



## CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

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**MEETING DATE:** 05/08/2025

**REQUESTER:** City of Norman

**PRESENTER:** Elisabeth Muckala, Assistant City Attorney

**ITEM TITLE:** CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, ACCEPTANCE, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF ORDINANCE O-2425-32: AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, AMENDING SECTIONS THROUGHOUT CHAPTER 36 ("ZONING") OF THE CODE, IN ORDER TO UPDATE DEFINITIONS, TO UPDATE AND ADD REFERENCES TO THE CITY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, TO UPDATE LANGUAGE TO ENSURE COMPATABILITY WITH THE AIM NORMAN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ITS VARIOUS INCLUDED MASTER PLANS, AND TO CLARIFY OR CORRECT LANGUAGE, INCLUDING FOR ERRORS; AND PROVIDING FOR THE SEVERABILITY THEREOF.

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### **BACKGROUND:**

The City of Norman released a Request for Proposal (RFP-2223-29) in September of 2022, seeking proposals from qualified consultants for professional services to prepare the following documents for the City of Norman:

- Comprehensive Land Use Plan;
- Housing Strategy Plan;
- Comprehensive Transportation Plan Update;
- Stormwater Master Plan Update;
- Water Hydraulic Modeling Update;
- Wastewater Master Plan; and
- Sanitation Master Plan.

The citywide proposal will develop an all-encompassing vision for the community that can be supported by all. To facilitate this objective, the City of Norman is seeking to update its Comprehensive Transportation Plan, Stormwater Master Plan, Water Hydraulic Modeling, and develop Wastewater and Sanitation Master Plans to ensure improvements to the City's infrastructure align with the vision and policies of the new Comprehensive Plan. The technical lead of the Comprehensive Plan project is Jane Hudson, Director of Planning and Community Development.

As set forth in the RFP, Public Engagement was designed to address three key tasks:

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### Task 1 – Norman Today – Where are we now?

This process was designed to consist of a review of background documents, economic and development trends, hazard mitigation and environmental constraints, land use inventory and urban design, transportation, public facilities and infrastructure, and housing and neighborhoods.

### Task 2 – Norman Tomorrow – Where do we want to go?

This process was designed to review the vision and future land use opportunities, or constraints and develop goals and principles based on community engagement and understanding where we are today.

### Task 3 – Norman Tomorrow – How do we get there?

This process was designed to develop Plan Elements for the various included master plans, utilizing the overarching goals and principles to define the program and design of the city and outline the specific plan elements and systems that guide the City's future, thus creating a cohesive strategy across the city and departments, and for all of the included individual masterplans.

Through the RFP process, a team consisting of seven City Staff members and two citizen members selected RDG Planning & Design, Inc. Contract K-2324-46 with RDG was approved by City Council on July 25, 2023. The final scope included all of the proposed individual master plans except that it was determined that the City did not require a Sanitation Master Plan update at this time. Thereafter, and on September 26, 2023, K-2324-46 was amended to include services for the creation of a Parks Recreation and Trails Master Plan, again bringing the total number of included master plans to seven.

An Ad Hoc Steering Committee to work with the City and its consultants in creating the "Area and Infrastructure Master Plan" ("AIM Norman") was originally appointed by Resolution R-2324-52 on August 22, 2023, and its membership and procedures finalized by Amendment 1 to R-2324-52 on November 14, 2023. The Steering Committee, and its appointed individual Sub-Committees for Housing, Stormwater, Water/Wastewater, Transportation, and Parks, have worked tirelessly to offer input and guidance on the creation of the seven AIM Norman master plans now submitted for the Planning Commission's review and consideration.

With these seven plans, two sets of code revisions by ordinance are also brought for consideration and review. These ordinances are proposed in order to implement amendments that will primarily: (a) revise and redefine terms relating to former master plans in order to ensure consistency with the AIM Norman plans; and (b) set forth the very first incremental code amendments incorporating elements of the AIM Norman plans. In some cases, incorrect numberings or other errors and inconsistencies in these provisions are addressed along with the more substantive changes.

### **DISCUSSION:**

Ordinance O-2425-32 amends several sections of Chapter 36 of the Norman Municipal Code, Norman's Zoning Ordinance. The primary purpose of these amendments is to address the transition period between the adoption of the new AIM Norman Comprehensive Plan and the revision of the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision provisions of the municipal code. These amendments chiefly address language referencing or relating to Norman's Comprehensive Plan(s). The Planning Commission's consideration of these code amendments was postponed from April 10, 2025 to May 8, 2025, which is also the date that the Planning Commission will

consider Resolutions adopting the seven AIM Norman Master Plans. These amendments are also planned to be set on the City Council agenda for final vote at the same time the Resolutions adopting the seven AIM Norman Master Plans are presented for a vote.

Per these amendments, the definition for “Comprehensive Plan” will be amended to refer to the AIM Norman Comprehensive Plan, which collectively includes the seven individual master plans. Additionally, sub-definitions for each individual master plan have been included as follows:

- “Land Use Plan” which refers to the AIM Norman Comprehensive Land Use Plan;
- “Transportation Plan” which refers to the 2025 Comprehensive Transportation Plan Update;
- “Wastewater Master Plan”;
- “Water Utility Master Plan”;
- “Parks Master Plan,” which refers to the Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan;
- “Housing Plan,” which refers to the Housing Strategy Plan; and
- “Stormwater Master Plan,” which refers to the Stormwater Master Plan Update.

Various references to previous Transportation and Land Use Plans are also updated within this ordinance. In 36-513 and 36-545, the code previously utilized language taken directly from the previous Land Use Plan. The language is amended to now refer to areas compatible with the AIM Norman Comprehensive Plan. 36-538 (“Northern Community Separator Overlay District”) was an overlay created in direct response to the adoption of the previous Land Use Plan. This ordinance strikes and reserves the entire section, as it no longer has a Comprehensive Plan counterpart.

Additionally, this ordinance implements amendments in two sections (36-560 concerning Special Uses and 36-571 concerning Zoning Amendments) where the Comprehensive Plan should be considered in making decisions under these sections. While these two references are new, a similar reference has always been found in 36-509 (concerning the Planned Unit Development, PUD, District). Further, adding references to the Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the legal standard for these kinds of decisions historically. When considering re-zonings, including PUDs/SPUDs and Special Uses, the City Council should avoid unreasonable or arbitrary action and make determinations based upon the best interests of the public health, safety, morals and general welfare. The Comprehensive Plan is, itself, adopted based upon these very principles. Including a direct reference to the Comprehensive Plan in the code language will signal to prospective applicants that City Staff will be referencing relevant Comprehensive Plan elements in future staff reports for these items, guiding City Council in considering an application’s compatibility, or lack of compatibility, with the Comprehensive Plan, as allowed by state law. However, where the Zoning Ordinance already directly addresses and allows (or does not allow) particular development or uses, the more specific provisions of the Zoning Ordinance will control under Oklahoma law. For that reason, City Staff is already in the process of planning comprehensive revisions to the Zoning and Subdivision portions of the City Code in order to more fully implement the Comprehensive Plan therein.

Finally, a last set of changes, found in two places (36-510 and 36-533), corrects mis-numberings that have been noted by City Staff since the code was re-codified and renumbered in February of 2023.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

City Staff recommends adoption of Ordinance O-2425-32, a companion item on this agenda to Ordinance O-2425-31 and Resolutions adopting the AIM Norman Comprehensive Plan and its various included Master Plans, implementing amendments to Chapter 36 of the Norman Municipal Code in order to accommodate the adoption of the AIM Norman Comprehensive Plans, and correct errors.