

CITY OF NORMAN, OK CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE

Municipal Building, Executive Conference Room, 201 West Gray, Norman, OK 73069

Tuesday, October 12, 2021 at 5:30 PM

AGENDA

It is the policy of the City of Norman that no person or groups of persons shall on the grounds of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, place of birth, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, marital status, including marriage to a person of the same sex, disability, retaliation, or genetic information, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination in employment activities or in all programs, services, or activities administered by the City, its recipients, sub-recipients, and contractors. In the event of any comments, complaints, modifications, accommodations, alternative formats, and auxiliary aids and services regarding accessibility or inclusion, please contact the ADA Technician at 405-366-5424, Relay Service: 711. To better serve you, five (5) business days' advance notice is preferred.

CALL TO ORDER

AGENDA ITEMS

1. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE CURRENT CITY OF NORMAN MASS TRANSIT SYSTEM AND ON-DEMAND MICROTRANSIT SERVICE PROGRAMS.

ADJOURNMENT



CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 10/12/2021

REQUESTER: Taylor Johnson, Transportation and Parking Program Manager

PRESENTER: Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works

ITEM TITLE: DISCUSSION REGARDING THE CURRENT CITY OF NORMAN MASS

TRANSIT SYSTEM AND ON-DEMAND MICROTRANSIT SERVICE

PROGRAM.

City of Norman Transit (Mass Transit and Microtransit)

Council Conference

October 12, 2021



Discussion Today

- Background and Major Milestones
- Existing City Service Overview
 - Fixed-Route
 - Paratransit
 - Budget
 - Transit / Public Safety Facility
 - Transit Transfer Center
- Regional Transportation Authority
- Go Norman Transit Plan
- Discussion of Microtransit/ On-Demand Services
- Discussion of wheretransity on Demana Service



Next Steps

Background and Major Milestones

- August 2018
 - City is notified by the University of Oklahoma (OU) regarding desire to transfer service.
- February 2019
 - Regional Transportation Authority of Central Oklahoma is officially formed.
- July 2019
 - Public transportation transitions from the OU to City of Norman.
 - Partnership with EMBARK.
 - Began operating fare free fixed-route and paratransit service.
- November 2019
 - Public Transit Sales Tax approved by over 70%.
- July 2020
 - Go Norman Transit Study commences.
- November 2020
 - Groundbreaking for Transit / Public Safety Maintenance Building.
- June 2021
 - Go Norman Transit Plan unanimously approved by Council at June 22, 2021 meeting.









EMBARK Norman Fixed-Route Service Overview

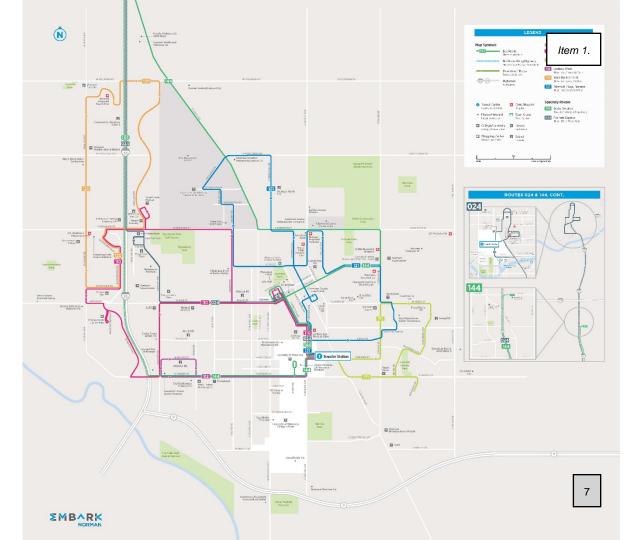
- Fare free.
- Operates on a fixed schedule.
 - Monday-Friday 7am-10pm
 - Saturday 10am-7pm
- Serves various destinations in Norman (map on next slide).
- 13 busses in fixed-route fleet.
- 189,664 passengers carried in FY21
 - Average Daily Weekday: 684
 - Average Saturday: 314





EMBARK Norman Fixed-Route Service Map

- 5 Local Routes
 - 110 Main St
 - 111 Linsey East
 - 112 Lindsey West
 - 120 West Norman Link
 - 121 Alameda/East Norman
- 2 Specialty Routes
 - 024 Norman/Sooner Express
 - Operated by EMBARK OKC.
 - 144 Social Security
 - Operates on Tuesday and Friday afternoons when the Moore Social Security Office is open.



EMBARK Norman Plus

Paratransit Service Overview

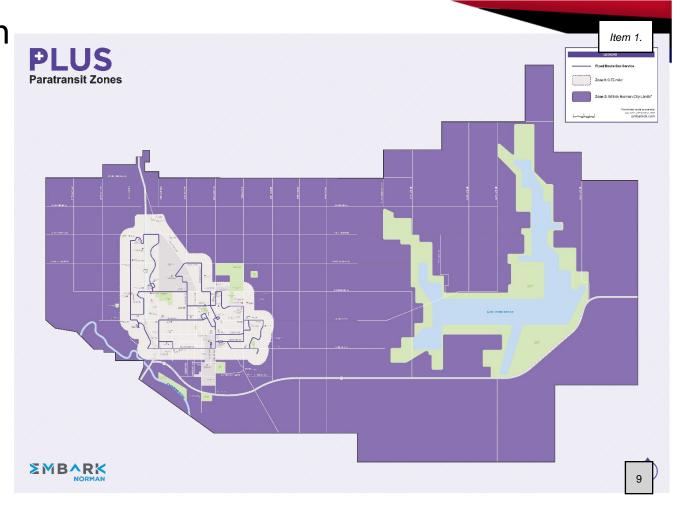
- Fare free.
- Hours of Operations:
 - Zone 1:
 - Monday-Friday 7am-10pm
 - Saturday 10am-7pm
 - Zone 2:
 - Monday-Friday 7am-7pm
- 15 busses in paratransit fleet.
- 16,338 passengers carried in FY21
 - Average Daily Weekday: 62
 - Average Daily Weekday Zone 1: 49
 - Average Daily Weekday Zone 2: 13
 - Average Daily Saturday (Zone 1 only): 13

- Required to provide for eligible individuals who are not functionally able to ride fixedroute bus service due to a disabling condition.
 - Must submit an application. Once approved,
 customers can schedule a trip 1-7 days in advance.
 - Current number of active customers: 563



EMBARK Norman Plus Paratransit Service Map

- Zone 1: Paratransit service required to be provided ¾ mile around fixed routes.
- Zone 2: ¾ mile to City of Norman limits.
 Service provided above what is required.



Existing Transit Operations, Maintenance, and Fleet Replacement Budget

- FY22 Expenses **\$7,108,252** (\$5,401,850 without fleet replacement)
 - EMBARK Interlocal Agreement \$3,585,856
 - Fleet Maintenance, Fueling, Cleaning, Staff \$1,568,992
 - Fleet Replacement \$1,706,402
 - Other Costs (Administrative Staff, Annual Fees/Memberships, etc.) \$247,002
- FY22 Revenues \$7,108,252 (\$5,487,357 without fleet replacement)
 - Annual FTA Section 5307 Urbanized Formula Allocation/Grant \$2,000,000
 - Public Transit Sales Tax \$2,550,000
 - FTA Section 5339c Fleet Replacement Grant \$639,969
 - OKDEQ Volkswagen Settlement Fleet Replacement Grant \$450,000
 - ODOT Public Transit Revolving Fund \$134,285
 - Norman Regional Hospital \$50,000
 - Bus Stop Advertising \$12,000
 - General Fund \$1,271,998



Item 1.

- New 20,000 square foot facility to house the transit operations and maintenance activities, as well as maintain heavy duty public safety equipment.
- Construction Cost \$7,584,743.41
- Revenues \$7,584,743.41
 - FTA CARES Act Grant \$5,057,371
 - Capital Fund \$1,657,372.41
 - PSST \$870,000
- Substantial Completion and Move-in –
 November 2021





Transit Transfer Center

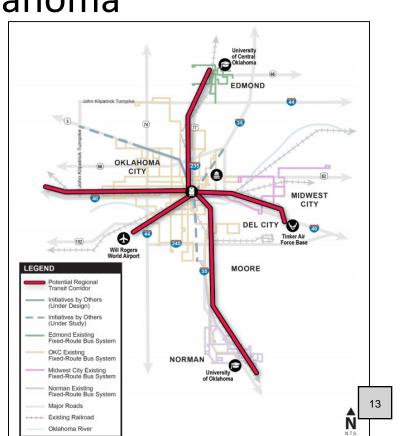
- Currently utilizing CART's Brooks Street Transfer Station.
- Working to establish a City bus Transit Center in the downtown area.
 - Supportive existing infrastructure (sidewalks, bike lanes/paths, access to street grid for routes).
 - Improve access to major destinations.
 - Continue momentum of creating a more vibrant downtown.
- Budget (Capital Fund) \$1,234,900
 - Land Acquisition \$442,500
 - Construction/Remodeling \$792,700





Regional Transportation Authority of Central Oklahoma

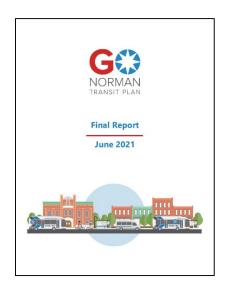
- Officially formed in February 2019.
- 6 Member Cities
 - Del City, Edmond, Midwest City, Moore,
 Oklahoma City, and Norman
- Transit System Plan approved in April 2021.
- Currently working on Alternative Analysis, which includes:
 - Corridor Planning
 - Stations and Land Use
 - Concept Development







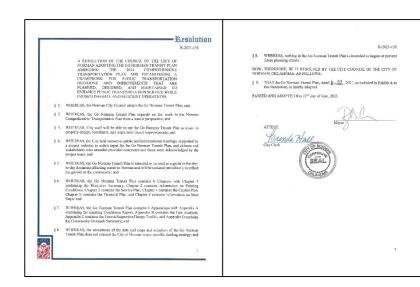
- RFQ process to select consultant:
 - Received 9 applications from qualified firms.
 - Selected Nelson\Nygaard Nationally known transit and transportation planning firm. In the past, N\N has worked with small urban communities, such as Norman, and with large urban ones, such as Oklahoma City (EMBARK OKC).
 - Contract in the amount not to exceed \$150,000.
- Study commenced in July 2020.
 - The Study was meant to create a plan to be used as roadmap for optimizing and expanding transit service with the City of Norman. The main objectives were:
 - Assessing the existing route network design.
 - Recommending the location and characteristics of a future transit center.
 - Developing a detailed plan to guide service improvements and capital investments.
 - Actively engage in the public and community stakeholders throughout the study.





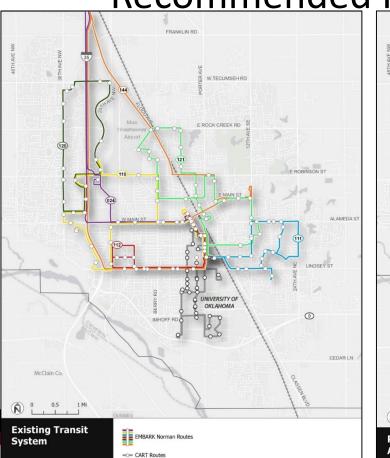


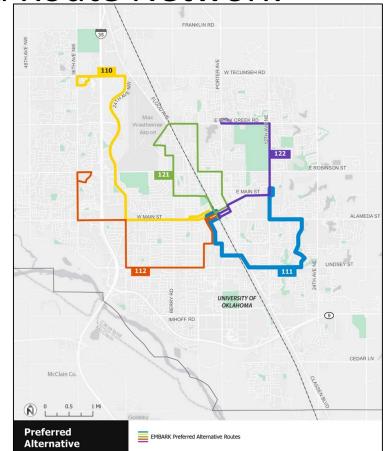
- Included numerous public engagement activities:
 - Online and on-board surveys, in-person and virtual community meetings, social media posts, utility bill inserts, project website, posters on busses.
 - Established stakeholder group to solicit feedback and share information.
- Final Report included operational and capital recommendations to the existing service and future expansion.
 - The Final Report also included an Existing Conditions
 Report, Fare Analysis, Transit Support Design Toolkit, and
 Outreach Summary.
- Plan adopted unanimously by Council at June 22, 2021 meeting.





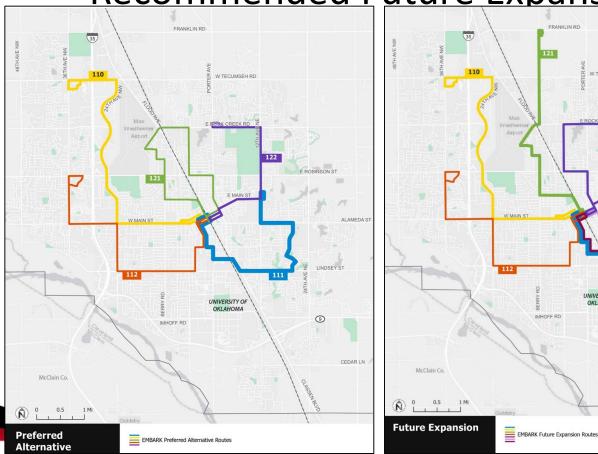
Recommended Route Network







Recommended Future Expansion



CEDAR LN

UNIVERSITY OF



Go Norman Transit Plan Summary of Recommendations

Item 1.



Update and streamline the route network

Realign bus routes to better serve the needs of existing and potential transit riders by improving access to key destinations and reducing travel time.



Upgrade and standardize the fleet

Replace aging vehicles and assemble a uniform fleet to minimize maintenance costs. Pursue Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grants for replacement buses.



Establish a Downtown Transit Center

Relocate the local route transfer hub from the OU campus to downtown Norman to maximize efficiency and allow for future service expansion.



Continue to operate fare-free

Avoid costly fare collection equipment on new buses. Allow riders to adjust to route changes and the local economy to recover from the pandemic before re-evaluating the fare policy.



Strategically expand bus service

Extend routes to serve emerging destinations, offer longer hours and more frequent service, and operate on Sundays.

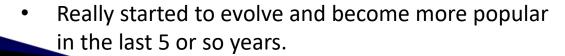


Promote transit supportive land use

Make transit easier to access and encourage more sustainable development. Maximize rider safety, comfort, and convenience.

Overview of On-demand or Microtransit Services

- On-demand or Microtransit service at its basic level is low-capacity, "flexible" public transit service.
 - Privately or publicly operated
 - Technology based
 - Vans or shuttle type vehicles
- Usually deployed to compliment traditional public transit to assist in these areas:
 - Low-Density Area Mobility
 - First-Last-Mile
 - Underperforming Bus Routes
 - Paratransit





Examples of

On-demand/Microtransit Services

- Service Options
 - On-demand Paratransit
 - Microtransit Zones
 - City Wide On-demand Service
- **Providers**
 - Via (Operations, Maintenance, and/or Technology)
 - Spare (Technology)
 - Moovit (Technology)
 - Routematch by Uber (Technology)
 - RideCo (Technology)



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City of Norman (EMBARK Norman)

- 2020 Population: 125,762
- 189 Square Miles
- FY21 Ridership (July 1, 2020 June 30, 2021): 206,002
 - FY20 Ridership: 282,923
 - FY19 Ridership: 333,274
 - City routes and paratransit ridership pulled from CART.
- Cost of Operations (FY22 Budget and Typical Fleet Replacement):
 - \$6,231,850
 - \$5,401,850 (Ops, Maintenance, Admin, etc.)
 - \$600,000 (1 CNG 35' Bus Replacement)
 - \$230,000 (2 Paratransit Vans Replacement)
- Fare: Free

Arlington (Via)

Item 1.

- 2020 Population: 398,864
- 99 Square Miles
- FY21 Ridership (October 1, 2020 September 25, 2021): 348,056
 - FY20 Ridership: 179,814
 - FY19 Ridership: 187,929
- Cost of Operations (FY21 Contract):
 - \$8,300,000
- Fare:
 - Trips from 0-1.5 miles: \$3.00
 - Trips from >1.5-3 miles: \$3.50
 - Trips from >3-4.5 miles: \$4.00
 - Trips from >4.5-6 miles: \$4.50
 - Trips over >6 miles: \$5.00
 - ViaPass \$25.00 weekly pass that allows up to 4 t per day.

Item 1.

Density Based Guidelines for Service



















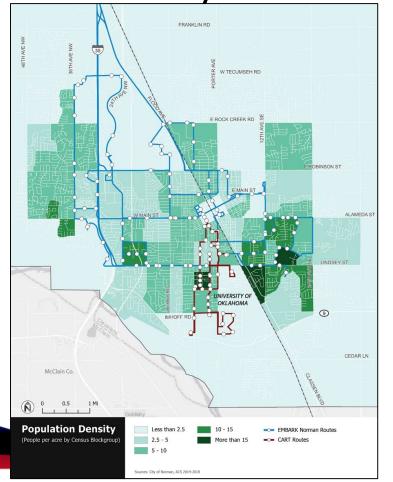


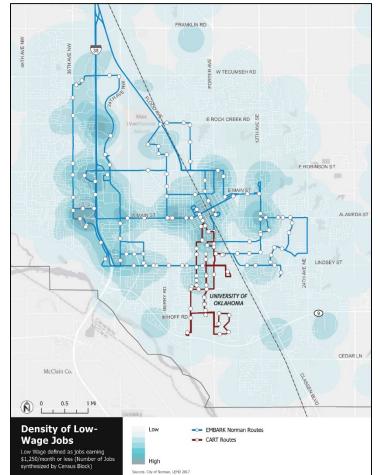




Item 1.

Density Based Guidelines for Service





On-demand/Microtransit Service Testimonials

- Ted Rieck, General Manager, Tulsa Transit: "It is a fallacy to think on-demand is more cost effective than fixed route. It depends on number of people using the service in a given time period. For example, on-demand works best if your volume is 2 or 3 rides per revenue hour or less. 5 to 8 rides per revenue hours begins to be more cost effective for fixed route or deviated fixed route. We're looking at converting services that are deviated fixed route and serve less than 2 or 3 riders per hour. Our vision is to focus on key fixed routes and use microtransit for first and last mile service."
- **Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART):** Is currently operating 17 microtransit zones. Branded GoLink, there will be an expansion to 30 zones in 2022 with some of the zones replacing fixed route services as recommended in their DARTzoom Plan.

On-demand/Microtransit Service Testimonials (continued)

- **Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA):** Began operating on-demand service on September 7, 2021 alongside the fixed route service to observe ridership trends. Originally planned to discontinue all non-university (UNT) routes on December 6, however, it will depend on the analysis of ridership and feedback.
- **Big 12 University City:** "No, _____ would not go 100% on demand. It's not cost effective. A fixed route bus in a high density area gets far more productivity than a 15-passenger vehicle. Our microtransit program is only suitable for areas where fixed routes cannot go (due to insufficient road infrastructure) or there is not enough density to sustain it (e.g. single family suburban neighborhoods vs. city apartment-rich ones)."

On-demand/Microtransit Service and the Go Norman Transit Plan

- Initially considered for northwest and/or southeast Norman.
- Decided not to pursue microtransit in the plan as it was showing to result in a large increase to the transit program budget.
- In the Go Norman Transit Plan planning horizon, approximately 10 years, it was identified that there are greater needs, particularly with frequency, in areas already served by fixed route service.
- Ridership per Service Hour Comparison.
 - Existing Fixed-Routes: 10-40 riders per service hour pre-pandemic, 6-17 riders per service hour in FY21 with limited capacity restrictions.
 - Existing Paratransit: 1.5 riders per service hour pre-pandemic and per service hour in FY21.
 - On-demand/microtransit: Typically 3-4 riders per service hour when used as a fixed route replacement.

EMBARK Norman Plus

- On-demand Service Pilot Program?
- Leverage our existing partnership with EMBARK.
- Upgrade our services that we receive from Routematch, the City's existing paratransit software provider.
- Increased, estimated, annual costs:
 - Operations, Maintenance, and Fuel (EMBARK and CON): \$571,830
 - Assumes level demand for service even with a switch to on-demand, however, demand for the service could increase. In addition, if service was to stay fare free and go to on demand, costs could double to \$1,143,660.
 - Assumes no trip will be longer than ten miles.
 - Fully loaded trip cost uses a standard cost per revenue hour (\$70) and assumes that two trips can be completed per hour.
 - Technology (Routematch): \$127,440 (first 2 years, \$43,360 ongoing)
- One-time capital costs:
 - 2-3 additional paratransit vehicles to handle the on-demand paratransit service: \$230,000--\$345,000



Next Steps

- Continue exploring and implementing the immediate/short-term Go Norman Transit Plan recommendations:
 - Design and build a Downtown Transit Center.
 - Create new bus stops to serve recommended route network.
 - Implement recommended route network.
- If Council directs, pursue implementing an on-demand paratransit pilot program:
 - Staff would recommend a mid-fiscal year 2023 start date of January 2023.
 - Need to create the pilot program and policies: zones of operation, fare or no fare, marketing, etc.
 - Finalize costs and submit a budget request to increase the transit program budget for fiscal year 2023:
 - Increased cost for EMBARK's annual operating contract for fiscal year 2023.
 - Increased cost for CON maintenance and fuel for fiscal year 2023.
 - Increase cost of technology services provided by Routematch in fiscal year 2023.
 - Procure additional 2-3 paratransit vehicles. (if funding could be realized in fiscal year 2022 that would be ideal due to delay in vehicle production)