



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

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

Thursday, May 28, 2026 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 28, 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 p.m.

PRESENT

Chairman Stephen Holman – Mayor
Councilmember Ward 3 Robert Bruce
Councilmember Ward 5 Trey Kirby
Councilmember Ward 7 Kimberly Blodgett

MEMBERS ABSENT

Councilmember Ward 2 Matthew Peacock

OTHERS PRESENT

Councilmember Ward 1 David Gandesbery
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Ms. Beth Muckala, Assistant City Attorney
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit Parking and Program Manager
Mr. Jason Huff, Transit Planner & Grant Specialist
Mr. Scott Sturtz, Director of Public Works
Mr. Tim Miles, City Engineer
Mr. David Riesland, Transportation Engineer
Mr. Joseph Hill, Streets Program Manager
Mr. Jason Huff, Transit Planner & Grants Specialist
Mr. Larry Wyatt, EMBARK
Mr. Trent Janauary, Oklahoma Turnpike Authority
Mr. Scott Martin, Norman Chamber of Commerce
Ms. Lisa Webb, Administrative Tech IV, City Clerk

1. PROJECT UPDATES AND DISCUSSION OF THE ACCESS OKLAHOMA EAST/WEST CORRIDOR

Mr. Trent Janauary, P.E., Chief Engineer, Oklahoma Turnpike Authority (OTA), provided the Committee with an update regarding the ACCESS Oklahoma East-West Connector and related projects.

Mr. Janauary reported that field work, design, right-of-way acquisition, and utility relocation activities continue along the East-West Connector. Construction has begun on the relocation of the City of Moore effluent line, which includes dual 36-inch force mains extending approximately four miles to the City of Moore Water Treatment Plant.

Construction updates were provided for the Canadian River mainline bridges and the Ten Mile Flats Bridge. Work on the Canadian River bridges began in February 2026 and is currently focused on the westbound bridge, including drill shafts, piers, and pier caps. Construction of the Ten Mile Flats Bridge began in Spring 2026, with drill shafts, columns, and piers underway. Mr. Janauary also reported that the project to drain and backfill a former borrow pit pond between Western Avenue and Santa Fe Avenue has been completed.

Mr. Janauary reviewed upcoming projects, including the I-44/East-West Connector interchange, Western Avenue interchange, Santa Fe mainline bridges, mainline bridges over 36th Avenue, and the segment between Santa Fe Avenue and Telephone Road. The Santa Fe to Telephone Road project will incorporate the City of Norman's 36th Avenue NW widening project. OTA's goal is to establish minimum traffic connections between I-44 and I-35 by the end of 2027, with the East-West Connector anticipated to extend to I-40 by 2030.

The Committee discussed frontage road configurations and access near I-35. Mr. Janauary explained that Indian Hills Road will serve as the eastbound frontage road and a new westbound frontage road will be constructed north of the turnpike. City streets and frontage roads will remain toll-free and will provide continuous access across I-35.

Mr. Scott Sturtz reported that all easements necessary for the City's 36th Avenue NW Phase 2 project have been secured and that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review is underway. Following review by the Federal Highway Administration, a public meeting will be scheduled. Staff and OTA will coordinate communication with affected property owners prior to construction, and access to residences will be maintained except for limited temporary closures necessary for bridge construction.

Mr. Janauary also discussed a joint OTA and Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) public meeting regarding proposed improvements to I-35 and the frontage roads. Proposed improvements include conversion of frontage roads to one-way operation, removal of existing button-hook ramps, construction of new ramp configurations and protected turnaround facilities, and continuous frontage roads through the interchange area. The Committee discussed potential impacts to businesses, local access, property owners, agricultural operations, and wildlife. Mr. Janauary stated that comments received through stakeholder and public meetings are considered during project development.

Item 1, continued

Regarding right-of-way acquisition, Mr. Janauary reported that 86 parcels have been acquired and closed along the East-West Connector and OTA is actively working with property owners on an additional 105 parcels. Additional parcels will be identified in the area where the South Extension alignment was relocated as design progresses.

Mr. Janauary also provided an update on the South Extension, reporting that survey work is underway and engineering plans are progressing toward the 60-percent design stage. OTA is currently working with 39 property owners whose properties are anticipated to require full acquisition. Additional full and partial acquisitions will be identified as design progresses. Construction of the South Extension remains several years away, allowing affected property owners additional time for relocation planning and appraisal review.

The Committee discussed appraisal, acquisition, and condemnation procedures. Mr. Janauary explained that properties are appraised based primarily on comparable sales and that property owners may obtain independent appraisals for consideration during negotiations. Mr. Sturtz explained the condemnation process, including review of appraisals and appointment of commissioners to determine fair value when an agreement cannot be reached. Mr. Janauary stated that negotiations with property owners continue throughout the process and that only a handful of parcels between I-44 and I-35 remain unresolved.

Committee members also discussed transparency regarding acquisition costs and whether certain acquisition information could be made available through an open records request. Mr. Janauary stated that OTA maintains acquisition information and agreed to review what information could be provided while protecting applicable personal or confidential information.

In response to questions regarding livestock and wildlife, Mr. Janauary stated that access-control fencing will be installed along the turnpike corridor to prevent animals from entering the roadway.

Mr. Sturtz reported that no additional City roadway projects are currently expected to be significantly impacted by the South Extension. Potential impacts to a limited number of City water wells remain under review. He further stated that the revised turnpike alignment is not expected to significantly change roadway classifications contained within the City's transportation planning documents.

The Committee discussed the long-term designation of 48th Avenue as a north-south corridor and whether future improvements could include a median or boulevard configuration. Mr. Sturtz stated that the corridor has been identified in previous transportation and regional planning documents and that various design concepts have been considered; however, there are currently no approved plans, budget allocations, or voter-authorized projects to widen 48th Avenue.

Staff advised that regular OTA construction and project updates will continue to be provided to the Committee. At the Committee's request, staff and OTA will also provide additional information regarding the number of businesses affected by project-related acquisitions at a future meeting.

2. PRESENTATION AND UPDATE ON THE 2023 BRIDGE BOND PROGRAM.

Mr. Scott Sturtz, Director of Public Works, provided the Committee with an update on the 2023 Bridge Bond Program. He reported that four of the 18 identified bridge projects have been completed and several additional projects are currently in design or preparing to move into construction. The 24th Avenue SW bridge over Merkle Creek was out for bid, while right-of-way acquisition and final design work were underway for the Franklin Road bridge project.

Mr. Sturtz also discussed the North Porter Avenue bridge project, which will elevate the roadway above the floodplain. Approximately \$13 million in grant funding has been secured for the approximately \$15 million project, allowing the City greater flexibility within the overall Bridge Bond Program. Design work is also underway for the 24th Avenue NE project. Staff continues to advance design and right-of-way activities on future projects to minimize delays associated with utility relocations and other preconstruction requirements.

The Committee discussed the scope of the Franklin Road projects. Mr. Sturtz clarified that the Bridge Bond Program addresses the bridge structures themselves and does not include reconstruction of the roadway between the bridges. Improvements are intended to address structural condition, safety, load requirements, and drainage.

Mr. Joe Hill, Streets Program Manager, reported that the four completed projects have resulted in approximately \$1.4 million in savings, excluding grant funding associated with the Porter Avenue project. The bid for the 24th Avenue SW bridge rehabilitation had also opened that afternoon and was below the estimated project cost. Staff explained that savings within the program could potentially allow additional bridge projects to be completed, subject to future Council approval.

The Committee discussed the availability of outside funding for bridge maintenance and the importance of continuing to pursue state, federal, and other funding opportunities. Staff explained that the Bridge Bond Program and the City's annual bridge maintenance program work together, with the bond program addressing major rehabilitation and replacement projects and annual maintenance funding helping extend the useful life of other bridge structures.

3. PRESENTATION AND UPDATE ON THE GRAY STREET PROJECT

Mr. Scott Sturtz, Director of Public Works, provided the Committee with an update on the Gray Street Project. He reported that the project was beyond its anticipated completion date and that the City continues to communicate its concerns regarding the schedule to the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT), which is managing the project. Remaining work was primarily associated with the railroad crossing, and two-way traffic on Gray Street was anticipated to begin following completion of that work. Landscaping and irrigation improvements will continue after the roadway is reopened.

Item 3, continued

The Committee discussed remaining Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and pedestrian accessibility items. Staff reported that the remaining work generally consists of smaller items, including pedestrian signal buttons and other final adjustments. Concerns were raised regarding pedestrian and wheelchair access near Jones Avenue and Gray Street. Staff stated that ADA access remains available and that additional improvements on the west side of Jones Avenue could be considered as funding becomes available.

The Committee also discussed the transition to reverse-angle parking along Gray Street. Staff acknowledged that motorists will experience a learning period as they become accustomed to the new parking configuration and emphasized the importance of signaling and allowing adequate space for vehicles to back into parking spaces. Staff reported that the parking spaces are approximately 10 feet wide and that the project reduced the number of spaces from 84 to 80. The design was also evaluated to ensure trucks and other larger vehicles would not significantly overhang the sidewalk.

The posted speed limit on Gray Street will remain 25 miles per hour. The Committee discussed the potential for the conversion from one-way to two-way traffic to reduce vehicle speeds and improve pedestrian safety within downtown.

Committee members requested future information regarding vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle crashes in the downtown area following completion of the project. Staff indicated that meaningful traffic and crash data should be collected after the roadway has been fully reopened and when both the University of Oklahoma and Norman Public Schools are in session.

4. DISCUSSION REGARDING UPDATES TO THE BICYCLE ROUTE MAP

Mr. David Riesland, Transportation Engineer, provided the Committee with an update regarding the Bicycle Advisory Committee's work to revise the City's bicycle route map. He reported that the updated map has been completed following a multi-year review process. Funding is available through the Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) to print copies for distribution, and staff will work with the City's GIS Division to incorporate the bicycle map as a layer within the City's online mapping system.

Printed maps are anticipated to be distributed through bicycle shops, local cycling organizations, the University of Oklahoma, and other locations frequented by cyclists. A QR code will provide access to the online version, allowing the map to function as a living document that can be updated as bicycle and multimodal projects are completed.

Mr. Riesland also reported that development of the map identified several bicycle-related City ordinances that may need to be updated. The Bicycle Advisory Committee is working with Legal staff to review those ordinances, with recommendations anticipated to be presented to Council in the coming months.

Item 4, continued

The Committee discussed existing and future multimodal connections, including Jenkins Avenue, Imhoff Road, 12th Avenue, 48th Avenue NW, Cedar Lane, and connections to Highway 9. Staff explained that the City's Complete Streets standards require future arterial roadway projects to incorporate accommodations for pedestrians, bicycles, vehicles, and transit.

The Committee also discussed the City's evolving approach to bicycle infrastructure. Staff stated that on-street bicycle lanes are generally no longer the preferred option when a separated multimodal path can reasonably be provided. The redesigned 36th Avenue NW project was cited as an example, with the previously proposed on-street bicycle lanes being replaced by a 10-foot multimodal path. Protected bicycle lanes may be appropriate in certain locations but present additional design and maintenance considerations.

Questions were raised regarding the designation of Cedar Lane as an advanced bicycle route because of its narrow roadway, hills, agricultural traffic, and limited sight distance. Staff explained that the "advanced" designation reflects the experience and skill expected of the cyclist rather than the condition of the roadway itself. Future improvements are planned near 36th Avenue and Cedar Lane; however, there are currently no plans to widen the more rural portions of Cedar Lane. The map may continue to be updated as roadway conditions and cycling patterns change.

5. PRESENTATION OF THE APRIL PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT

Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit Parking and Program Manager, presented the April Public Transit Report and provided updates regarding transit operations, grant funding, and ongoing programs.

Mr. Johnson reported that the City was not selected to receive a Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) grant for the proposed EMBARK Well program. Staff will seek additional feedback regarding the application and continue evaluating future funding opportunities for the program. The proposed program had been estimated at approximately \$100,000 annually for three years, with the level of service adjustable based on available funding.

The Committee discussed potential future regional transit funding and whether additional funding could support programs such as EMBARK Well, increased fixed-route frequency, expanded on-demand service, or other transit enhancements. Staff noted that regional funding discussions remain ongoing and that future funding priorities would ultimately be determined by Council.

The Committee discussed access to the Adult Wellness and Education Center. Staff reported that sidewalk and ADA improvements have been completed between an existing Porter Avenue bus stop and the Wellness Center to provide a shorter and more accessible pedestrian connection. Staff acknowledged that the improvements are not a complete transit solution but may improve access for some users.

Item 5, continued

Mr. Johnson also provided an update regarding a recently damaged paratransit vehicle. The vehicle, which was only a few months old, was struck while stationary and was considered a total loss. Because approximately 80 percent of the vehicle was purchased with Federal Transit Administration funding, the City was required to replace the vehicle or reimburse the federal funding. Council previously approved a replacement vehicle, which was anticipated to arrive in July or August.

The Committee discussed federal transit grant administration. Mr. Johnson explained that staff tracks grant obligation and expenditure deadlines and that the Federal Transit Administration conducts a triennial review of the City's transit program. Staff reported that the City has not lost grant funding due to failure to obligate or expend funds within required timeframes.

The Committee also discussed the Norman On-Demand microtransit program. Staff reported that Council previously directed that the program continue while efforts were made to reduce costs. Staff worked with the service provider and the University of Oklahoma to reduce the City's contribution, with OU's contribution based generally on the percentage of OU-affiliated ridership.

Committee members discussed the cost per ride, the role of microtransit in providing late-night and Sunday service, ADA accessibility, and whether the program continues to meet established key performance indicators. Staff acknowledged that the pilot phase has effectively run its course and stated that an RFP is anticipated in the fall to evaluate available service providers and ensure the City is receiving the best value if the program is continued. The RFP would also allow the City to consider other service models and potentially incorporate the program into future transit budgets rather than addressing it through subsequent budget amendments.

The Committee expressed interest in continuing to evaluate microtransit as part of the City's overall and regional transportation system while reviewing costs, performance measures, funding sources, and alternative service models. Staff also discussed the importance of beginning to build a transit fund balance to provide greater flexibility for unexpected expenses and future vehicle replacement needs.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

ATTEST

City Clerk

Mayor Stephen T. Holman