requirements are unlikely to shift dramatically.

This incentive program can be made permanent through an ordinance, written in such a manner that it will hold up over time regardless of how and when state codes are updated, or it could be made a minimum standard in the City of Norman building codes and not an incentive.

Committee members supported the program being made permanent and will discuss making it a minimum requirement later after review of additional data.

3. DISCUSSION REGARDING DEFINITION OF FAMILY IN THE ZONING ORDINANCE.

Ms. Jeanne Snider, Assistant City Attorney, and Ms. Jane Hudson, Planning and Community Development Director, provided a presentation on the current definition of Family in the Zoning Ordinance Section 36-514, R-1, Single-Family Dwelling District.

3. (continued) DISCUSSION REGARDING DEFINITION OF FAMILY IN THE ZONING ORDINANCE.

The current definition of Family has been part of the zoning ordinance since 1954 and is defined as "An individual, or two or more persons related by blood, marriage, or legal adoption living together as a single housekeeping unit in a dwelling unit, including foster children, domestic servants and not more than two roomers; or three-unrelated persons living together in a quasi-unit quarters or a group home as defined by 60 O.S. §862.

The City addresses occupancy to help ensure health and safety of residents and to protect the quality and character of the neighborhoods. The proposal to eliminate the ordinance came out of the need to provide more flexibility and affordability in housing options. Students, the disabled, elderly, immigrants, unhoused, low income often seek to live in cooperative housing together with roommates are discriminated against under the current occupancy policy limits.

Over the years, the City has explored various avenues of enforcement to protect residents from issues that arise from traffic, parking and noise. Enforcement is difficult, requires a large amount of staff time to research and administer, and proving family relations is a daunting task. Neighbors are asked to spend time completing investigation forms, log information on vehicles, tags numbers and date /time of observation.

This ordinance disproportionately impacts specific groups, including multi-generational, culturally large or extended family households, students and low-income households. From 2023 through 2025 there have been 28 complaints submitted, with all but one case closed either due to insufficient evidence or submission of proof of compliance.

With upcoming Development Code updates, Staff is proposing Family be defined as: "a number of persons cohabitating in a single dwelling and includes a "group home" as defined by 60 O.S. §862". Committee members asked to review a proposed draft ordinance at a future meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:23 pm.