



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

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

Wednesday, November 19, 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, November 19, 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

The meeting was called to order by Chair Mayor Stephen Holman at 4:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Stephen Holman
Councilmember Ward 3 Robert Bruce
Councilmember Ward 5 Brandon Nofire

OTHERS PRESENT

Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Copouncilmember Ward 6 Joshua Hinkle
Shannon Stevenson, Assistant City Manager
Ms. Beth Muckala, Assistant City Attorney III
Mr. Anthony Purinton, Assistant City Attorney II
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit Parking and Program Manager
Mr. Scott Sturtz, Director of Public Works
Mr. Tim Miles, City Engineer
Mr. David Riesland, Transportation Engineer
Mr. Brian Hiney, Traffic Management Center Engineer
Ms.. Mylisha Allen, Legal Intern
Ms. Maria Nairn, Communications
Ms. Katherine Griffith, Admin Tech III, City Clerk

AGENDA ITEMS

1. PRESENTATION OF THE OCTOBER PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT.

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

The three CNG transit buses have been ordered.

Mr. Johnson said that ACOG, (Association of Central Oklahoma Governments), is reviewing the Central Oklahoma Long-Range Transit Plan at their meeting on Thursday, November 20, 2025.

Ridership Update

- 49,549 total ridership October 2025 versus 48,424 for October 2024

Route Highlights

- Route 111 (East Lindsey) served over 20,000 riders per month, and Route 112 (West Lindsay) saw a 27% increase in usage as well.
- Saturday ridership was 3,079 (20.6% increase) versus 2,553 October 2024.

Fixed Route Service

- 22 riders per service hour (industry standard remains strong for city size).

2. REVIEW AND CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF TRANSIT SERVICE OPTIONS TO THE ADULT WELLNESS AND EDUCATION CENTER.

Chairman Holman, opened the discussion on the agenda item concerning public transit service to the Adult Wellness & Education Center (A.W.E. Center). The topic was previously reviewed approximately a year earlier, and the goal is to revisit challenges and discuss updated options, including route adjustments, sidewalk access, and potential Embark Well service.

Background

- The A.W.E. Center has become increasingly popular since opening two years ago.
- Community members continue to request improved transit connections and sidewalk access.
- Currently nearby bus stops exist, but sidewalk connectivity is poor, with steep slopes and non-continuous paths that pose access challenges for individuals using walkers or wheelchairs.
- Staff previously examined route adjustments, but each option presented operational challenges.
- Transit system changes must remain balanced and make sure adjustments benefiting one group do not adversely affect others.
- Route changes must be studied carefully to avoid degrading system reliability.

Item 2, (continued)

- Three options were originally reviewed with Embark:
 - Adjust Route 121
 - Adjust Route 122
 - Provide Embark Well (on-demand service)

Staff have also revisited sidewalk options now that construction is largely complete, with possible improvements to shorten walking distances.

Route 121 Analysis

- Current: Transit Center → Westheimer Airport → Norman North → Robinson → Porter.
 - Current Bus Stops: Three stops along Porter (including Porter & Johnson and two newly added stops).
- Proposed Adjustment (previously studied): From Robinson → turn onto Finley → south to Main → return to Transit Center.
 - Would add a stop at Robinson & Finley for access closer to the A.W.E. Center.
- Issues Identified:
 - The adjusted route did not meet schedule timing for the 30-minute headway.
 - Deviating to Finley added too much travel time, affecting reliability of the entire service day.
- Alternatives suggested by Council (e.g., routing through Johnson or Frank Streets) were evaluated:
 - Johnson Street: speed humps, uneven topography, on-street parking, not suitable for bus traffic.
 - Frank Street: narrow, residential, nearly one-lane with no curb-and-gutter; not appropriate for a 35-foot bus.
 - Left turns onto Porter: safety concerns and delays crossing multiple lanes of traffic.
- Routing through new redeveloped areas near Johnson is complicated by unpredictable construction timelines.

Staff have concluded that Route 121 modifications remain operationally challenging and do not meet timing needs.

Route 122 Analysis

- Current: Transit Center → Main St → 12th Ave → Rock Creek → Porter → back via same path.
- Strengths of Existing Route:
 - Serves Walmart (a major trip generator).
 - Connects residential areas, including multifamily housing around High Meadows and Porter/Rock Creek.
- Ridership is currently growing and performance is strong.
- Interlined with Route 121 (operates as a pair every 30 minutes).
- Proposed Adjustment: Remove service from part of Main St and 12th Ave; instead, route through Robinson → Finley → Main to reach the A.W.E. Center vicinity.

Item 2, (continued)

- Trade-offs: Would remove service from multiple existing stops, including high-use locations near Walmart and 12th & Robinson.
 - Would require public involvement, potential FTA review, and formal route change procedures.
 - Staff noted the “donut hole” issue seen in previous route debates, improving one area removes access from another.
- **Stop Usage Questions Raised by Council:**
 - Council requested data on ridership at existing stops near Porter & Johnson and near Acres (closest current stops to A.W.E.).
 - Staff will retrieve bus stop ridership counts and report back.
 - Concern expressed that reported current usage may underrepresent latent demand, as some riders would only use transit if a stop existed directly at the A.W.E. Center.
- **Impact on Shelter Stop:**
 - The shelter at Main & Porter would still be served by Route 111, but the direct connection between the Transit Center and the shelter would be reduced if Route 122 were modified.
- **Embark Well Option**
 - Staff noted ongoing progress toward implementing Embark Well (On-Demand Microtransit).
 - Could provide more flexible service without adjusting fixed routes.
 - Further details were not elaborated during this portion of discussion.
- **Sidewalk / Infrastructure Improvements**
 - Staff have revisited sidewalk feasibility now that construction near the A.W.E. Center is mostly complete.
 - Potential improvements may shorten the walk and reduce steep grade challenges.
 - Outreach to the nearby hospital is underway regarding options for corridor enhancements.
- **Council Discussion Highlights**
 - Safety concerns at various intersections.
 - Feasibility of protected left turns (e.g., at Gray St).
 - Whether small route variations could maintain timing.
 - The number of people currently walking from existing stops to the A.W.E. Center.
- Demand seems higher than expected, based on constituent feedback.
- Staff reiterated need for additional data, especially stop-level ridership counts.
 - Staff to provide bus stop ridership data for stops near the A.W.E. Center.
 - Continue evaluating sidewalk and pedestrian access improvements.
 - Continue coordination with Embark regarding potential Microtransit service.
 - Additional public meetings and FTA review may be required if fixed route adjustments are recommended.

Item 2, (continued)

Committee Members discussed the theoretical impacts of moving a bus stop one block over. Concerns included whether individuals currently using stops at Porter and Johnson could still conveniently access their destinations. While this option may be the least disruptive, further study would be needed to confirm route feasibility.

A recent citizen request led to the addition of a new stop at Mosier. This was primarily driven by senior living residents north of Robinson and others who preferred not to disembark at Johnson and Porter when traveling near Robinson and Porter.

Discussion shifted to the Embark Well program as a potential solution, especially for riders without convenient access to bus stops. The group noted that Embark Well removes the barrier of distance-to-stop because it provides more direct transportation.

Overview of Embark Well Program (Current Model, as operated in OKC)

- Eligible Age: 60+
- Application Required for age verification and destination approval
- Reservation: Next-day scheduling
- Service Zone: Within existing paratransit Zone 1
- Purpose: Improve senior mobility, increase access to physical activity, improve social engagement
- Destinations Proposed for Norman:
 - Norman YMCA
 - The Well
 - Norman Regional Health Club
- Case studies in OKC show improvements in health metrics for program participants over six to twelve months.

Potential program structure for Norman:

- Trips per Person: Approximately 3 per week (flexible based on demand and budget)
- Participants: Target of around 100 for initial pilot
- Cost Considerations:
 - Could partner with Uber/Lyft or a similar transportation networkOKC uses Uber for ambulatory riders and uses paratransit vehicles for wheelchair-accessible trips Embark Well demand in OKC has increased annually.
 - Estimated cost: \$75,000–\$100,000 per year

Following Council direction previously last year, staff sought external funding. TSET's physical activity grant was identified as a suitable source.

- Council Approval: Oct. 28th resolution authorized the application
- Application Submitted: Yesterday, November 18, 2025, (ahead of deadline)
- Pilot Proposed: 3-year program at \$100,000 per year
- No local match required
 - Staff expect to receive notification in a few months.

Item 2, (continued)

Embark Well could serve seniors accessing wellness programming at various locations, including seasonal programs (e.g., water-walking at Westwood). Door-to-door service reduces dependence on fixed-route access and eliminates “last-mile” challenges.

Although specific survey details were not recalled, stakeholders engaged in recent meetings expressed enthusiasm for Embark Well. Many advocates seemed motivated by the needs of individuals with mobility issues. Embark Well appears likely to serve these users more effectively than a bus-stop-based solution.

Staff answered questions about whether eligibility standards for Embark Plus paratransit are too restrictive.

- Eligibility follows federal ADA guidelines
- Requires medical verification
- Designed to ensure the service is reserved for riders who truly need it
- There is no federal cap on eligible users
- Norman provides citywide Embark Plus service, even though only Zone 1 coverage is federally required

Embark Well would initially serve all of Norman's Paratransit Zone 1. Staff noted parameters could be expanded or restricted depending on usage and budget. Discussion addressed how individuals from different parts of Norman (west side, east side, etc.) could reach the Wellness Center via fixed-route service.

- Riders would typically transfer to Route 121
- Alternatively, riders could walk from stops on Route 122, though it is a longer walk
- Routes 110 and 112 also connect to Route 121 via the Transit Center
- Uncertainty remains regarding where key stakeholder advocates live within Norman.

Councilmembers expressed support for Embark Well, particularly in serving older adults with mobility issues and difficulty accessing the Adult Wellness Center (AWEC). Embark Well would complement Embark Plus by absorbing some trip demand at a lower cost.

Sidewalk Connection Issues Near Johnson

- A detailed report on physical access barriers along Johnson was given:
 - North side of Johnson has unsafe cross-slopes
 - South side sidewalk is gone, with retaining walls replacing it
 - There is a narrow section near a 45-degree curve that presents hazards
 - Staff are pursuing permission from the hospital to repair sections
- Proposed improvements include:
 - Installing ADA-compliant ramps
 - Constructing a new sidewalk segment to connect with the AWEC sidewalk system
- Preliminary estimates suggest the project can be funded under existing sidewalk allocations

Item 2, (continued)

Timeline for Embark Well Implementation

- Grant decision expected: March, with July 1, 2026, being the earliest start date.
- RFP process would begin immediately after grant approval to select an operating vendor.
- Starting operations would require a few months, though existing OKC systems provide helpful templates.

A suggestion was raised to connect the AWE to the parking lot behind the newly built Behavioral Health Center:

- Currently there is no sidewalk infrastructure there
- Users would have to navigate through a parking area with elevation challenges
- Johnson-side improvements appear more feasible and faster to implement
- Staff are open to investigating future options with Behavioral Health Center cooperation

Prioritizing Sidewalk Projects

Council support was voiced for accelerating the Johnson sidewalk connection, even if it means shifting priority from another project. All Councilmembers expressed that senior citizens have contributed taxes over their lifetimes and deserve improved accessibility infrastructure.

Staff noted that the City already has a contractor on its sidewalk program, so no new RFP would be required. This work could be handled as a unit-item change order, allowing the City to proceed quickly. Costs are not expected to be significant.

The chair asked for final comments or questions, and hearing none, the meeting moved to agenda item number three.

3. STATUS UPDATE AND DISCUSSION REGARDING LINDSEY STREET PROJECTS.

Mr. Scott Sturtz, Director of Public Works, and Mr. Tim Miles, City Engineer, presented information on the upcoming Lindsay Street bond projects.

Mr. Miles said the Lindsay Street improvements were approved by voters in the 2019 bond program, with utility relocations currently underway. Some residents in Wards four and seven had raised concerns, prompting the update.

Earlier phases improved the section from I-35 to Pickard through a combination of ODOT work and the 2012 bond program. The remaining two segments were funded in 2019.

Overview of the Two Lindsay Street, separate but connected, Projects

- Pickard to Elm (Project 1) – shown in yellow in the presentation slides.
- Elm to just west of Jenkins (Project 2) – includes the Elm intersection; the Jenkins intersection has already been improved.
- Both projects have received federal funding.
- Originally, the Elm-to-Jenkins project was scheduled first (FY 2026), but due to OU's upcoming stadium construction in 2027, requiring heavy-material deliveries, the order was reversed. ACOG approved switching the project years without affecting funding availability.
- \$4.1M previously allocated for Elm–Jenkins is now applied to Pickard–Elm.
The Elm–Jenkins segment will be more expensive due to major stormwater upgrades needed to address known flooding issues near Lindsay and Elm.

Justification for Federal Funding - The projects scored highly due to:

- Improved pedestrian and multimodal safety
- Increased roadway capacity at intersections
- Relief of congestion - ACOG's regional congestion report ranked Lindsay as:
 - 18th most congested arterial in the OKC metro
 - 29th most congested corridor overall, including interstates
 - Crash frequency is high, though fatalities are low.
- Existing Conditions of Segment
 - It is about 31 feet wide
 - Functions like a rural section with no curb/gutter
 - Lacks storm sewer; water runs in shallow ditches or along pavement edges
 - Has sidewalk only on the north side (added roughly 10 years ago)
 - Most of the corridors have 66 feet of statutory right-of-way (33 ft each direction). Proposed improvements fit within this width, requiring only temporary easements for driveway and sidewalk tie-ins.
 - Trees are being preserved wherever possible. Environmental notifications were sent to residents; in one case, a redesign preserved an 80-year-old family tree.

Proposed Improvements: Pickard to Elm

- Bike lanes on both sides
 - Bike lanes continue from the previous project segment for continuity. A 10-ft multimodal path on one side was considered but rejected due to frequent side-street crossings and inconsistent design transitions.
 - Council noted that bike lanes feel safer on slower, narrower streets like this corridor.
- Three-lane roadway (one lane each direction + continuous center turn lane)
- Sidewalks on both sides
- Intersection upgrades at Flood and Chautauqua
- Removal of time-based left-turn restrictions
- Improved storm sewer

Item 3, (continued)

- Driveway replacements to match new sidewalk elevations
- Numerous temporary construction easements
- Minimal permanent right-of-way acquisition
- Ramp areas at Chautauqua requiring small triangular right-of-way sections (15 ft triangular pieces)
 - A representative plan sheet illustrates continuous center turn lanes and the limited space available for tapering lanes between Lahoma and Chautauqua.

Right-of-Way Acquisition Process

- No ROW has been purchased yet.
A contract with Pinnacle (acquisition agent) goes to Council next Tuesday.

Process overview:

- Temporary easements for driveways are typically donated, since they improve properties.
- Other temporary easements are compensated.
- Permanent ROW acquisitions follow state and federal procedures.
- Parcels over \$15,000 require professional appraisal and review appraisal.
- Before negotiations, properties will be staked to show limits of work and easements.
 - Acquisition is expected to begin early next year due to holidays.

Project Schedule - FY 2026 project:

- Bid target: October 2026
- Only 11 months available for ROW acquisition, utility relocation, and final plans.

Proposed Improvements: Elm to Pickard Overview - Section largely retains its current appearance:

- Remains three lanes
- Transitions from on-street bike lanes (west section) to 10-ft multimodal paths closer to campus
- Trees preserved by keeping curbs in similar locations
- Features three midblock pedestrian crossings used heavily by OU students

Proposed safety improvements:

- Raised medians at crossings
- Medians will be six inches tall and mountable (45-degree sides) to allow emergency vehicles to cross
- Raised pedestrian tables (speed-table style)
- Independent signal controllers for each crossing (currently all three activate together)
 - OU prefers to maintain existing crossings; the City will continue coordinating with them.
 - OU requested no raised median between Asp and Jenkins so that all three lanes can be used on game days for security and traffic management.
 - Council suggested adding a raised crossing between Dunham and the stadium entrance; staff will continue discussions with OU.

Item 3, (continued)

Storm Drainage:

- Elm–Jenkins includes major storm drainage improvements designed to:
 - Convey up to 50-year storm within curb-to-curb
 - Convey 100-year storm within ROW
 - Reduce, though not fully eliminate, flooding at Lindsay/Elm/College
- Design work is ongoing, final hydrology is not yet complete.

When asked if a citywide stormwater utility could reduce flooding more holistically, Staff confirmed that:

- Multiple tools exist (detention, rain gardens, upsized pipes with controlled outflow, etc.)
- Systemic improvements require dedicated funding
- Priority/ranking systems would be used if such a utility were established

Council referenced the recent 10-inch, 3-hour storm. Staff anticipate:

- Flooding will still occur during extreme events
- Duration and severity should decrease significantly
- Some remaining localized pockets may persist due to upstream grading issues

Both projects are being handled by one consultant for consistency (lighting, design continuity, transitions).

- Pickard–Elm is 65%+ complete
- Moving into ROW acquisition and final plan detailing
- Public meeting required during the NEPA process, likely Spring 2026 (April–May)
- Only a few resident comments received so far (Chautauqua and Pickard locations)
- David Kinnard, a 30-year Chautauqua resident, spoke against the planned changes as he feels increasing traffic will worsen safety for the OU student pedestrians. He stressed that long-term solutions should prioritize bicycle/pedestrians and reduce vehicle demand, not widening roads to bring in more traffic. Warned that adding capacity now could lead to future expansion and more congestion.

Chairman Holman thanked staff for their work. Staff will provide further updates as the project progresses, and councilmembers may request updates at any time.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

ATTEST

City Clerk

Mayor