



*association of central oklahoma governments*

July 30, 2014

Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager  
City of Norman  
201 W. Gray Street  
Norman, OK 73069

Dear Mr. Lewis:

The Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) is an association of city, town and county governments within Central Oklahoma. The ACOG area encompasses Oklahoma, Cleveland, Canadian and Logan counties. ACOG currently has 37 dues-paying member entities.

Formed under Oklahoma's Interlocal Cooperation Act, ACOG's mission is to build a stronger regional community by means of cooperation, leadership and planning. ACOG serves the greater Oklahoma City region as the designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO), and works on mobility, public safety and livability programs for Central Oklahoma.

Through ACOG's leadership, area jurisdictions and diverse community interests collaborate to address the region's challenges and identify the opportunities for cooperative solutions. These efforts, in turn, enhance the effectiveness of local government. The City of Norman, a Charter member, has been an active participant in ACOG since its beginning in 1966.

### **A Forum for Addressing Regional Objectives and Diverse Community Issues**

ACOG provides an opportunity for city leaders to foster relationships with neighboring communities with the goal of finding common solutions for shared actions.

The best example of this is the build-out of the region's enhanced 9-1-1 system. In 1987, the city and the region developed the life-saving 9-1-1 emergency telephone system through a concerted effort requiring public elections that approved landline user fees. In 2005, ACOG and the City of Norman again led efforts to establish enhanced 9-1-1 service for mobile phones. As technology and mobile devices continue to evolve, so too, do our efforts in assuring that the 9-1-1 system remains compliant and compatible. For the fourth year in a row, an independent audit revealed 99.7% accuracy in 9-1-1 data as a result of ACOG's detailed quality assurance management.

As part of ACOG's service to the City of Norman, we provide coordination of wireless 9-1-1 testing, VOIP integration and maintenance of the Master Street Address Guide and 9-1-1 databases, as well as a wide variety of public safety communications training through ACOG's Training Institute consortium.

ACOG is currently in the final stages of implementing a complex migration plan whereby all technical support and maintenance is migrated from third party vendors to ACOG staff. This service has greatly improved responsiveness and service to the region's 9-1-1 centers, and will be of great value to the region as the interface with new technologies begins to evolve through Next Generation 9-1-1 implementations, such as Text-to-911.

Other examples of regional programs managed by ACOG that impact and benefit Norman include:

Air Quality Program – For over 20 years, ACOG has been the leader in maintaining air quality in Central Oklahoma. However, the region is faced with a new challenge as a result of revisions to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone. The new ozone standard will most likely result in our region's violation of the standard, requiring expanded and regulated efforts to get back into compliance. The implications of violating the ozone standard could have a negative impact on economic development in Norman and neighboring communities. As of summer 2013, the Central Oklahoma region is in violation of the ozone standard, but is still classified an attainment region. We are working with state and federal stakeholders to monitor any policy impacts that a designation may have on the region.

Legislative Issues - ACOG staff monitors state and federal legislation and policy that could potentially affect local governments and communities, and keeps its members up to date through correspondence and presentations at ACOG Board meetings.

Economic Development – In spring 2013, ACOG became designated an official Economic Development District (EDD). This designation will allow ACOG to work with the city and the U.S. Economic Development Administration on infrastructure improvement projects that could promote community and economic development. One of the first successes of our program was acquiring the EDA grant for the build-out of the University North Park Centre. ACOG will also continue to monitor and update the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), and work with city and staff from Norman's economic development partners.

### **Long-Range Planning (Transportation and Water)**

Transportation Planning – A significant benefit of participation in the regional transportation planning process is the ability of member entities to access federal transportation funds for pennies on the dollar. Norman has long served as the cornerstone for the required local participation in the regional transportation planning process. The City's active membership on committees, assistance with defining needs within the City and the region have helped support the federally certified Oklahoma City Area Regional Transportation Study (OCARTS) area planning process since its inception 48 years ago.

Norman receives funding through ACOG for arterial street improvement projects, traffic signal improvements and sidewalk construction through the Surface Transportation Program Urbanized Area (STP-UZA) funds. The STP-UZA funds estimated to be available to Norman in FY14 was \$731,200.

In FY2014, ACOG continued working on the regional Commuter Corridors Study, which will be completed in the coming months. The study is looking at transit capacity in three corridors in the region, including a southern corridor that would examine connections between Norman and Oklahoma City. This study was part of the Regional Transit Dialogue, which is a vision for regional transit in Central Oklahoma. ACOG will continue a cooperative relationship with Norman towards establishment of a Regional Transit Authority to further these study efforts.

For FY2015, the City of Norman's Transportation dues amount is \$13,000. The return on investment to the city in this category alone is substantial.

Water Resources – The Water Resources Division of ACOG helps our members maximize the use of ground and surface water resources. This includes planning, management, protection, and research of potable water supplies.

The Water Resources Division staff maintains the largest technical database on the Garber-Wellington aquifer and other groundwater resources of the region. As the aquifer yield study concludes and public discussion concerning the new permit limits begins, ACOG staff is working with state, federal, and local communities to ensure a technically sound yield study and a fair and equitable distribution of water rights in Central Oklahoma.

As an EPA designated 208 Agency for surface water quality management, ACOG reviews, maintains, and implements necessary plans for discharge permits and TMDL studies. As part of this 208 strategy, ACOG staff is currently finishing a regional water quality study on the Canadian River encompassing all the municipal dischargers along the river segment from Minco to Purcell, including Oklahoma City, Norman, Moore, and Mustang. This project will provide an informed understanding of the assimilative capacity of the watershed for future waste load allocations. Final review including public review with ODEQ and EPA will be in late 2014.

As part of the mission “*to identify pollution sources and recommend preventative measures*”, staff is doing review of aerial photography in the West Edmond Oil and Gas field in Logan and Oklahoma counties. Over fourteen brownfield sites have been identified. These sites are being incorporated into a database for planning purposes. Staff is also working with the Oklahoma Corporation Commission to modify casing requirements in the Oklahoma Water Quality Standards.

### **Technical Assistance and Other Services**

Technical Assistance (TA) – ACOG prides itself on being responsive to its member entities. Members are encouraged to contact staff whenever they have a need. According to our records, Norman has contacted ACOG for assistance on such things as:

- Alternative fuel vehicle information (IGS staff)

- Socioeconomic and data information (Transportation staff)
- Emergency management (dispatcher) training information (9-1-1 staff)
- Transportation policy and funding information (Transportation staff)
- Air Quality information (Transportation staff)
- Wireless Phase 2 testing information (9-1-1 staff)
- Next Generation 9-1-1 research and program development (9-1-1 staff)
- Bike to Work Day information (Transportation staff)
- Groundwater information (Water resources staff)
- Safe Routes to School information (Transportation staff)
- Federal and state legislative issues (IGS staff)
- Bicycle and pedestrian safety and active transportation programming (IGS and TPS staff)
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and Economic Development grants and opportunities (IGS/EDD staff)
- Disaster Relief Opportunity (DRO) funding potential and resource assistance with federally declared disasters (IGS/EDD staff).

To summarize, the dues paid by the City of Norman and the member governments in Central Oklahoma supplements a dedicated and professional staff who:

- Provide a fair and impartial setting for regional decision making.
- Track and analyze issues that may affect our local governments.
- Provide guidance and assistance in problem solving.
- Provide quality services that are relevant, effective and efficient.

*Our programming and commitment to our members and the citizens of Central Oklahoma illustrates that ACOG operates as a sole source to the City of Norman for a variety of professional services.*

Norman is a vital player in the regional planning process. Regional cooperation doesn't just happen on its own. It stems from visionary communities like Norman who strive to see the full potential of the Central Oklahoma region. ACOG is committed to assisting its member communities as they strive for excellence and in providing a cooperative forum in which to achieve that goal.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please call me at 234-2264.

Sincerely,



John G. Johnson  
Executive Director