



CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 07/09/2024

REQUESTER: Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager

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

ITEM TITLE: CONSIDERATION OF ACCEPTANCE, APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF AMENDMENT THREE 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 \$751,717, FOR A REVISED NOT-TO-EXCEED AMOUNT OF \$1,551,485, FOR EXTENSION OF THE NORMAN ON-DEMAND MICROTRANSIT PILOT PROGRAM FOR A ONE YEAR PERIOD BEGINNING AUGUST 21, 2024 AND ENDING AUGUST 20, 2025.

BACKGROUND:

Over the course of fiscal year 2021-2022 (FYE 2022), City staff presented and discussed many modes of transit which prompted Council to request more information about microtransit. This type of service is relatively new and intended to help fill gaps left between public fixed route bus service and the privatized taxi or rideshare services that many people are familiar with. At the conclusion of FYE 2022, the City Council amended the FYE 2023 budget to allocate \$750,000 for a microtransit pilot program. In an effort to bring in expertise and fine tune what the service would look like, the City hired the consulting firm HNTB to better understand the goals of the City and explore alternative solutions within the microtransit industry to meet those goals.

City staff and HNTB 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 either from 6pm-12am or 7pm-1am, as well as Sundays from 10am-6pm. The second recommendation was to invest in more robust software to improve existing paratransit service in partnership with EMBARK. The recommendation suggested this service be offered in a defined zone and limited in size, to be proposed by potential vendors in response to a Request for Proposal (RFP).

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.

DISCUSSION:

At Council's request, staff put together a presentation reviewing the Norman On-Demand microtransit pilot program data during the first six months of operation as well as a review of options to expand and continue the service. This information was presented at a Council Conference meeting on February 27, 2024, where Council concurred that their desire was for the service to be expanded and to extend the pilot for another year.

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.

Extension of this pilot program for a second year is contingent on amendment of existing contracts with both River North Transit, LLC (Via Transportation, Inc.) and the University of Oklahoma. The amended contract with River North Transit (K-2223-164-AMD-3) would include the vehicle and service area expansions approved in April 2024, and would clarify general service hours during the University's fall and spring semesters (August 21, 2024 to May 10, 2025: 7PM-1AM on Mon.–Wed.; 7PM-3AM on Thurs–Sat.; and 10AM-6PM on Sundays) and summer service hours (May 11, 2025 to August 20, 2025: 7PM-1AM on Mon.–Sat.; and 10AM-6PM on Sundays). The estimated cost for this service extension between August 21, 2024 through August 20, 2025 is \$751,717, for a total contract not-to-exceed amount of \$1,551,485. The requested \$751,717 is available in the Transit and Parking Fund, Miscellaneous Services – Transit Operation Contract (account number 27550277-44766).

Please note that this is a companion item to the proposed Amendment 2 to Contract K-2324-50 between the University and the City (K-2324-50; Amendment 2).

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Staff recommends that City Council approve Amendment Three 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 \$751,717, for a revised not-to-exceed amount of \$1,551,485, for extension of the Norman On-Demand microtransit pilot program for a one year period beginning August 21, 2024 and ending August 20, 2025.