



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

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

Thursday, January 22, 2026 at 4:00 PM

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## 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, January 22, 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

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

### MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Stephen Holman, Chair  
Councilmember Ward 3 Robert Bruce  
Councilmember Ward 5 Brandon Nofire  
Councilmember Ward 7 Kimberly Blodgett

### OTHERS PRESENT

Councilmember Ward 1 David Gandesbery  
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant  
Councilmember Ward 6 Joshua Hinkle  
Mr. Anthony Purinton, Assistant City Attorney  
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit Parking and Program Manager  
Mr. Scott Sturtz, Director of Public Works  
Mr. Tim Miles, City Engineer  
Ms. Megan Phelan, Park Planner  
Mr. Chris Mattingly, Utilities Director  
Mr. Jason Olsen, Parks and Recreation Director  
Mr. James Briggs, Park Development Manager  
Ms. Katherine Griffith, Administrative Tech III, City Clerk

## 1. PRESENTATION OF THE DECEMBER PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT.

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

Mr. Johnson informed Council that one of the City's new cutaway transit vehicles was recently involved in a high-speed collision when a suspect fleeing police struck the parked EMBARK vehicle. The vehicle was deemed a total loss. Because the vehicle was purchased with federal funds and the driver involved did not have insurance, the City must either replace the vehicle using local funds or return the federal funding used for the original purchase. A request to authorize reallocation of funds to replace the vehicle at an estimated cost of \$192,000 will appear on an upcoming City Council agenda. Councilmembers discussed insurance recovery, restitution possibilities, and federal funding requirements, and generally indicated that replacing the vehicle would be preferable to returning the federal funds.

Mr. Johnson also provided an update on the Central Oklahoma Long-Range Transit Plan prepared by the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments and EMBARK. The plan has been approved by the ACOG board and will be presented to City Council for acknowledgement of receipt.

Staff reviewed December 2025 ridership data, noting that fixed-route ridership increased to 43,899 rides compared to 38,424 rides in December 2024. Bicycle usage also increased significantly during the same period. EMBARK Plus paratransit service recorded approximately 2,000 rides in December 2025 compared to 1,818 in December 2024. Staff attributed the overall ridership increase in part to favorable weather conditions.

Staff also reported that Norman On-Demand service recorded approximately 1,800 rides in December 2025 compared to approximately 3,400 rides during the same period in 2024. While ridership declined, staff noted that lower demand has improved wait times and reduced walking distances for users, while also generating some operational cost savings.

Councilmembers inquired about a recent increase in denied rides, and staff indicated they will review trip data to identify potential causes and explore ways to reduce denied trips. Staff also reported that operations at the Transit Center continue to run smoothly, with security present and recent facility improvements completed without issue.

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## 2. PROJECT UPDATE AND DISCUSSION OF THE ACCESS OKLAHOMA - EAST/WEST CORRIDOR.

Mr. Scott Sturtz, Public Works Director, provided an update on the Access Oklahoma East/West Connector project led by the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority (OTA).

Mr. Sturtz reported that OTA has awarded the contract for construction of the segment crossing the Canadian River between Newcastle and Norman, extending past 72nd Street. Preliminary work is expected to begin in mid-February with construction activity anticipated in late February or early March. OTA's stated goal is to allow two-way traffic between Newcastle and Interstate 35 by the end of 2027, although the full project buildout may continue beyond that timeframe.

Item 2, continued

Staff reviewed the anticipated construction schedule for upcoming segments of the project, noting that several portions of the corridor, including improvements near 36th Avenue NW, will be bid over the next several months with construction activity expected to extend through 2027. Staff noted that the overlapping schedules will result in significant construction activity in the area.

Staff also discussed ongoing coordination efforts between the City of Norman, Cleveland County, the City of Moore, and the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority related to drainage improvements and project sequencing along 36th Avenue NW. Staff indicated that public communication efforts, including updates and public service announcements, will be provided as construction progresses to help residents navigate traffic impacts.

Mr. Sturtz also provided an update on a recently awarded federal grant related to the project. Staff will be working with the Federal Highway Administration and the United States Department of Transportation to coordinate project timing and funding requirements. Staff noted that the grant is the largest federal grant the City has received to date and that additional coordination will be necessary to determine how the funding may align with Turnpike Authority construction schedules.

Staff advised that future agreements with the Turnpike Authority may come before Council once additional information regarding the grant and project coordination becomes available. Council thanked staff for the update and emphasized the importance of continued transparency and communication as the project moves forward.

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### 3. DISCUSSION REGARDING STREETScape DESIGNS FOR DIFFERENT COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS.

Mr. Tim Miles, City Engineer, and Ms. Megan Phelen, Park Planner, presented information regarding streetscape design approaches for the City's commercial districts.

Staff provided an overview of the City's streetscape philosophy, emphasizing the use of Complete Streets principles and best practices intended to support walkability, bicycle access, transit use, and vehicle mobility. Staff highlighted recent and ongoing projects reflecting this approach, including the Porter Avenue Streetscape project, the Gray Street two-way conversion, and the Main Street Median improvements.

Staff discussed typical streetscape elements such as pedestrian zones, landscaping buffers, street trees, bike facilities, transit access, and street furniture. Discussion also focused on pedestrian safety measures including medians, curb bump-outs, and refuge islands designed to shorten crossing distances and improve accessibility.

### Item 3, continued

Staff provided updates on several projects. The Gray Street project includes decorative intersection treatments, landscaping, street furniture, and lighting improvements, with additional visual enhancements expected in the coming months. Staff also reviewed the completed Porter Avenue Streetscape project, noting improvements to sidewalks, bus stops, landscaping, and lighting. Committee members discussed concerns regarding planter placement, sidewalk width, and traffic speeds along Porter Avenue. Staff acknowledged these challenges and noted that lessons learned will inform future streetscape designs.

Staff also reviewed the Main Street Median project, which focuses on replacing turf with native and drought-tolerant plantings to reduce long-term maintenance while improving aesthetics and safety. Committee members expressed support for incorporating pollinator-friendly landscaping where feasible.

Staff discussed the development of a proposed Street Tree Ordinance intended to support tree canopy preservation and long-term maintenance in both residential and commercial areas. Staff also outlined potential funding mechanisms for future streetscape projects, including bond funding, grants, tax increment financing districts, and private partnerships.

Committee members discussed potential opportunities for future streetscape planning along several corridors, including North Flood Avenue and East Main Street, particularly in areas experiencing redevelopment or increased investment. Additional discussion included opportunities to improve pedestrian safety, expand on-street parking where feasible, and better define transitions between commercial corridors and adjacent residential areas.

Staff noted that future streetscape improvements will require continued coordination with redevelopment efforts, funding opportunities, and long-range planning initiatives.

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#### 4. DISCUSSION OF GRANTS RECENTLY AWARDED TO THE CITY.

Mr. Scott Sturtz, Public Works Director, provided an overview of recently secured and active grant funding totaling more than \$84 million for transportation, infrastructure, and transit-related projects.

Staff reported that since December 23, 2025, the City has secured significant funding through multiple federal and regional programs, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities program, Hazard Mitigation grants, the Federal Highway Administration and United States Department of Transportation programs, the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program, Surface Transportation Block Grant funding through Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, Federal Transit Administration grants, and the Bridge Investment Program in partnership with the Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma.

Item 4, continued

Staff highlighted a \$25 million SS4A grant awarded for the 36th Avenue Northwest corridor project between Tecumseh Road and 34th Street. The total project value is estimated at approximately \$40 million. Staff noted that Norman and Oklahoma City were the only two cities nationwide to receive the full \$25 million SS4A award. Implementation of the project will begin with environmental review and planning, with Council action anticipated to authorize the study.

Additional recent awards include more than \$16 million in transportation funding through ACOG programs, as well as funding for several transportation and safety projects including intersection improvements, traffic signal upgrades, pavement markings, transit vehicle replacement, and a roundabout project at Acres Street and James Garner Avenue. Staff also reported a Bridge Investment Program grant of approximately \$13.5 million for replacement of the Porter Street Bridge, which will significantly reduce the City's anticipated bond-funded cost for that project.

Staff discussed several pending grant applications, including a BUILD grant for improvements to Cedar Lane Road and 36th Avenue Southeast, a Rural Surface Transportation grant application in partnership with the Absentee Shawnee Tribe for improvements along 24th Avenue Northeast, and a planning grant for a Tecumseh Road rail grade separation study in partnership with BNSF Railway. If awarded, these pending applications could provide up to \$27 million in additional funding.

Councilmembers expressed appreciation for staff efforts in securing competitive grant funding and coordinating with regional and federal partners. Staff noted that while the volume of awarded grants presents logistical challenges, departments are prepared to move forward with project implementation and will continue coordinating public communication efforts regarding the awards.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

The Meeting was adjourned at 5:31pm.

ATTEST

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City Clerk

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Mayor