



# The City of **NORMAN**

201 West Gray • P.O. Box 370  
Norman, Oklahoma 73069 • 73070

223827

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
Phone: 405-366-5402

FD 35164

October 9, 2008

Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

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Dear Members of the Board:

I write to provide you with copies of my letter sent to Governor Brad Henry and a resolution unanimously adopted by the City Council of Norman with respect to the need to preserve the terminal facilities at Union Station in Oklahoma City for future passenger, freight and intermodal transportation. It is my understanding that you have before you a decision which would greatly effect whether the full functionality of this rail facility will be preserved.

As you will see in the city's resolution, we believe that it is possible to meet both the goal of reconstructing the I-40 Crosstown and the goal of preserving and enhancing rail service. An adjustment in the alignment of the Crosstown Expressway can be accomplished without relocating or abandoning the existing BNSF tracks in the Union Station facility. On the contrary, to abandon, relocate or eliminate a portion of the Union Station tracks would have devastating effects on current freight operations and future passenger rail opportunities.

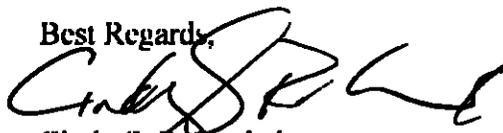
Significant changes have occurred since the current alignment of I-40 was adopted. Rising energy prices challenge the quality of life of our citizens and underscore the critical need for commuter rail service as quickly as possible. In a recent study, our metropolitan area ranked last out of the 50 largest metro areas in its preparedness for public transit, which would help citizens cope with fuel costs. To lose critical infrastructure at this point in time would be a further detriment to central Oklahoma. The Oklahoma City metropolitan area also faces classification as non-attainment of EPA standards with respect to ozone, which is directly related to motor vehicle emissions, thus, Norman's elected officials and community leaders are motivated by sound environmental reasons to aggressively pursue rail transportation options. Finally, we are attentive to the experience of other cities and believe that we have a critical opportunity to preserve valuable rail infrastructure, which can only be replicated in the future at great expense.

The City of Norman's history and economy have been shaped by rail transportation. Founded in 1889, Norman developed around the Santa Fe Railroad with a passenger depot as well as a freight station. Norman became the headquarters for the railway. As business grew, it was necessary to expand the depot three times in the first few years of its existence. Today, with an estimated 111,357 residents, Norman is the third largest city in the State of Oklahoma and home to the flagship University of Oklahoma.

I submit this letter and resolution for your consideration and ask you to weigh our concerns in your decision. Norman is committed to participating in the process of developing rail options for our region. Our community believes very strongly that the future prosperity of Norman and the entire central Oklahoma region depends upon a robust multi-modal rail transit system, of which the Union Station terminal facility is a key part.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards,



Cindy S. Rosenthal  
Mayor

CC.

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OKC, OK 73105



# The City of **NORMAN**

201 West Gray • P.O. Box 370  
Norman, Oklahoma 73069 • 73070

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
Phone: 405-886-6

September 26, 2008

The Honorable Brad Henry  
Governor, State of Oklahoma  
2300 N. Lincoln Blvd.  
OKC, OK 73105

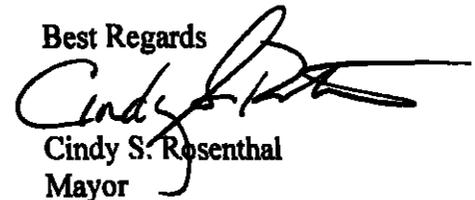
Dear Governor Henry:

On September 23, 2008, the Norman City Council unanimously adopted the enclosed resolution requesting an independent gubernatorial commission to evaluate immediately and expeditiously rail transportation needs in central Oklahoma and to reconsider the current I-40 Crosstown alignment. We acknowledge and support the need for the reconstruction of I-40, but our citizens and community leaders strongly believe that a robust system of rail options in the future is being jeopardized. The City of Norman endorses a win-win solution that completes the Crosstown but also saves Union Station and the full capacity of available rail yard so that we can realize a modern 21<sup>st</sup> century rail system for passenger, freight, and intermodal transportation.

Significant changes have occurred since the current alignment of I-40 was adopted. Rising energy prices challenge the quality of life of our citizens and underscore the critical need for commuter rail service as quickly as possible. The Oklahoma City metropolitan area is threatened with classification as a non-attainment area due to ozone levels, which are directly tied to motor vehicle emissions, and sound environmental reasons motivate our call for public transportation. The experience of other cities tells us that we have a critical opportunity to preserve valuable rail infrastructure, which can only be replicated in the future at great expense. Finally, other cities have witnessed the benefits of economic development from rail transit-oriented development; central Oklahoma should not miss this opportunity.

The City of Norman believes that it is not too late to make a modest adjustment in the I-40 alignment so that central Oklahoma can move quickly to realize an effective rail system. On behalf of the council and the citizens of Norman, I respectfully submit this resolution for your consideration. Your leadership on the issue of rail transportation may be one of the most important aspects of your legacy. We acknowledge the need for a regional financing authority to support a rail transit system and stand ready to do our part to provide our citizens with the kind of quality transportation options that they will need and expect in the future.

Best Regards



Cindy S. Rosenthal  
Mayor

# Resolution

R-0809-33

**A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA TO APPOINT A SPECIAL COMMISSION TO CONSIDER FUTURE RAIL TRANSIT OPTIONS IN THE OKLAHOMA CITY METROPOLITAN AREA; FUTURE USES OF UNION STATION AND ITS ASSOCIATED RAIL LINES TO ENHANCE FUTURE RAIL TRANSIT FOR THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA; AND ALTERNATE ROUTES FOR THE INTERSTATE 40 CROSSTOWN EXPRESSWAY.**

- § 1 WHEREAS, the replacement of the I-40 Crosstown Expressway through downtown Oklahoma City is critically necessary due to its deteriorated condition; and
- § 2 WHEREAS, rail transit can stimulate economic development, provide dependable, safe and inexpensive transportation for all; reduce vehicular traffic and congestion; lower carbon dioxide emissions that contribute to global warming; provide an important means of transportation for military facilities, and greatly improve air quality in metropolitan areas; and
- § 3 WHEREAS, the Oklahoma City metropolitan area ranks high nationally among other large cities in terms of its widespread geographic area and commuting population, ranks 40<sup>th</sup> out of 100 as most traffic congested, and ranks last out of 50 as best prepared for \$4 per gallon gasoline, according to "Major US Cities Preparedness for an Oil Crisis", a study by Warren Karlenzig, Common Current, March 2008; and
- § 4 WHEREAS, citizens of the central Oklahoma metropolitan area are in need of safe, efficient, and affordable transportation alternatives as opposed to reliance upon personal automobiles in face of rising gasoline prices; and
- § 5 WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Agency has recently established stricter standards for ozone concentrations which are directly related to automobile usage and in 2006, Central Oklahoma exceeded the maximum allowed ozone level 11 times, almost twice as many times as the previous four years combined and before the new federal standards of the Clean Air Act became law, and
- § 6. WHEREAS, the City of Norman is a signatory of the U S Conference of Mayors climate protection agreement and is committed to supporting transportation alternatives which reduce vehicular traffic and congestion and lower carbon dioxide emissions that contribute to global warming, and
- § 7. WHEREAS, the central Oklahoma metropolitan area is behind many other large cities in transportation efficiencies, including Denver, Salt Lake City and Dallas, whose Union Stations are the foundation for their vibrant rail and bus systems, have been successful beyond expectations, and have received enthusiastic public support and demand for wider availability; and
- § 8 WHEREAS, the historic and strategically valuable Union Station rail yard in Oklahoma City lies at the center of the state's unique railway network linking the state's major towns, Tinker Air Force Base, and Will Rogers World Airport and is the last grand urban passenger rail yard in the west that remains virtually unused today, with all of its original space and much of its essential infrastructure intact, including numerous tracks connecting every corner of the state; and



- § 9. WHEREAS, the future of rail service in central Oklahoma depends upon having a hub that allows rapid and cost-effective development of a safe, convenient, fuel-efficient and environmentally friendly rail transit system for linking the economic engines of Oklahoma's towns, cities and military bases; and
- § 10. WHEREAS, recent rulings by the Federal Surface Transportation Board provide an important opportunity to expeditiously reconsider viable route alternatives for the new Crosstown Expressway that do not require the destruction of Union Station's invaluable rail yard; and
- § 11. WHEREAS, experience shows that any major public infrastructure project requires years, sometimes decades of planning and foresight, which translates into millions of dollars in additional costs to taxpayers, before opening for service, as well as millions of dollars of additional costs to taxpayers while citizens now urgently seek alternatives to traditional highway travel; and
- § 12. WHEREAS, government at all levels cannot procure adequate funding for new roads and bridges and are years behind on maintenance in many cases, and
- § 13. WHEREAS, pending petroleum shortfalls coupled with the rising cost of auto fuels threaten the economy and security of the state and the nation, and change the assumptions made previously concerning the value of rail travel in the state and the country, and
- § 14. WHEREAS, accommodation of the need for an intermodal transportation hub for the Oklahoma City metropolitan area located in downtown Oklahoma City and the need for Highway replacement through downtown Oklahoma City can be met if the proposed alignment of the Crosstown Expressway be moved 400 feet south of the present planned alignment through the Union Station rail yard

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA:

- § 15. WHEREAS, the City of Norman, Oklahoma, supports the efforts of ONTRAC to further investigate cost effective rail options for the State of Oklahoma and encourages the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments and its member cities to give due consideration to joining in the adoption of this resolution
- § 16. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the City of Norman, Oklahoma, respectfully requests that the Honorable Brad Henry, Governor of Oklahoma, convene a Special Commission of citizens, public officials, and transportation experts to consider immediately and expeditiously the future of rail transit options in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, to study future uses of Union Station and its associated rail lines to enhance future rail transit for the state, to weigh the short and long term benefits of alternative routings of the Crosstown Expressway that would not jeopardize any future use of the Union Station rail yard, and that the commission report to the Governor and to the public its finding and recommendations in an expedient manner; and that until such time, the Governor direct the Oklahoma Department of Transportation to proceed with only those aspects of the Crosstown Expressway that do not affect Union Station's rail yard or connecting rail lines or that limit the State's ability, either materially or financially, to implement any alternative routings recommended by the Special Commission.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 23rd day of September, 2008.

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

  
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Mayor