



Legislation Text

File #: R-2021-130, **Version:** 1

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF RESOLUTION R-2021-130: A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN ADOPTING THE GO NORMAN TRANSIT PLAN; AMENDING THE 2014 COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN; AND ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION DECISIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS THAT ARE PLANNED, DESIGNED, AND MAINTAINED TO ENHANCE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICE WHILE PROMOTING SAFE AND EFFICIENT OPERATIONS.

BACKGROUND: City Council adopted the first Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) for the City of Norman on May 13, 2014. The CTP established a framework for transportation improvements that are planned, designed, and maintained to integrate vehicular, walking, bicycling, and transit use while promoting safe and efficient operations for all users in the community.

During the formation of the CTP, a Citizens Visioning Committee (CVC) Subcommittee titled “Transit Capacity and Quality of Service” was created to assist with providing a modest update to the 2008 Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART) Plan and ensure public transit’s incorporation into the CTP. Based on the subcommittee’s work, action items were created to assist transit staff and the community in prioritizing service enhancements when funding became available.

During the course of fiscal years ending 2019 and 2020, the City and key stakeholders began and completed a transition of the operations of the City transit services from the University of Oklahoma (OU) to the City.

During the first few months of operation of the City transit service, and during the education campaign for the Public Transit Sales Tax, staff heard from the community and Council about the need to update our long term vision for transit in Norman. Many of the assumptions for the basis of the 2008 CART Plan, and the subsequent plan that was incorporated into the CTP in 2014, were outdated and need to be rethought. For example, the current transit transfer station in Norman is located on campus, just east of the OU football stadium. The assumption that this would be the location well into the future is the basis for any route expansion identified in the 2008 CART Plan. Now that the transit system is City operated, there is a need to identify a new location within the community to locate the City transit transfer station. This will then help to inform any route changes, enhancements, or expansion in Norman’s future.

Using RFQ-1920-60, City staff solicited proposals to update the City’s Long Range Transit Plan. The following key objectives were proposed in RFQ-1920-60:

- Actively engage the public and major partners throughout the process.
- Assess the current hub/spoke system and looped routes for fixed route service.
- Provide recommendations on a new transfer station location/area and recommend route changes to accommodate the new location/area.
- Find innovative ways to serve underserved areas.

- Integrate an understanding of the connections between land-use and transit.
- Develop a detailed plan to guide service changes and capital investments.

RFQ-1920-60 also provided a broad outline of the subject areas to be addressed in the Long Range Transit Plan:

- Detailed evaluation of the existing system;
- Market analysis;
- Land use integration opportunities;
- Non-traditional service opportunities;
- Analysis of alternatives and implementation plan
 - Description of year by year service changes in phases, including siting of new transfer station, route changes, expansion, enhancements, etc.
 - Impacts on staff levels
 - Necessary capital needs, including capital outlay, vehicle replacement, bus stop amenities, maintenance/operation facility capacity needs, and transfer station capacity needs.
- Additional Financial Considerations
 - Fare Analysis
 - Fiscal impacts of moving towards an electric fleet.
 - Identify the magnitude and probability of alternative funding sources.
- Public Outreach

An evaluation committee made up of City staff, stakeholders, and community members scored and ranked the proposals received in response to RFQ-1920-60. At the conclusion of the evaluation process, Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates, Inc. (Nelson\Nygaard) were selected as the most qualified firm for the proposed project. Nelson\Nygaard has extensive experience working with municipalities, universities, public agencies, elected officials, and community stakeholders to envision, develop, and improve transit systems that support local community needs. Nelson\Nygaard partnered with Anglin PR, a local Disadvantaged Business Enterprise-certified marketing and engagement firm, as a sub-consultant assisting with public engagement.

DISCUSSION: Development of the Go Norman Transit Plan has been a 10-month process to evaluate the need for improved and expanded transit in our community. City staff and our consultant team from Nelson\Nygaard have spent numerous hours in biweekly project update meetings, public meetings and stakeholder meetings over this period. The meetings with the public and key stakeholders were mostly held in November 2020, February 2021, and June 2021. Work completed includes the creation of a project website, Existing Conditions Report, Transit Development Guide, Fare Analysis Report, and Final Plan. The Final Plan includes recommendations regarding transfer station location, route changes and expansion (immediate, short, and long-term), bus stop location changes, and capital replacement.

The Go Norman Transit Plan, if adopted, will serve as a guide for updates and improvements to the public transportation system in Norman in the immediate, near, and long term. With an adopted, current plan staff can better assist Council with proposing where improvements should be made when funding becomes available. In addition, an adopted, current plan will allow staff to be more

competitive in securing grant funding for future improvements.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of Resolution R-2021-130, adopting the Go Norman Transit Plan and including it as an amendment to the 2014 Comprehensive Transportation Plan and establishing a framework for public transportation decisions and improvements that are planned, designed, and maintained to enhance public transportation service while promoting safe and efficient operations