



## CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

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**MEETING DATE:** 06/23/2026

**REQUESTER:** Taylor Johnson, AICP, Transit and Parking Program Manager

**PRESENTER:** Scott Sturtz, P. E., Public Works Director

**ITEM TITLE:** CONSIDERATION OF ACCEPTANCE, APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF AMENDMENT FIVE TO CONTRACT K-2223-164: BY AND BETWEEN THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, AND RIVER NORTH TRANSIT, LLC, (VIA TRANSPORTATION, INC.), IN THE AMOUNT OF \$601,502, FOR A REVISED NOT-TO-EXCEED AMOUNT OF \$2,844,972, FOR EXTENSION OF THE NORMAN ON-DEMAND MICROTRANSIT PROGRAM BEGINNING July 1, 2026 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2027.

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### **BACKGROUND:**

Over the course of 2021-2023, Council requested more information about microtransit, a type of service intended to help fill gaps between public fixed route bus service and the rideshare services with which many people are familiar. In an effort to bring in expertise and fine tune what the service would look like, the City hired consulting firm HNTB and alongside City staff conducted two workshops with Council on October 18, 2022 and January 3, 2023 respectively.

Following feedback from Councilmembers through those workshops, two recommendations were made. The first was for a microtransit pilot program consisting of turnkey microtransit service that would operate in the late evenings Monday through Saturday as well as during the day on Sunday. This recommendation suggested the service be offered in a defined zone, limited in size, to be proposed by potential vendors in response to a Request for Proposal (RFP). The second recommendation was to invest in more robust software to improve existing paratransit service, which has since been discussed and implemented in partnership with EMBARK.

City staff and HNTB then worked to create RFP-2223-59, and proposals were scored by the selection committee using the evaluation criteria in the RFP which included: responsiveness to scope of work, past performance and references, cost, qualifications of project staff, qualifications of firm, and if the proposal included an Oklahoma-based firm or satellite office. At the conclusion of the evaluation process, River North Transit, LLC (a wholly owned subsidiary of Via Transportation, Inc.) was selected as the most qualified proposer and Council approved Contract K-2223-164 on June 27, 2023.

In the Spring of 2023, as Norman was concluding the RFP process, OU was looking to begin a similar process for their SafeRide program which offers students free rides Thurs-Sat 10pm-

3am. It was identified that there may be efficiencies in combining resources to have 1 late night transit service for the community. Staff from both the City of Norman and OU worked together to combine resources with a goal of expanding the City and Via proposed service to incorporate the University's SafeRide program.

On Aug. 8, 2023, Council approved Amendment 1 to K-2223-164 with River North Transit (Via Transportation) and its companion agenda item contract K-2324-50 with OU for Microtransit Services to include the SafeRide program. This combined program was scheduled to operate from August 21, 2023 through August 20, 2024. On May 1, 2024 the service was revised to include an additional vehicle, expand the service map westward, and to reduce the SafeRide hours during summer operation by concluding service at 1am Monday through Saturday. These changes were accomplished through Amendment 2 to contract K-2223-164 with River North Transit, LLC (Via Transportation, Inc.) and Amendment 1 to contract K-2324-50 with the University of Oklahoma both of which were approved by City Council on April 23, 2024.

A "Year 2" extension of the program maintaining the SafeRide program and clarifying the hours during the school year vs summer hours was authorized by Council on July 9, 2024 with the approval of Amendment 3 to contract K-2223-164 with River North Transit, LLC (Via Transportation, Inc.) and Amendment 2 to contract K-2324-50 with the University of Oklahoma.

A nominal "Year 3" extension to the program of ten months through June 30, 2026 was authorized by Council on July 8, 2025 with the approval of Amendment 4 to contract K-2223-164 with River North Transit, LLC (Via Transportation, Inc.) and Amendment 3 to contract K-2324-50 with the University of Oklahoma. This shorter contract cycle was implemented to better align the contract with the City's fiscal year.

Operational information for the service such as hours, pricing, and maps can be found online at [city.ridewithvia.com/norman](http://city.ridewithvia.com/norman).

## **DISCUSSION:**

Staff has presented information and discussed this service with Council at various Community Planning and Transportation Committee (CPTC) meetings since the beginning of the microtransit program. Most recently, the Fund 27 (Public Transportation and Parking Fund) fiscal year 2027 budget was discussed at the February 26, 2026 and April 23, 2026 CPTC meetings. During those discussions, those Councilmembers present voiced their desired to keep the microtransit services operating in fiscal year 2027, however, direction was provided to staff to work to decrease the expenses given the budget issues that are being projected. Staff were able to work with both the operator and the University to identify service hours that could be decreased without impacting the usability of the service too much. The changes proposed for fiscal year 2027 would be to begin service at 7:30pm Monday through Saturday, rather than 7:00pm, as well as ending service at 5:00pm on Sunday, rather than 6:00pm.

Since the service began on August 21, 2023 through the end of May 2026 the service has completed 95,611 rides (24,803 rides in FY26 year to date, July 2025-May 2026), with a 4.9 out of 5 star rating (customer satisfaction), and a ridership per service hour rate of 5.5. Approximately 31% of all rides completed were requested by OU student accounts; however, only 27% of these (or 8% of total ridership) were offered as part of the free to students SafeRide program.

Approximately 69% of all rides completed, the remaining rides offered by the service, were requested by non-OU rider accounts.

Extension of this pilot program for fiscal year ending 2027 is contingent on amendment of existing contracts with both River North Transit, LLC (Via Transportation, Inc.) and the University of Oklahoma. The estimated cost for this service extension between July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027 is \$601,502, for a total contract not-to-exceed amount of \$2,844,972. The requested \$601,502 is available in the Transit and Parking Fund, Miscellaneous Services – Transit Operation Contract (account number 27550277-44766) for fiscal year 2027.

Please note that this is a companion item to the proposed Amendment 4 to Contract K-2324-50 between the University and the City (K-2324-50; Amendment 4).

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Staff recommends that City Council approve Amendment Five to contract K-2223-164 by and between the City of Norman, Oklahoma, and River North Transit, LLC (Via Transportation, Inc.) in the amount of \$601,502, for a revised not-to-exceed amount of \$2,844,972, for extension of the Norman On-Demand microtransit program beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027.