



MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Conference in the Executive Conference Room of the Norman Municipal Building on the 13th day of May, 2025, at 5:30 p.m., and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray Street 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Heikkila called the Meeting to Order at 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor Larry Heikkila
Councilmember Ward 1 Austin Ball
Councilmember Ward 2 Matthew Peacock
Councilmember Ward 3 Bree Montoya
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 5 Michael Nash
Councilmember Ward 6 Joshua Hinkle
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman
Councilmember Ward 8 Scott Dixon

AGENDA ITEMS

1. UPDATE ON THE CENTRAL OKLAHOMA LONG RANGE TRANSIT PLAN.

Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager, Public Works Department, introduced guests Chip Nolen, Planning Manager for Embark, and John Sharp, Deputy Director of the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG). The presenters provided an update on the Central Oklahoma Long-Range Transit Plan.

John Sharp, ACOG Deputy Director, stated the plan is funded jointly by the Federal Transit Administration and MAPS 4 (City of Oklahoma City), with an approximate budget of \$2 million and the project is now over halfway complete. He said a series of meetings, workshops, and discussions with regional transit staff and stakeholders have been conducted with consulting firm Kimley-Horn facilitating. A virtual town hall will be held in the coming months to gather additional public input. A major focus is improving interconnectivity between different modes of transportation, e.g., fixed route, commuter rail, paratransit, and other services.

Mr. Sharp said emphasis is placed on addressing regional congestion, particularly during peak hours, and providing alternative modes of travel. He said the final plan recommendations are anticipated in Fall 2025, with presentation to the ACOG Board in September or October. He added budgeting and cost analyses will occur over the summer. The plan is long-term in scope, projecting 20 to 30 years into the future, aiming to ensure the region's transit system can accommodate growth and mobility needs, including aging populations and paratransit demand.

Chip Nolen, Planning Manager for Embark reviewed project partners; Embark, ACOG, MAPS Office, CityLink Edmond, Embark Norman, RTA, and ODOT. He described the roles and funding sources of various entities:

- ACOG: Regional planning and federal fund access.
- RTA: Potential future sales tax funding for high-capacity transit.
- ODOT: Supports rural transit and access to state funds.
- Local Transit Agencies: Funded primarily through local general funds or municipal sources (e.g., Edmond, Oklahoma City, Midwest City).

Mr. Nolen said the project goals are to create a cohesive, equitable, and efficient regional transit network, develop clear recommendations for coordination between local and regional operators, and identify priority corridors, funding strategies, and implementation timelines. The draft transit vision focuses on providing meaningful access to transit; enhancing quality of life; offering reliable, competitive service; and using resources efficiently.

Public engagement includes online participation through ConnectCentralOK.com, which includes prior town hall recordings and feedback portals and another regional workshop is planned for the coming months to further refine implementation and investment priorities.

Transit Vision Overview

- The plan seeks to improve local and regional bus operations, paratransit, and integration with high-capacity modes such as commuter rail and bus rapid transit (BRT).
- Draft plan highlights:
 - 15 high-frequency routes (15-minute service)
 - 15 on-demand service zones
 - 23 new routes
 - 25 routes with enhanced service
 - 16 new capital facilities (transit centers, park-and-rides, etc.)

For Norman, the plan includes:

- 2 high-frequency routes
- 4 routes with enhanced service
- 3 on-demand zones
- 5 new routes
- 2 capital facilities

Item 1, continued

Mr. Nolen highlighted the public input themes to date as a need for improved connections and transfer points; desire for express services between communities; support for increased frequency and longer hours; and overall public enthusiasm for regional transit development.

Councilmember Peacock asked about the process for pursuing a BRT corridor locally and suggested Main Street as a potential candidate.

Mr. Nolen welcomed the input, noting that such ideas could be incorporated during this draft phase.

Council discussed coordination with existing community plans such as Go Norman Transit Plan, Compass 2045, and Edmond Shift; the importance of identifying potential park-and-ride locations in north and south Norman; the need to ensure compliance with federal NEPA environmental requirements prior to property acquisition to protect eligibility for federal funding; and potential use of tax increment financing (TIF) and county partnerships to support infrastructure and spur economic development, particularly in underutilized areas of south Norman.

Mayor and Councilmembers expressed interest in the economic potential of locating the RTA maintenance facility in south Norman, emphasizing job creation and redevelopment opportunities.

Staff noted that the RTA is currently evaluating potential sites and that funding sources; likely a mix of federal infrastructure grants, local sales tax for operations, and possibly bonding or TIF mechanisms, will be critical considerations.

Councilmember Foreman inquired about job types and whether Oklahoma has the workforce to support such a facility.

Staff explained that similar skillsets already exist in the region, due to proximity to Amtrak and BNSF operations, and that maintenance facility jobs (mechanics, operators, and technicians) could largely be filled locally.

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

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ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor