



**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:** August 24, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Public Transportation Monthly Report

### Purpose

The Public Transportation Monthly Report provides 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 on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021. Staff are continuing to move forward on the next steps as recommended in the plan. Recent work includes:
  - On February 14, 2023, Council approved contract K-2223-72 with Stronghold Construction to complete the renovation of the 320 E. Comanche St. property into a City Transit Center. A pre-construction meeting was conducted on February 21, 2023 to organize the start of the project, and a Notice to Proceed was issued on February 28, 2023. Construction commenced on March 1, 2023. It was estimated that the project would be completed and open in August 2023, however, the project has been delayed due to asbestos remediation and other items that came up throughout the project. The current estimated completion date is around October 1, 2023 with a ribbon cutting ceremony being planned for October 13, 2023 and a start of service using the facility on October 16, 2023. Work on the project during the months of June and July 2023 included:
    - Masonry
    - Interior framing
    - Finalizing interior framing
    - Framing, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing rough-in and inspections
    - Electrical service change over
    - Concrete sidewalk completion
    - HVAC unit delivery and install
    - Steel delivery and welding
    - Column removal
  - On December 13, 2022 Council unanimously approved a resolution to alter bus routes and transit bus services as recommended in the Go Norman Transit Plan to take effect in 2023. Staff have started the work to implement the newly approved changes, which includes changes to bus stops, signage and advertising, as well as operator training. These route changes are planned to go into effect on October 16, 2023, aligning with the opening of the new Transit Center.

#### • Grants

- Staff continue to program and draw down on Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grants periodically to reimburse the City for eligible public transit expenses.
- On April 12, 2023 Council approved a grant application to FTA's Bus and Bus Facilities (5339b) and Low-or No-Emissions Grants to purchase 6 CNG cutaway buses for fleet replacement. On June 26, 2023 FTA announced the project selections, and the City's grant application was awarded. Staff will begin the process to request Council's acceptance of the grant and procurement of the vehicles.
- Staff continue to research eligible grants to support existing operations, vehicle needs, and future improvements. Staff are researching project opportunities for the various ACOG (Air Quality) grants that will be available over the next few months.

#### • Microtransit Pilot Program

- Following a study to determine the best plan for establishing a microtransit pilot program in the City of Norman, staff conducted a competitive bid process. The proposal from Via Transportation was determined to be the best suited to the needs of Norman. Contract K-2223-164 with Via Transportation was approved unanimously by council on June 27, 2023. Following interest from the University of Oklahoma, both a proposed contract with the university and a companion amendment to the existing contract with Via have been drafted to expand this program to include the university's SafeRide program. Contract K-2324-50 with the University of Oklahoma and Amendment 1 to Contract K-2223-164 with Via Transportation were approved by Council at their August 8, 2023 meeting. Website updates and the end user app both went live on August 16, 2023 and the microtransit service launched on August 21, 2023.

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• **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, even account for replacement vehicles that have been accepted so far, 21 out of 27 (8 of 13 in the fixed route fleet; 13 of 14 in the paratransit fleet) 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.
  - There are multiple ongoing purchases for replacement vehicles in progress, and once all of these ordered vehicles have been delivered we expect to have only 9 out of 27 (3 out of 13 in the fixed route fleet; 6 out of 14 in the paratransit fleet) of the revenue vehicles used in the City's transit fleet which have met their useful life and are eligible to be retired according to FTA requirements.
- The City is currently in the process of purchasing 5 paratransit vans and staff anticipates receiving these vehicles Sept/Oct 2023. Below is background on this purchase:
  - 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 from 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.)
- The City is currently in the process of purchasing 5 CNG 35' fixed route buses. Staff visited the manufacturing factory in Livermore, CA, during the week of July 17-21, for final inspections and approvals. As of Aug 4, 2023, all five vehicles have been delivered and the final rounds of inspections and testing are underway to ensure there are no warranty issues that need to be addressed before staff accept the buses and prepare to put them into service. So far one of the five CNG buses have been accepted and put into service. Below is background information on this purchase:
  - Utilizing transit 5339 funds allocated from FY21 (grant number OK-2020-026), 1 35' CNG bus will be purchased. These were funds allocated to the Norman urbanized area by formula. In addition, on June 14, 2022 the City Council approved a contract with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) accept Surface Transportation Block Grant – Urbanized Area (STBG-UZA) funding for the purchase of 2 35' low-floor CNG transit buses. An Authorization to Purchase for these 3 buses was approved by Council on August 23, 2022. A purchase order was issued on September 14, 2022 to the manufacturer.
  - Utilizing funds received from the FY22 FTA Low- or No-Emissions Vehicle Program, staff proposed to purchase 2 additional CNG 35' fixed route buses. Council approved a resolution accepting the grant and an authorization to purchase the buses on September 27, 2022. The purchase order for 2 buses was issued September 29, 2022.
- The City is currently in the process of purchasing 3 paratransit ADA compliant minivans for revenue service as well as 2 non-revenue support vehicles. The support vehicles arrived in early July and are already in service. Staff anticipates receiving the paratransit vehicles in Aug/Sept 2023. Below is background on this purchase:
  - Council provided funding in the budget sufficient to outright purchase a single large transit bus and a single paratransit vehicle. Because of effective use of grant funding and only using a small percentage of budgeted money as a local match against grant funds, staff proposed to use \$355,692.55 of the remaining funding (\$357,810) for the outright purchase of 3 additional ADA minivans for the paratransit fleet and replacement of two support vehicles which was approved by the City Manager on April 6, 2023.
  - The first of the two non-revenue support vehicles, a 2023 Ford Escape, was delivered on June 8-2023 and staff are completing the proper paperwork and inspections to bring it into active service and decommission the vehicle it will be replacing.

**Conclusion**

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

**Attached:** EMBARK Norman Performance Reports for June and July 2023