



CITY OF NORMAN, OK

CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING

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

Wednesday, December 17, 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 Wednesday, December 17, 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 called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Stephen Holman - Chair
Councilmember Ward 3 Robert Bruce

OTHERS PRESENT

Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 6 Joshua Hinkle
Councilmember Ward 8 Scott Dixon
Mr. Darryl Pyle, City Manager
Ms. Shannon Stevenson, Assistant City Manager
Mr. Rick Knighton, City Attorney
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager
Mr. Scott Sturtz, Director of Public Works
Mr. Tim Miles, City Engineer
Mr. David Riesland, Transportation Engineer
Mr. Chris Mattingly, Director of Utilities
Ms. Tiffany Vrska, Chief Communications Officer
Ms. Katherine Griffith, Admin Tech III, City Clerk

AGENDA ITEMS

1. PRESENTATION OF THE NOVEMBER PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT.

Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager, gave the November 2025 monthly report.

- Staff reported two paratransit vehicles are in need of replacement:
 - One unit was involved in a recent accident and was scrapped due to extensive damage.
 - A second unit, identified as the first paratransit vehicle purchased by the City, is due for replacement.
- Staff is seeking funding sources and anticipates a budget request if replacement funding cannot be secured in the current fiscal year.

Service expansion priorities

- Staff discussed an estimated cost of approximately \$300,000–\$320,000 to increase route 110 frequency (including Embark labor, fleet maintenance, and fuel).
- Staff indicated this could be considered through the next budget process depending on Council priorities, projected expenses, and transit tax revenues.
- Staff noted additional requests may arise by the January deadline and could be prepared as a letter request if desired.

Regional transit planning

- Staff reported ACOG has approved the Central Oklahoma Long Range Transit Plan on November 20, 2025.
- Staff stated an item would be brought to City Council, (anticipated second meeting in January), to acknowledge receipt of the plan, consistent with ACOG's approach across participating cities.
- Staff noted ACOG is working to establish a Public Transit Advisory Committee to formalize regional coordination and support implementation of action items in the long-range plan.
- Early regional discussion topics may include regional fare coordination and regional paratransit considerations, acknowledging operational challenges with multiple entities.

Ridership Update

- 42,191 total ridership November 2025 versus 41,597 for November 2024
- Average total daily ridership was 1,758 for November 2025, (1.85% increase 2024)

Fixed Route Service

- 21.75 riders per service hour weekdays - November 2025 (2.85% decrease over November 2024).

1. (continued)

Norman On Demand (Microtransit)

- Staff stated this is the third year of the program, which was initially established as a pilot. Staff recommended initiating a new RFP to formalize the service if Council wishes to continue it.
- Staff noted demand has declined, and that may help overall costs; however, costs will not be confirmed until an RFP is issued and proposals are received.
- Committee discussion included:
 - Interest in expanding service hours and increasing overlap with fixed routes.
 - Requests received regarding service to the Eastside Library and related route considerations; staff noted productivity challenges due to limited transit uses along the corridor but agreed to revisit earlier concepts.
 - Caution about over-expanding Microtransit while maintaining fixed routes due to budget constraints.

Performance measures and budget sustainability

- Committee members expressed concern about the potential depletion of reserves and emphasized aligning service levels to revenues.
- A request was made to establish clearer Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for Microtransit to define success/failure benchmarks.
- Staff reiterated the goal of maintaining transit operations as **self-supporting** through the transit tax and federal funds, with acknowledgement that significant shortfalls would require Council decisions.

Microtransit metrics and fare policy

- Committee discussed the Microtransit "average walking distance" metric (staff explained it reflects the walking distance to/from pickup/drop-off points, not necessarily curb-to-curb service).
- Staff confirmed the program's flat \$3 fare and noted the City:
 - Eliminated "six free ride" promotions and increased the fare from \$2 to \$3, resulting in higher fare revenue and lower demand.
 - Observed reduced instances of fraudulent signups tied to the prior promotion.
- Staff noted that because the contract is billed by driver hours, lower demand has also resulted in fewer vehicles deployed and lower monthly invoices/expenses.

Minimum service obligations and paratransit

- Staff explained transit service is funded through a voter-approved transit tax and an annual FTA formula allocation, and that fixed-route service triggers paratransit obligations.
- Staff noted the City provides paratransit citywide (including areas beyond the minimum requirement), and that zone expansion could be reviewed if budget capacity issues arise.

Fare collection technology

- Committee discussed evolving technology and the possibility of app-based fare collection (including examples from other systems).
- Staff noted cash handling is expensive but highlighted the equity and reliability considerations related to cashless systems, and discussed options such as cash-to-digital conversion at centralized locations (e.g., transit center).

1. (continued)

Embark Plus on-time performance

- A Committee member raised a constituent concern about Embark Plus pickups occurring outside the negotiated window.
- Staff clarified scheduling windows and requested trip details to investigate. Staff noted on-time performance has been impacted by software changes intended to improve overall efficiency (riders per service hour).

The Committee thanked staff for the update. No formal action was taken.

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

Mr. Scott Sturtz, Director of Public Works, provided an update on the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority (OTA) Access Oklahoma East/West Connector and related City coordination efforts. Staff will provide regular OTA updates to help with transparency and keep Council informed.

- Staff reported OTA awarded a \$97 million project for the East/West connector to construct:
 - A bridge over the Canadian River, and
 - A structure over 72nd/Pennsylvania in Oklahoma City.
- Construction was anticipated to begin in February or March.
- Staff stated the City is monitoring OTA's monthly bidding schedules and upcoming awards, including work near SH-74/48.

36th Avenue NW project background and costs

- Staff provided background on the 36th Avenue NW widening project:
 - Phases 1–2 originated from the 2012 Bond Program
 - Phase 3 is part of the 2019 Bond Program.
 - Estimated costs have increased substantially over time (noting escalation from early estimates to current projections in the \$27–\$28 million range for portions of the work).
 - Staff stated the project has remained difficult to fund through federal programs since 2016 due to changing scoring and funding conditions and described it as the last remaining 2012 bond project presenting funding challenges.

Design elements

- Staff reviewed the intended cross-section including:
 - Sidewalk on the west side, travel lanes, and a 10-foot multimodal path on the east side (reflecting input from the Bicycle Advisory Committee and preferred design approaches compared to on-street bike lanes).

2. (continued)

Drainage coordination with OTA

- OTA identified significant drainage infrastructure needs in the project area and contacted the City about potential partnering.
- Staff described updated OTA drainage modeling, including use of **2D modeling** producing higher flow estimates than prior City modeling, which may require a larger box culvert system and could influence placement relative to City roadway improvements.
- Staff emphasized the goal of avoiding duplication and coordinating improvements efficiently.

Potential partnering framework

- Staff indicated discussions are underway regarding a potential cost-sharing approach comparable to an 80/20 split, which is typical federal funding assumptions, to advance roadway and drainage improvements in coordination with OTA construction.
- Staff explained OTA's preliminary award timeline for certain segments (including an anticipated award period in mid-2026 for portions of the mainline near 36th) and the benefit of having 36th Avenue improvements in place as nearby access changes occur.

Funding and timing

- Staff noted the City is still pursuing other federal funding, including an application tied to the **Safe Streets for All** program (with delayed notice due to federal disruptions).
- A Committee member asked whether City bond revenues would still be used for the Tecumseh-to-Franklin section under a partnering scenario; staff stated the City would continue to pursue cost-share assumptions and align available funds accordingly.
- Staff noted Moore's related roadway work is moving forward using bond funds without relying on federal awards.

Access/interchange discussion

- Staff discussed conceptual access patterns, noting that direct interchanges at every roadway may not occur, and that access may be provided via service roads and earlier/later ramps, similar to designs in other corridors.

Agreements and Council action

- Committee members asked how an 80/20 split would be authorized and what form an agreement would take.
- Staff stated the likely process would include:
 - An initial resolution indicating intent to pursue coordination, followed by
 - A formal agreement/contract detailing costs, responsibilities, and funding mechanisms, requiring Council consideration.
- Staff described a compressed timeline if OTA aims to bid in summer 2026, indicating decisions and coordination would need to occur well in advance of plan completion and bidding.

Request for broader Council discussion

Staff stated they could bring the item forward in January for broader discussion and emphasized the newness of the information and the City's commitment to ongoing updates.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 pm.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor