



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

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

Thursday, June 25, 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, June 25, 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 4:01 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
Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit Parking and Program Manager
Mr. Jason Huff, Transit Planner & Grant Specialist
Mr. Tim Miles, City Engineer
Mr. Chris Mattingly, Director of Utilities
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. Tim Miles, City Engineer, presented the committee's monthly update regarding the Access Oklahoma Program and proposed turnpike projects affecting Norman. Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager, also participated in the discussion by providing updates on recent developments.

Item 1, continued

Mr. Miles reported that construction activities on the Toby Keith Expressway between Interstate 44 and Interstate 35 continue to progress. Current work includes: Ongoing bridge construction over the Canadian River, continued utility relocations, including relocation of an effluent line, continued right-of-way acquisition activities and design work for the Interstate 44/Toby Keith Expressway connection.

Mr. Miles advised that bid packages for the I-44 connection showed no significant cost increases and construction is anticipated to begin in approximately October 2026 following contract award. Additional project information is expected to be available during the August update.

Mr. Miles reviewed the next phases of construction, which included: bridge construction at 60th Avenue NW, bridge construction at 48th Avenue NW, grading and paving projects associated with the East-West Corridor, coordination with the city's 36th Avenue NW Phase II project, construction of the 10-foot multi-use trail through the Indian Hills area, anticipated December 2026 construction start for coordinated city and OTA projects and planned January 2027 bid opening for Phase I of the East-West Connector.

Mr. Miles noted coordination with an Oklahoma Department of Transportation project that will convert frontage roads near Interstate 35 from two-way to one-way traffic and include improvements near 19th Street.

Mr. Miles reported that planning for the proposed north-south extension remains in the preliminary design phase. Updates were presented regarding survey crews conducting field work throughout the corridor, design advancing from functional planning toward approximately 60% completion, right-of-way needs being identified by March 2027, with many acquisitions anticipated to be defined earlier and staff and OTA representatives continued discussion of potential interchange locations.

Potential interchange locations under consideration are state Highway 9, Alameda Street, Tecumseh Road and Indian Hills Road.

Mr. Pyle explained that discussions have focused on minimizing the number of interchanges while maintaining reasonable access. Committee members discussed the purpose and necessity of additional interchanges as well as potential impacts to nearby neighborhoods, agricultural properties, and family-owned farms. Environmental concerns related to Lake Thunderbird and watershed protection along with the city's role in coordinating with the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority while balancing regional transportation needs with the preservation of private property and community resources were discussed.

Mr. Pyle clarified that city staff did not request additional interchanges and the OTA initially identified major east-west corridors for consideration. City staff consistently recommended that fewer interchanges would be preferable. The current right-of-way impact would generally remain unchanged regardless of the interchange options currently under discussion.

Item 1, continued

Additionally, OTA has indicated that additional interchanges are sometimes added to improve driver safety by reducing long distances between exit opportunities.

However, Committee members expressed concerns regarding additional loss of agricultural land; impacts on long-established family properties; the cumulative number of proposed interchanges within Eastern Norman and the importance of minimizing impacts while opposing the overall project where appropriate.

Mr. Pyle advised that the City of Noble has expressed support for additional interchanges near Etowah Road and Maguire Road. The City of Noble has also requested frontage roads between those locations and portions of the surrounding property are within Noble city limits, while adjacent environmentally sensitive property remains within Norman.

Mr. Pyle also provided updates regarding coordination with BNSF Railway on a potential grade-separated railroad crossing at Tecumseh Road. He mentioned a grant opportunity that would fund preliminary engineering and design and discussed long-range coordination with future commuter rail planning.

Committee members asked about the status of property acquisition.

Mr. Miles reported the East-West Corridor acquisitions are substantially complete and remaining acquisitions are proceeding through the normal eminent domain process where necessary. OTA is expected to provide a more comprehensive right-of-way update during its August presentation.

Mr. Miles noted that although the committee will not meet in July, OTA representatives are expected to participate in a July Study Session or Conference to provide additional information regarding the right-of-way acquisition progress, eminent domain procedures, proposed interchange locations and the overall project schedule.

Mr. Pyle advised that the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority (OTA) anticipates finalizing project elements for bidding by August 2026. Additional discussions with the City Council and OTA are expected prior to that time to gather Council input regarding proposed interchange locations and project design.

Mr. Miles encouraged Committee members and the public to utilize the Access Oklahoma website to review current project maps and right-of-way information. The online mapping system is updated frequently and allows users to zoom in for detailed views of proposed interchanges, ramps, and right-of-way acquisitions. Mr. Miles noted that future committee meetings may include live demonstrations of the online mapping tool.

Committee members also focused on the long-term financial impacts associated with additional interchanges.

Chairman Holman noted that new interchanges could create future demand for widening adjacent City streets, including Lindsey Street, Alameda Street, and Tecumseh Road.

Item 1, continued

Mr. Miles estimated that urban street widening projects currently exceed \$10 million per mile, citing the City's 36th Avenue NW project as a recent example.

Committee members questioned whether the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority would participate in funding future roadway improvements necessitated by increased traffic generated by the turnpike. Mr. Pyle responded that the City currently has no planned or budgeted projects to widen those roadways and emphasized that numerous higher-priority transportation needs already exist throughout the community.

Committee members expressed appreciation for the continued transparency of staff's monthly updates and encouraged ongoing communication with residents regarding project developments.

Mayor Holman requested a progress report from Public Works regarding the Gray Street 2-Way Conversion and how it has affected the number of accidents, etc. at the August meeting. Additionally, he would like reports on this once school starts back and we have more traffic. He would like progress reports in November and December from Public Works.

2. PRESENTATION OF THE MAY PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT

Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Manager, provided the May Transit and Parking update.

Mr. Johnson reported that the replacement cutaway vehicle for the unit damaged in an accident is expected to arrive in July. The vehicle will undergo delivery inspection before being placed into service. An update will be provided at the August meeting.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will conduct its triennial review July 8–9. Staff have submitted requested documentation in advance. The in-person review will include examination of records, procedures, and transit facilities to ensure compliance with federal requirements.

ACOG approved the City's annual TIP amendment reflecting the City's current federal transit allocation. Mr. Johnson reported that the upcoming federal allocation is approximately \$98,000 higher than the current year's allocation. The City's 1/8-cent sales tax provides the local match required to leverage federal transit funding.

Mr. Johnson reported that the city was not awarded the TSET grant for the EMBARK Well program. Staff will continue pursuing other grant opportunities and will request feedback regarding the unsuccessful application. The city did receive TSET funding for playground equipment at Reaves Park Kids Space.

City Council approved extensions of the existing Norman On-Demand agreements with VIA and the University of Oklahoma. Staff will develop an RFP for future microtransit service and evaluate turnkey providers and alternative models, including subsidized rides through private transportation companies.

Item 2, continued

Mr. Johnson reported that May ridership included approximately 2,233 trips, compared with approximately 3,382 trips in May of the previous year. He noted the continuing decline in ridership and will monitor ridership when students return in the fall.

Norman On-Demand service hours were reduced to control costs. Service will now begin at 7:30 a.m. Monday through Saturday, and Sunday service will end at 5:00 p.m.

Committee members discussed transitioning Norman On-Demand from a pilot program to a more permanent service. Staff will use the upcoming RFP and budget process to provide Council with options and costs. Future One Transit funding may provide additional support, but staff emphasized the need for sustainable local funding.

Mr. Johnson reported that fixed-route ridership was approximately 457,193 for the year to date, approaching the 500,000-trip milestone. May ridership was generally consistent with the prior year. EMBARK Plus ridership was also relatively stable.

Staff reported that four of seven performance measures were positive, two were trending positively, and one was negative. Improving on-time fixed-route performance remains a priority and continues to be discussed with EMBARK.

Mr. Johnson explained that the fixed-route system was modified in October 2023 to provide more bidirectional service and fewer loop routes. Also, the Go Norman Long-Range Transit Plan, adopted approximately five years ago, should be revisited because development patterns and transportation needs have changed.

Staff use CAD/AVL technology to monitor fixed-route ridership and on-time performance, Ecolane for paratransit scheduling and performance, and VIA's software for Norman On-Demand. Staff also use census and demographic data to identify areas with greater potential transit demand.

Committee members discussed the need to consider transit service for new housing and development on the east side of Norman, including planned affordable, student, and family housing. Mr. Johnson stated that the existing long-range plan includes a Southeast Norman route that could serve portions of the area.

Mr. Johnson discussed potential future service to areas including the east-side library, Southeast Norman, major retail destinations, student housing, and other growing areas. Staff noted that additional funding could accelerate implementation of planned routes and service improvements.

Committee members discussed requests from developers and community organizations for additional bus service. Mr. Johnson encouraged early coordination with the Transit Department when new developments are being planned.

Committee members requested information regarding why the EMBARK Well grant application was not selected. Mr. Johnson will seek feedback from the grant program and report back to the committee.

Item 2, continued

Committee members requested a progress report on the Gray Street conversion to two-way traffic for the August meeting.

Committee members requested that the report should include the conditions during the first three months following the conversion; traffic crashes and other safety concerns; operational issues and public concerns; improper parking or other observed traffic issues and available preliminary crash data.

Mr. Johnson noted that a more comprehensive crash analysis may not be available until October or November, after sufficient data has been collected and school-year traffic patterns can be evaluated. Preliminary information may be available for the August update.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Holman adjourned the meeting at 5:06 p.m.

ATTEST

City Clerk

Mayor Stephen T. Holman