



**MEMO TO:** Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee

**FROM:** Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager

**THROUGH:** Shawn O'Leary, P.E., CFM, Director of Public Works

**DATE:** June 23, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Public Transportation Monthly Report

### Purpose

The Public Transportation Monthly Report is meant to provide updates to City Council on public transit related items. In addition to the updates provided below, attached is the EMBARK Norman Performance Report for the previous month. The Performance Report provides updates on key metrics associated with the operations of the transit system.

### Updates

- Go Norman Transit Plan (City of Norman Transit Long Range Plan Update)
  - The Go Norman Transit Plan was approved by resolution by Council at its June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 meeting. Staff are continuing to move forward on the next steps as recommended in the plan. Recent work includes:
    - The acquisition of property downtown, 318-320 Comanche Street, to be used as a transit center, which Council approved the purchase sale agreement on January 18. The City and the seller finalized the sale process on March 4, 2022. Staff have completed a task order for on-call architectural and engineering services with McKinney Partnership Architects P.C., which was approved by City Council on May 10, 2022. The initial project kickoff meeting occurred on site the morning of May 13, 2022.
    - On October 1, 2021 ACOG announced the grant cycle for their Air Quality Small Grant Program was open. This program seeks to improve air quality in Central Oklahoma by reducing reliance on single-occupancy vehicle trips. Small transportation infrastructure projects and transit improvements as well as projects focused on congestion relief efforts are all eligible. Staff submitted an application on November 19, 2021 requesting funding to install 80 new bus stops associated with the recommended route changes in the Go Norman Transit Plan. Council supported this application by approving a programming resolution on November 30, 2021 for the project. On January 13, 2022 the ACOG MPO Technical Committee recommended a list of projects be approved for funding, of which the City's was one of them. Then the ACOG MPO Policy Committee reviewed the list of projects on January 27, 2022 and approved them for funding. City staff worked with ACOG on a contract agreement for the project which was brought to the March 8th Council meeting and approved.
    - Staff have also worked with Nelson/Nygaard, the consultant that worked with the City to create the Go Norman Transit Plan, on an amendment to their contract which was approved by Council on March 8, 2022. This amendment will make minor changes to the Go Norman Transit Plan to reflect the property at 320 Comanche Street to be used as a Transit Center, rather than The Depot.
    - Lastly, staff are looking at the overall schedule for implementing the recommended route network in the Plan. This will include a public participation process to finalize the route changes, implementing the bus stop changes, renovating the new Transit Center, and marketing.
- Grants
  - Staff continue to program and draw down on Federal Transit Administration Grant (FTA) grants periodically to reimburse the City for eligible public transit expenses.
  - Staff continue to research eligible grants to support existing operations, vehicle needs, and future improvements. Staff are awaiting news of 1 grant application and are looking to apply to 2 additional grants in the near future. Please see below for more information:
    - FY22 RAISE Grant: Application for purchase and installation of 2 pantograph chargers, providing for in service charging for the new EV buses. Council supported the application by resolution on April 12 and it was submitted on April 14.
    - FY22 FTA Bus and Bus Facilities Grant: Staff are proposing to replace 2 CNG 35' fixed route buses and 4 paratransit vans. Council supported the application by resolution on May 24, and it was submitted on May 31. (Please note that staff are submitting the 2 CNG 35' buses to this grant and the one listed below, with the

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- request to FTA to fund the replacement through one grant or the other, not both.)
- FY22 FTA Low- or No-Emissions Vehicle Program: Staff are proposing to replace 2 CNG 35' fixed route buses. Council supported the application by Resolution on May 24, and it was submitted on May 31. (Please note that staff are submitting the 2 CNG 35' buses to this grant and the one listed above, with the request to FTA to fund the replacement through one grant or the other, not both.)
- Please see the Go Norman Transit Plan section on the first page of this report for more information on an ACOG Air Quality Grant to support new bus stops in Norman.
- Fleet Maintenance & Vehicle Procurement
  - City Fleet Maintenance staff continue to ensure that the transit fleet is in operational condition each morning for line up, despite the age of the vehicles that the City inherited.
    - The City's Transit Fleet includes 27 revenue vehicles, 13 in the fixed-route fleet and 14 in the paratransit fleet. Unfortunately, 21 out of 27 of the revenue vehicles used in the City's transit fleet have met their useful life and are eligible to be retired according to FTA requirements. Two additional vehicles will reach the end of their useful life by the end of 2022, and a third will do so in 2023.
  - The City is currently in the process of purchasing 2 battery electric busses and staff anticipates receiving these vehicles in August/September 2022. Below is background information on both battery electric bus projects:
    - An authorization to purchase the City's first battery electric vehicle, a transit bus, was approved at Council's May 25, 2021 meeting. A purchase order was issued on May 27, 2021 to the manufacturer. Approximately 50% of the vehicle purchase price will be reimbursed through a grant received from Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality through the Volkswagen Settlement Fund.
    - An authorization to purchase the City's second battery electric transit bus was approved at Council's August 10, 2021 meeting. A purchase order was issued on August 13, 2021 to the manufacturer. Approximately 70% of the vehicle purchase price will be reimbursed through a grant received from the FTA's FY21 Low- or No-Emission Vehicle Program. The City's project was 1 of 49 projects selected in the nation.
    - Council granted approval for additional funds to be allocated to both bus builds on December 14, 2021. These additional funds were used to add charge rails to the top of the busses so that in the future an overhead pantograph charging system could be utilized.
    - As the buses near completion, staff will take a trip to the bus manufacturer's facility in California to oversee part of the process. Preliminary plans for this trip are being made for July.
  - On December 14, 2021 the City Council passed and adopted resolution R-2122-72 transferring \$346,703 from the Capital Fund Balance to be matched with \$122,812 available in the Public Transit and Parking Fund to be used to replace 5 paratransit vehicles in the Transit Fleet for a total of \$469,515. Due to ongoing supply chain issues the price of the vehicles had increased, however staff were able to identify additional FTA grant funding allocated to Norman to supplement the cost increase and decrease the amount of local match that was provided from the Public Transit and Parking Fund. Resolution R-2122-98 was approved by Council on March 8 transferring an additional \$149,454 (for a total cost of \$584,655) to cover the cost increase. FTA grant OK-2020-026 will be amended to \$496,157 leaving a local match of \$88,508 (a reduction in the local matching funds of \$34,304.)
  - Staff have worked with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) to draft a contract to accept Surface Transportation Block Grant – Urbanized Area (STBG-UZA) funding for the purchase of 2 35ft low-floor CNG transit buses, which Council reviewed and approved at their June 14, 2022 meeting. A follow up authorization to purchase the buses will be drafted for review and approval.

## Conclusion

Thank you for your review of these updates and attached monthly performance report. Staff are available to answer any questions.

**Attached:** EMBARK Norman Performance Report for April 2022