

CHAPTER 8

PUBLIC TRANSIT



SYSTEM SNAPSHOT

Public transportation, or transit, is an important component of Encompass 2040 and demand for more service continues to increase within the OCARTS area. For some, the use of public transit is a choice, but many citizens depend on it to get to work, school, medical appointments, shopping, social events, and recreational activities. Public transit in the OCARTS area has typically been planned and implemented at the local level. However, Central Oklahoma is currently working to establish a regional transit authority (RTA) to govern, identify dedicated funding, and eventually implement a regional transit system. Such a system, when funded and launched, will provide enhanced mobility, spur economic development, and improve quality of life in the region.

QUICK STATS:

- 40+ LOCAL FIXED ROUTES
- 2 EXPRESS BUS ROUTES
- 4.6 MILES OF NEW DOWNTOWN OKC MODERN STREETCAR
- SANTA FE STATION UPGRADES FOR INTERMODAL HUB
- \$1.3 BILLION FOR CURRENT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

OCARTS PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICES

FIXED ROUTE SERVICE

Fixed route bus service in the OCARTS area is operated by three providers. The Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority (COTPA) operates EMBARK in Oklahoma City (with some service provided to Midwest City), the University of Oklahoma Transit Services Division operates Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART) in the City of Norman, and McDonald Transit operates Citylink under contract with the City of Edmond.

EMBARK

In January 2013, the Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority (COTPA) initiated a Transit Service Analysis process. The goals of the Transit Service Analysis were to evaluate the existing Metro Transit bus system, improve the route network to increase ridership and productivity within the existing budget, and also identify future service improvements if additional resources become available. Based on an examination of market research data, existing travel patterns and ridership, and public outreach, a series of short-term and long-term route recommendations were developed to better serve Oklahoma City residents. The goals

of the study were to improve frequency on many routes, reduce transfer waiting times, reduce passenger travel time, and realign routes to better match demand.

In September 2013, it was announced that Metro Transit would change its name to EMBARK and the change was implemented on April 28, 2014. The rebranding of Metro Transit also included a new bus route system as suggested in the Nelson Nygaard Transit Service Analysis. At the time of the Encompass 2040 Plan adoption, EMBARK ran 23 local routes, an express route from Oklahoma City to Norman, the Downtown Discovery route in downtown Oklahoma City, and a free shuttle service at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center in Oklahoma City.

EMBARK service is concentrated in the service area of Oklahoma City and Midwest City, with express bus service to Norman. The Oklahoma City system has fixed routes that radiate from the Downtown Transit Center at Northwest 5th Street and Harvey Avenue. The Transit Center opened in July 2004 and is near many employment destinations due to its location within the Central Business District. Route 23—the Crosstown Route—travels Northeast & Northwest 23rd Street, facilitating the transfer of passengers from route to route without having to go to the Transit Center. Some routes have loops that intersect each other, allowing passengers to transfer from one quadrant to another without going through the Transit Center. Buses generally depart from the Transit Center in 15-minute intervals throughout the day.

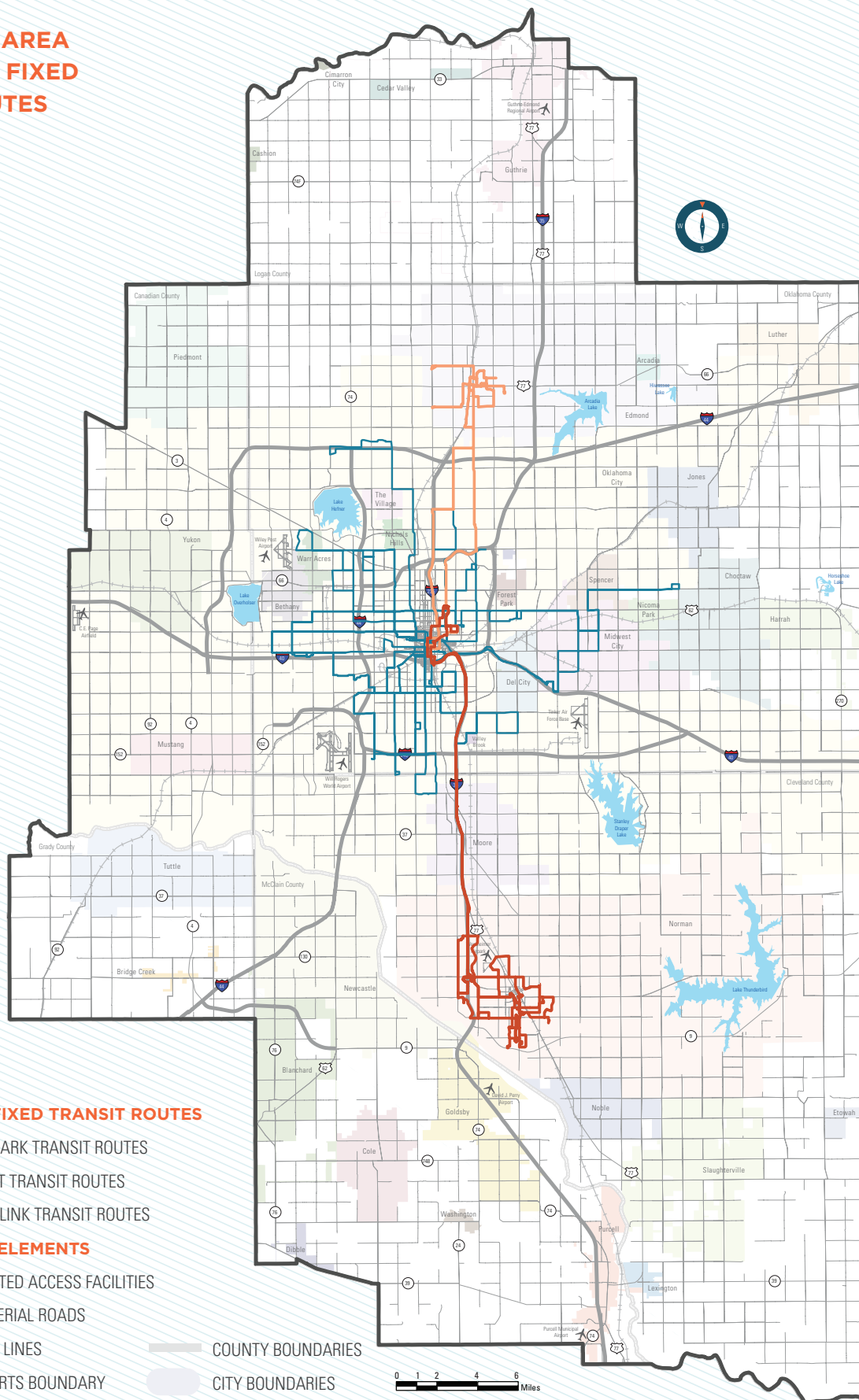
EMBARK buses operate weekdays from approximately 5:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and Saturdays from approximately 6:20 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. In January 2015, EMBARK also added night service until 12:00 a.m. on two highly traveled routes. Two more routes added night service in January 2016. Many portions of the region not served by the Oklahoma City system are not heavily populated areas. However, several suburban communities within the region's urban core do not receive bus service because local funding is not budgeted to help fund the service.

CLEVELAND AREA RAPID TRANSIT (CART)

CART operates thirteen bus routes in the City of Norman and on the University of Oklahoma (OU) campus. Service hours are weekdays, from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., and Saturdays, from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., except OU home football game days. CART provides a deviated route service, called Late-Night Flex, serving the campus area from 9:00 p.m. until 11:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. CART collaborates with COTPA to run the

FIGURE 8.1: OCARTS AREA TRANSIT FIXED BUS ROUTES

OCARTS AREA TRANSIT FIXED BUS ROUTES



express route from Norman to Oklahoma City, Monday through Friday. Also, CART provides service on Tuesdays and Fridays to the Social Security Office in Moore and a weekday lunch shuttle between the OU research campus and Campus Corner. CART operates year-round public transportation service in Norman, however, CART utilizes an Alternate Schedule during certain periods to be more efficient. These periods are mostly during OU summer and winter breaks, since some routes are primarily utilized by OU students.

CITYLINK

Citylink runs four local routes serving the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) campus and a large portion of the City of Edmond, as well as an express route to and from Oklahoma City. Citylink buses operate weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Saturdays from approximately 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. All Citylink routes are free.

The City of Edmond also has plans to construct a multimodal transit center north of 2nd Street between Broadway Avenue and the BNSF Railroad. The center is envisioned to serve as a bus transfer point with commuter parking, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, a pedestrian bridge across 2nd Street, and space and infrastructure to support future passenger rail service.

Figure 8.1 provides a general picture of the local and express fixed routes within the OCARTS area provided by COTPA, CART, and Citylink.

NON-FIXED ROUTE SERVICES

Non-fixed route service is public transportation service available to anyone that does not follow a specific path, route, or line on a map. Generally, it serves a specific area and passengers call ahead to schedule trips within the service area.

CART offers a late-night curb-to-curb service near and around the University of Oklahoma campus, Monday through Thursday during the fall and spring semesters. Curb-to-curb rides may be scheduled anywhere in the late-night service area. Requests are met on a first-come, first served basis and can be reserved no more than a week in advance. All vehicles on the route are lift-equipped for passengers with disabilities.

PARATRANSIT AND SPECIAL TRANSIT SERVICES

In addition to the fixed routes, COTPA, CART, and Citylink provide special services to meet the needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities in the Central Oklahoma area. These paratransit services and special transportation services include the following:

PARATRANSIT SERVICES

EMBARK Plus – Oklahoma City

EMBARK Plus provides public transportation for mobility-impaired persons in compliance with U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) regulations and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The USDOT regulations require that similar transit service (paratransit) be provided for persons with disabilities within at least three-quarters of a mile around all fixed transit routes. This is known as Zone 1. All ADA services areas outside of Zone 1 are known as Zone 2.

CARTaccess - Norman

CARTaccess is CART's origin-to-destination service for individuals who, because of disability, are unable to ride the fixed route buses. CARTaccess features lift-equipped vans and operates the same hours as the regular CART routes.

CAPS - Edmond (Citylink Access Paratransit Service)

Citylink Access Paratransit Service (CAPS) is a free curb-to-curb service that enables residents with disabilities to be picked up by Citylink and comfortably driven to appointments in a wheelchair accessible bus. CAPS is intended to provide services in accordance with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). The CAPS service operates Monday through Saturday. Service is available within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from a Citylink route, excluding the 100X Expresslink route.

SPECIAL SERVICES OFFERED THROUGH EMBARK

Congregate Meals

The Congregate Meal Transportation is a donation-based service for the Oklahoma County Senior Nutrition Project. Citizens age 60 and older, who live within the service area, are provided round trip van service to one of 15 local nutrition sites for a noon meal.

Discount Bus Pass Program

Bus fares and passes are half price for persons 60 and older or doctor certified as disabled.

TABLE 8.1: TRANSIT SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE OCARTS AREA

EMBARK	SCHEDULE	FARE	FY 2015 RIDERSHIP
FIXED ROUTES (local)	M-F: 5:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m. Sat: 6:20 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.	OKC: Regular \$1.75 Special \$0.75* Downtown Discovery: No fare	Avg. Systemwide Fixed Route Daily Ridership: M-F: 11,500 Sat - 4,215 (Including Express and Discovery Routes)
FIXED ROUTES (Sooner Express) (operated by COTPA)	M-F: 6:20 a.m. - 6:10 p.m.	Regular \$2.25 Special \$1.10*	Avg. Daily Ridership: 59
PARATRANSIT (EMBARK Plus)	M-F: 5:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m. Sat: 6:20 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.	OKC: Zone 1-\$3.00 Zone 2-\$6.00	Avg. Daily Ridership: M-F: 143 Sat - 33
CONGREGATE MEALS	M-F	Free - donations accepted	Avg. Daily Ridership: 125
DAILY LIVING CENTER	M-F	Free - donations accepted	Avg. Daily Ridership: 44
HELPLINE	24 hours per day – every day	Free - subsidized by City of Oklahoma City & COTPA	Avg. Daily Ridership: n/a
INTERIM	As needed	Free - subsidized by Areawide Aging Agency & COTPA	Avg. Daily Ridership: 1
RSVP	As needed	Free - donations accepted	Avg. Daily Ridership: 21
SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM	As needed	Free - donations accepted	Avg. Daily Ridership: 13
SHARE-A-FARE	24 hours per day - every day	\$6.00 for \$10.00 fare	Avg. Daily Ridership: 49
STEP	M-F	Free - donations accepted	Avg. Daily Ridership: 65
CART	SCHEDULE	FARE	FY 2015 RIDERSHIP
FIXED ROUTES (local)	M-F: 7:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. Sat: 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Regular \$0.75 Special \$0.35* OU students/faculty/staff free	Avg. Systemwide Fixed Route Daily Ridership (Including Express): M-F: 3,773
SOONER EXPRESS (Operated by CART)	M-F: 6:15 a.m. - 10:07 p.m.	Regular \$3.00 Special \$1.50*	Avg. Daily Ridership: 97
PARATRANSIT (CARTAccess)	M-F: 7:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. Sat: 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Zone 1-\$1.50 Zone 2-\$3.50 OU students/faculty/staff free in Zone 1 \$1.50 in Zone 2	Avg. Daily Ridership M-F: 116
CITYLINK	SCHEDULE	FARE	FY 2015 RIDERSHIP
FIXED ROUTES (local)	M-F: 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Sat: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Free	Avg. Systemwide Fixed Route Daily Ridership: 343 (Including Express)
FIXED ROUTES (Expresslink)	M-F: 6:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Free	Avg. Daily Ridership: 137
PARATRANSIT (CAPS—Citylink Access Paratransit Service)	M-F: 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Sat: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Free	Avg. Daily Ridership: 15

* Ages 60+, Disabled, Medicare/ADA Cardholders, or Children ages 6-17 years

Helpline

Helpline is a taxi service for emergency or medically related transportation for the homeless.

Interim

Interim is a one-time service coordinated through social service agencies to transport persons 60 and older for essential trips only. Participants must be unable to secure transportation from any other source.

Non-Emergency Medical Trip (NEMT)

Curb-to-curb trips for citizens 60 and older to doctor and other non-emergency medical appointments are provided in a service area including much of Oklahoma City, Midwest City, Del City, Moore, Bethany, Warr Acres, The Village, Nichols Hills, Spencer, Nicoma Park, and Forest Park.

RSVP

The Retired Senior Volunteer Provide-A-Ride program links senior volunteer drivers with low to moderate income seniors in need of transportation to medical appointments.

Senior Companion Program

The Senior Companion program matches able seniors with frail elderly persons. Seniors are trained volunteers, helping other seniors in preparing meals, providing companionship, assisting with housekeeping or supporting the need for other professional services. A van transports volunteers from their residences to the residences of the elderly.

Share-A-Fare

Share-A-Fare provides lower cost taxi fares for older adults and persons with disabilities. Participating communities and EMBARK pay 40 percent of the cost and the participant pays 60 percent.

STEP

The STEP (Supplemental Transportation for the Elderly and Disabled Persons) shopping shuttle provides van service to designated grocery stores for persons 60 and older who live in the service area.

Table 8.1 summarizes the schedules, fares and average ridership for the OCARTS area public transportation services described above.

SECTION 5310 ELDERLY AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES PROGRAM

In addition to the transportation services available to the elderly and persons with disabilities provided through the

public transportation providers, numerous organizations operate wheelchair accessible vans and buses under the Section 5310 program (authorized under 49 U.S.C. § 5310). This program allows private, non-profit organizations to purchase vehicles, with federal assistance, to transport elderly and disabled clients to meet their everyday needs, including transportation to work, medical appointments, shopping, and recreation. Oklahoma's Section 5310 program is administered by the Department of Human Services, Aging Services Division, within the State's Census-designated rural areas, Small Urban areas, and the Oklahoma City (Large) Urban Area.

SECTION 5311 RURAL TRANSIT SERVICE

In addition to the transit services operating in the urban part of the OCARTS area, First Capital Trolley in Guthrie and Delta Public Transit in McClain County provide transit service under the federal Section 5311 program, which assists non-urbanized areas (less than 50,000 population) in providing rural public transportation services. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation, Transit Services Division, administers the Section 5311 program (authorized under 49 U.S.C. § 5311), which includes around 20 rural transit providers statewide.

TAXI OPERATIONS

In the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, public transportation services are supplemented by several private taxicab operations. Although over a dozen taxi and shuttle services are located in the area, the primary operator is under the management of Yellow Cab Company.

AMTRAK PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE

Amtrak rail service in the OCARTS area consists of the Heartland Flyer service to Fort Worth, Texas. The train departs Oklahoma City's Santa Fe Station (Intermodal Hub), located on E. K. Gaylord, at 8:25 a.m. daily and arrives in Fort Worth at 12:39 p.m. It departs Fort Worth at 5:25 p.m. daily and arrives back in Oklahoma City at 9:39 p.m. The train also serves the Oklahoma communities of Norman, Purcell, Pauls Valley, and Ardmore, as well as Gainesville, Texas. Table 8.2 provides historical ridership and funding information for the Heartland Flyer.

The Heartland Flyer service corridor (Oklahoma City to Fort Worth), as well as the Oklahoma City to Tulsa corridor (no train service is currently provided) are both part of the federally-designated South Central High-Speed Rail Corridor. In January

TABLE 8.2: HEARTLAND FLYER STATISTICS

FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR	RIDERSHIP	OKLAHOMA FUNDING	TEXAS FUNDING
2000	65,529	n/a	n/a
2001	57,799	n/a	n/a
2002	52,584	n/a	n/a
2003	46,592	n/a	n/a
2004	54,223	n/a	n/a
2005	66,968	\$3.9 million	\$0
2006	64,078	\$3.9 million	\$0
2007	68,245	\$2.0 million	\$2.0 million
2008	80,892	\$2.0 million	\$2.0 million
2009	73,564	\$2.0 million	\$2.0 million
2010	81,749	\$2.0 million	\$2.0 million
2011	84,039	\$2.3 million	\$2.1 million
2012	87,873	\$2.3 million	\$2.2 million
2013	81,226	\$2.1 million	\$2.1 million
2014	77,861	\$3.0 million	\$3.0 million
2015	69,006	\$3.2 million	\$2.5 million
2016	66,105	\$3.3 million	\$2.5 million
2017	N/A	\$3.0 million	\$2.1 million

Note: In 1998, Oklahoma received a one-time grant of \$23 million from the 1997 Tax Payer Relief Act. Oklahoma utilized these federal monies for initial BNSF track improvements and four years of Heartland Flyer direct cost of operation. From 2003 to 2006, all State of Oklahoma funds paid for the Heartland Flyer, and starting with the FFY 2007 contract Oklahoma and Texas have shared the cost of the Flyer.

2009, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) awarded \$11 million in high-speed and intercity passenger rail funding to Texas, which included \$4 million for adjusting signal timing over 63 miles of Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) track. The project was expected to reduce travel time on the Texas leg of the Heartland Flyer by over 15 minutes by increasing travel speeds from 49 mph to 79 mph.

In March 2010, Amtrak completed a feasibility study for the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) on the costs and logistics of a potential expansion of passenger rail service in Kansas. Out of four possible scenarios, two involved extension of Heartland Flyer service to either Newton or Kansas City. The

next step was the selection of one of the four alternatives and incorporation of the feasibility study data into a Service Development Plan, a comprehensive business and operations plan for implementing expanded passenger rail service in Kansas. KDOT was awarded a \$250,000 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act federal grant to create the Service Development Plan. The federal funds provide only a 50 percent share and must be matched by another \$250,000. KDOT and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) are sharing the cost of the match requirement. At the time of adoption of the 2040 plan, the alternatives mentioned have not been implemented due to the lack of funding availability. In addition to these chosen alternatives, part of the route used by the Heartland Flyer is designated by the USDOT as the South Central High Speed Rail Corridor and is slated to be upgraded to high-speed rail service should funding ever become available. The corridor extends from San Antonio, Texas, to Tulsa through Fort Worth and Oklahoma City. Another branch of this corridor extends from Fort Worth through Dallas to Little Rock, Arkansas.

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PLANNING FOR REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

FIXED GUIDEWAY STUDY

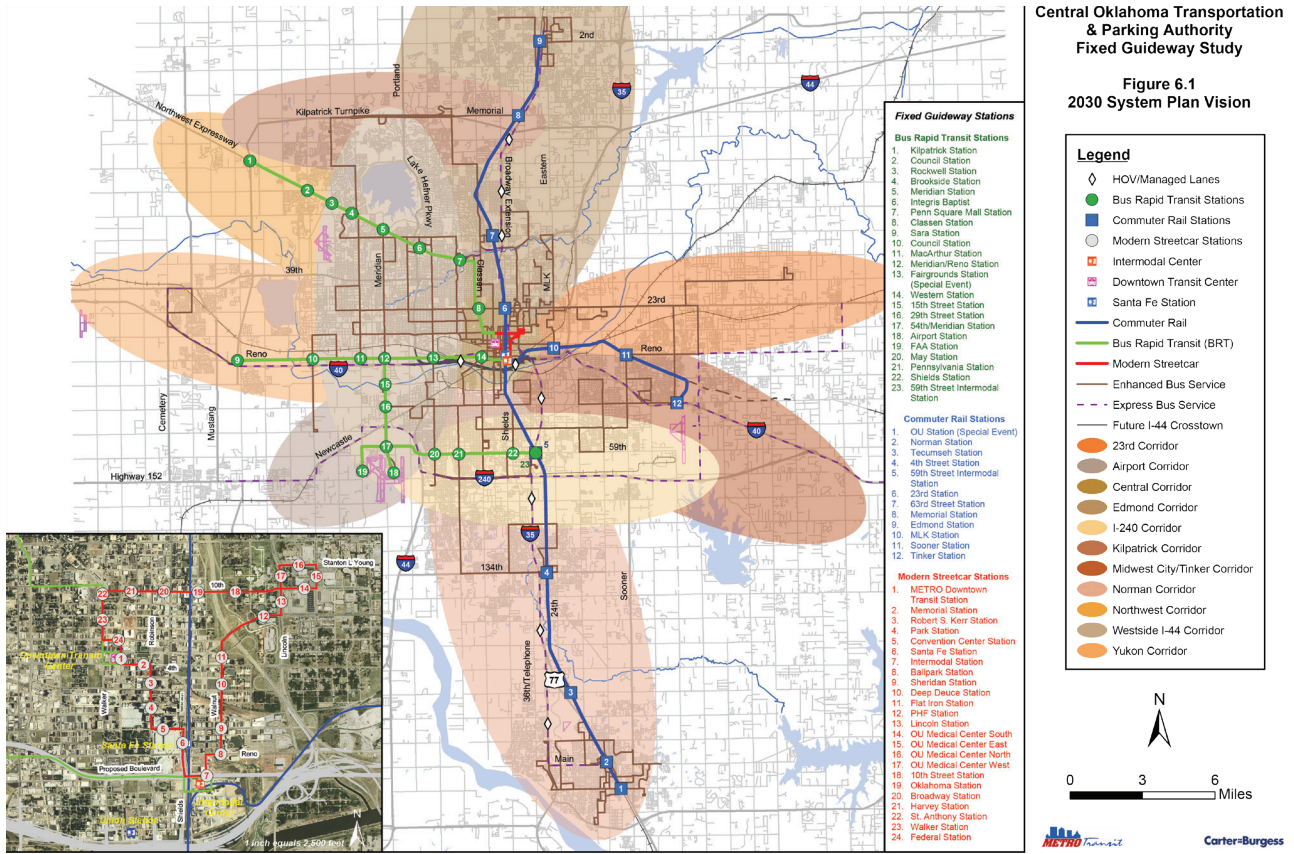
The Regional Fixed Guideway Study (FGS), prepared for COTPA by Jacobs Engineering (formerly Carter-Burgess), was completed in December 2005, and formally received by the COTPA Board of Trustees, the City of Oklahoma City Council, and the ACOG Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee in 2006.

The study resulted in the creation of the 2030 System Plan for Central Oklahoma and recommended the following regional public transportation vision:

- Commuter rail between Edmond and downtown Oklahoma City
- Commuter rail between Norman and downtown Oklahoma City
- Commuter rail between Midwest City/Tinker Air Force Base and downtown Oklahoma City
- Bus rapid transit (BRT) along portions of Reno Avenue, Northwest Expressway, SW 59th Street, and Meridian Avenue
- Modern streetcar in downtown Oklahoma City
- Enhanced bus service to support the recommended future rail and BRT lines with a larger service area and more frequent service
- Downtown intermodal transit station where the commuter rail, streetcar, BRT, local and interstate bus service, and other transportation modes would connect.

The FGS final report can be accessed on the ACOG website at acogok.org.

FIGURE 8.2: REGIONAL FIXED GUIDEWAY STUDY 2030 SYSTEM PLAN MAP



On December 8, 2009, Central Oklahoma took a step toward its regional vision when Oklahoma City voters approved MAPS 3, a one-cent sales tax that began April 1, 2010, and will expire December 31, 2017. The package of projects included \$120 million toward funding the downtown streetcar and \$10 million toward other transit infrastructure, such as an intermodal transit hub or commuter rail improvements, as recommended by the Fixed Guideway Study. Separate studies for these efforts are described in subsequent sections of this chapter.

The recommendations of the Regional Fixed Guideway Study 2030 System Plan are presented in Figure 8.2.

REGIONAL TRANSIT DIALOGUE

Since completion of the Fixed Guideway Study, communities in Central Oklahoma have become energized about public transportation. Thus, ACOG, in cooperation with local partners, initiated a visioning process to determine the desire for expanded and enhanced regional public transportation. This “Regional Transit Dialogue” (RTD) engaged locally elected officials, policy stakeholders, private sector leaders, and the general public to articulate how transit can serve the OCARTS area in the years and decades to come. Specifically, the process was designed to address several key themes including:

- Development of a seamless regional transit system
- Exploration of dedicated funding sources and strategies
- Provision for more effective coordination and integration of regional transit services
- Improved integration between transit and land use

The RTD process was managed by a steering committee and four subcommittees. A planning team was established to handle the initial logistics of the dialogue and to staff the committees. The initial phase of the RTD began in April 2009 and concluded in July 2010. Additional information about the RTD and the reports produced by the RTD subcommittees can be found on the ACOG website.

A second phase of the RTD began in October 2012 to further evaluate and refine the initial RTD recommendations. Under the RTD umbrella, the Steering Committee commissioned and led the Intermodal Transportation Hub Study, the Central Oklahoma Commuter Corridors Study (CentralOK!go), and the establishment of a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) Task Force to continue exploration of the administrative, financial and legal foundation required to establish a regional transit authority. These efforts are discussed in the sections below.

The RTD Steering Committee was also instrumental in the approval of HB 2480 in May 2014, which updated current State legislation related to the creation of regional transportation districts by multiple jurisdictions.

REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY TASK FORCE

Central Oklahoma is working to establish a regional transit authority (RTA) under the guidance of ACOG's Regional Transit Dialogue (RTD) Steering Committee and RTA Task Force to pursue the planning and funding necessary to implement such a system. Regional transit requires dedicated funding from a combination of sources beyond revenues currently available to the OCARTS area.

In late 2015, leaders from six Central Oklahoma municipalities decided that for the Regional Transit Dialogue to move forward, a formal agreement should be established to promote and establish a Regional Transit Authority. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in December 2015 by the mayors of Oklahoma City, Norman, Edmond, Moore, Midwest City, and Del City establishing a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) Task Force with the purpose of developing a formal Regional Transit Authority in Central Oklahoma. Participants in the Task Force also include directors from the three transit providers in the region: Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority (COTPA), Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART) and Citylink.

The MOU established several short and long-term goals to be achieved by the Task Force:

Short-Term:

- Continue efforts to analyze potential dedicated funding sources for public transportation
- Provide legal, financial, marketing and political support for a referendum and/or vote of the people for dedicated funding source(s)
- Coordinate with existing transit providers

Long-Term:

- Establish policies and procedures required for operation of an RTA
- Continue planning and development for the public transportation system in Central Oklahoma
- Coordinate with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) and federal governing agencies
- Coordinate and implement the regional public transportation system

At the time of Plan adoption, the RTA Task Force continues to hold monthly meetings to contribute to the progress and success of the future Regional Transit Authority. The Task Force is preparing to distribute a potential user survey and poll to get more information as to how to proceed with the RTA in terms of implementation and economic feasibility.

GREATER DOWNTOWN ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS (AA)

A major recommendation of the Fixed Guideway Study was to conduct an Alternatives Analysis (AA) for the greater downtown area of Oklahoma City. An AA identifies the best transportation technology and route, and is a required step for receiving federal capital funds for fixed guideway transit improvements.

COTPA conducted an Alternatives Analysis for the downtown area, using an experienced consultant team led by Jacobs Engineering. An AA Steering Committee, comprised of local citizens, led the study with input from the transit consultants, city planners, and engineers. The study considered capital and operating costs, ridership forecasts, technical feasibility, and citizen input. The AA began in early 2008 and resulted in the selection of a modern streetcar as the locally preferred mode, as well as the route, in July 2011 by the COTPA Board of Trustees and Oklahoma City Council.

The route was subsequently re-examined and updated in 2016 and a loop going through the Bricktown area of downtown Oklahoma City was added. Figure 8.3 shows the final streetcar route adopted by the Oklahoma City Council in 2016. Streetcar construction began in early 2017 and is expected to be completed in December 2018. A storage and maintenance facility for the streetcar operation will be located at South West 7th and Hudson Avenue, and will also open in 2018. There will be a total of seven streetcars running on the system and will be operated by Herzog Transit Services. Each streetcar will hold approximately 100 people.

While a modern streetcar will provide improved mobility in the Oklahoma City downtown, Bricktown, and midtown areas, the system is viewed as an integral piece of a larger regional public transportation system. Future connections via commuter rail, bus rapid transit, and enhanced bus are needed to connect the downtown core and communities across the region over the coming decades.

FIGURE 8.3: DOWNTOWN OKLAHOMA CITY STREETCAR ROUTE MAP



INTERMODAL HUB STUDY

Passenger rail transportation is viewed as a critical component of the region's future transportation system. Toward that end, the region has determined the location of an intermodal hub to accommodate connections among all transportation modes, both current and planned. The hub will provide vital connections among Central Oklahoma's Amtrak service, the downtown Oklahoma City streetcar, city bus connections, and any future commuter rail, Greyhound bus service, and high speed rail serving the South Central High-Speed Rail Corridor.

In partnership with the Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority (COTPA), the City of Oklahoma City, and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT), ACOG led the Intermodal Transportation Hub Study, which was prepared by Jacobs Engineering and completed in June 2011. The year-long study involved a two-tier evaluation process that began with ten initial sites along the major rail lines within downtown Oklahoma City and culminated with selection of the Santa Fe Station on E.K. Gaylord Boulevard in downtown Oklahoma City. The Santa Fe Station currently houses Oklahoma City's Amtrak Heartland Flyer service, and through the hub study, it was determined that the adjacent rail yard is sufficient to support the future commuter rail services recommended by the Regional Fixed Guideway Study (FGS). In addition, current right-of-way exists to construct a third platform if future passenger rail demand were to grow beyond that identified in the FGS 2030 System Plan.

The results of the hub study are presented in the Intermodal Transportation Hub Master Plan which is available on ACOG's website. While the study area considered in the hub plan was concentrated in downtown Oklahoma City, the conclusions of the Hub Master Plan have far reaching implications for improving regional travel between the central city and the communities of Edmond, Norman, Midwest City, and others. The Master Plan includes the operational analysis of the rail yard, building and parking needs, conceptual site and building layouts, proposed phasing and construction strategies, and phased estimated capital and operating costs.

Following the hub study, the City of Oklahoma City acquired the Santa Fe Station from private ownership using a TIGER Grant, local funds and STBG-UZA funding. It is the goal of the city to have this station become a regional transportation hub that combines transit access for regional rail, streetcar, bike-share and many other modes of transportation. The

Oklahoma City Streetcar will stop across the street from the Santa Fe Station. Phase 1 and 2 of the improvements to the station are completed. Eventually the four phases of the project will include a new plaza and a tunnel leading to a terrace overlooking Bricktown.

COMMUTER CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVES ANALYSES

In addition to the Greater Downtown Area Alternatives Analysis (AA) and Intermodal Hub Study, the 2005 Regional Fixed Guideway Study also recommended that alternatives analyses be conducted for all corridors in the study. This sentiment was seconded by the Regional Transit Dialogue Steering Committee. The FGS 2030 System Plan identified the corridors between Edmond and downtown Oklahoma City, Norman and downtown Oklahoma City, and Midwest City/Tinker Air Force Base and downtown Oklahoma City as potential candidates for commuter rail.

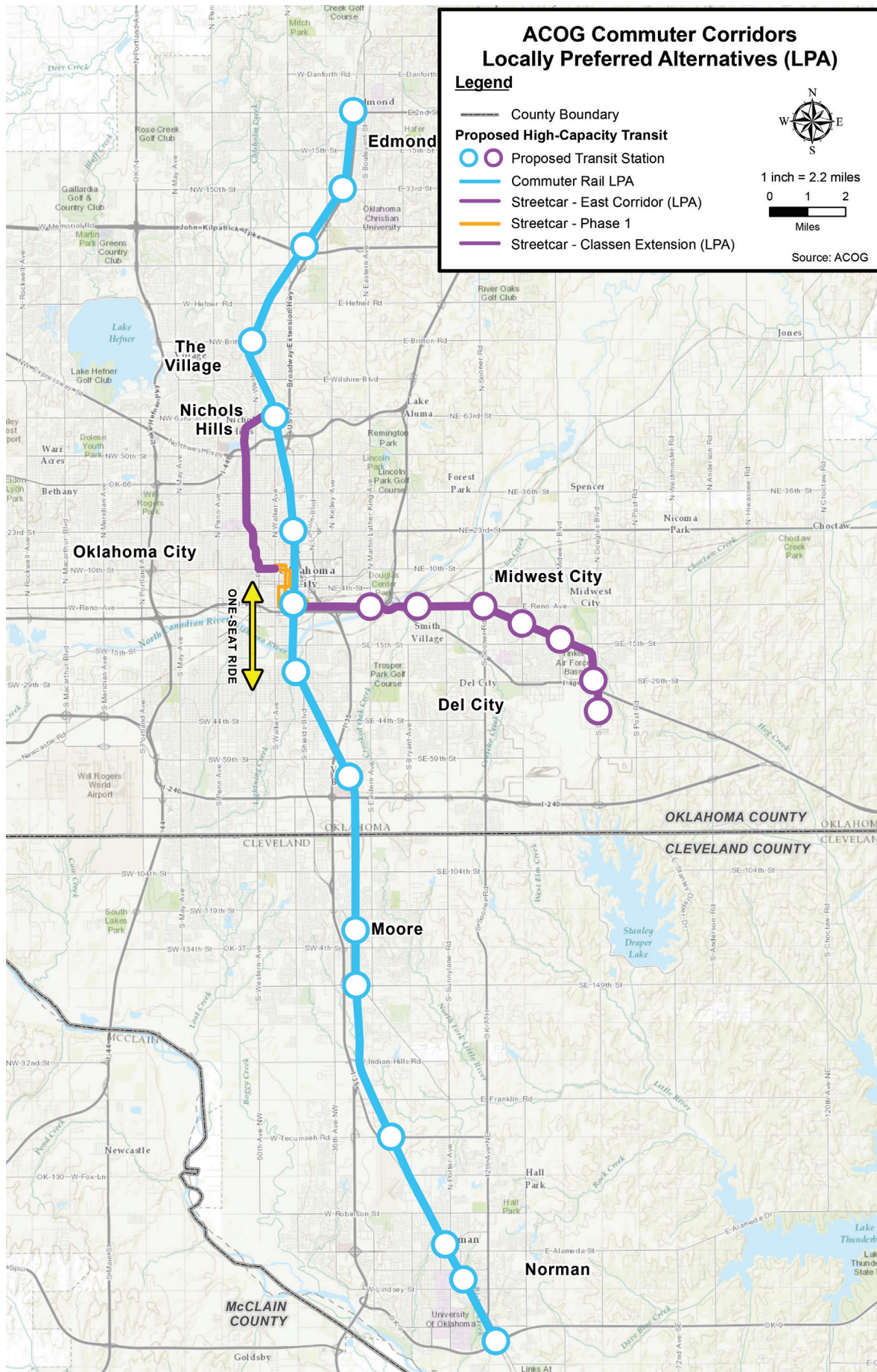
In light of these recommendations, ACOG allocated a portion of its federal formula funding for a detailed study of these three corridors, and the six communities adjacent to the corridors provided local matching funds to support the study.

From January 2013 through July 2014, ACOG led the Central Oklahoma Commuter Corridors Study (CCS), titled CentralOK!go, with the assistance of a consultant team led by URS Corporation (now known as AECOM). The CCS was an analysis of travel options for three major commuter corridors within the Central Oklahoma region. The RTD Steering Committee served as the steering committee for CentralOK!go and was assisted by local workgroups in the evaluation and ranking of route and mode options within each study corridor.

The Commuter Corridor Study considered various routes and modes of public transportation, and focused on three regional corridors that all converged in downtown Oklahoma City at the newly renovated Santa Fe Station Intermodal Hub. The locally preferred alternatives (LPA) resulting from CentralOK!go serves as a start for a regional high-capacity transit system in Central Oklahoma.

The CentralOK!go Final Report and Appendices are available for review on the ACOG website. Figure 8.4 shows the Locally Preferred Alternatives (LPA) for the regional transit system that were recommended by the Commuter Corridors Study, and approved by the Regional Transit Dialogue Steering Committee in July 2014 and the ACOG Board of Directors in October 2014. Following the selection of an LPA for a regional transit system,

FIGURE 8.4: COMMUTER CORRIDORS STUDY LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES (LPA)



there are several detailed steps that have to be taken before the system can actually be built. There is required Federal Transit Administration (FTA) oversight, preliminary engineering, submittal of plans to FTA for approval and more before a region can create a new transit project. The steps are shown in Figure 8.5.

ILLUSTRATIVE TRANSIT PROJECTS

During the development of Encompass 2040, the MPO modeled an illustrative transportation network inclusive of regional transit—commuter rail, bus rapid transit and enhanced bus—as recommended by the 2005 Fixed Guideway Study and the 2014 Central Oklahoma Commuter Corridors Study. A map of the Illustrative Transit Projects is shown in Figure 8.6.

Components of the desired OCARTS regional transit system include:

- 44 miles of Commuter Rail Transit (CR)
- 40 miles of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
- Enhanced bus service with connection to rail and BRT stations
- 5-6 mile downtown OKC Modern Streetcar* (with potential for extensions)
- Intermodal Transportation Hub* serving CR, BRT, streetcar, bus and other modes

*The initial phase of downtown modern streetcar will soon be under construction and is scheduled to open in 2018. In FY 2018, the first two phases of the Santa Fe Station Intermodal Hub project were completed.

PUBLIC TRANSIT NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

Several tools and techniques have been used in order to define transit passenger needs and preferences in Central Oklahoma. In January 2015, ACOG circulated a transportation survey and received 470 responses. In mid-2016, several open house and public availability sessions were held to receive public input.

OCARTS area citizens have indicated a desire for more, in the way of quality and quantity of, public transportation options. Walkable urban neighborhoods, expanded bus service, more multi-modal options, and a greater mix of commercial and residential areas are among the suggestions for improving the current system.

Connecting to available transit services is a problem for some Central Oklahoma residents. Lack of continuous sidewalks, absence of bicycle trails, and/or the scarcity of bus shelters

FIGURE 8.5: FTA MAJOR CAPITAL NEW STARTS PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

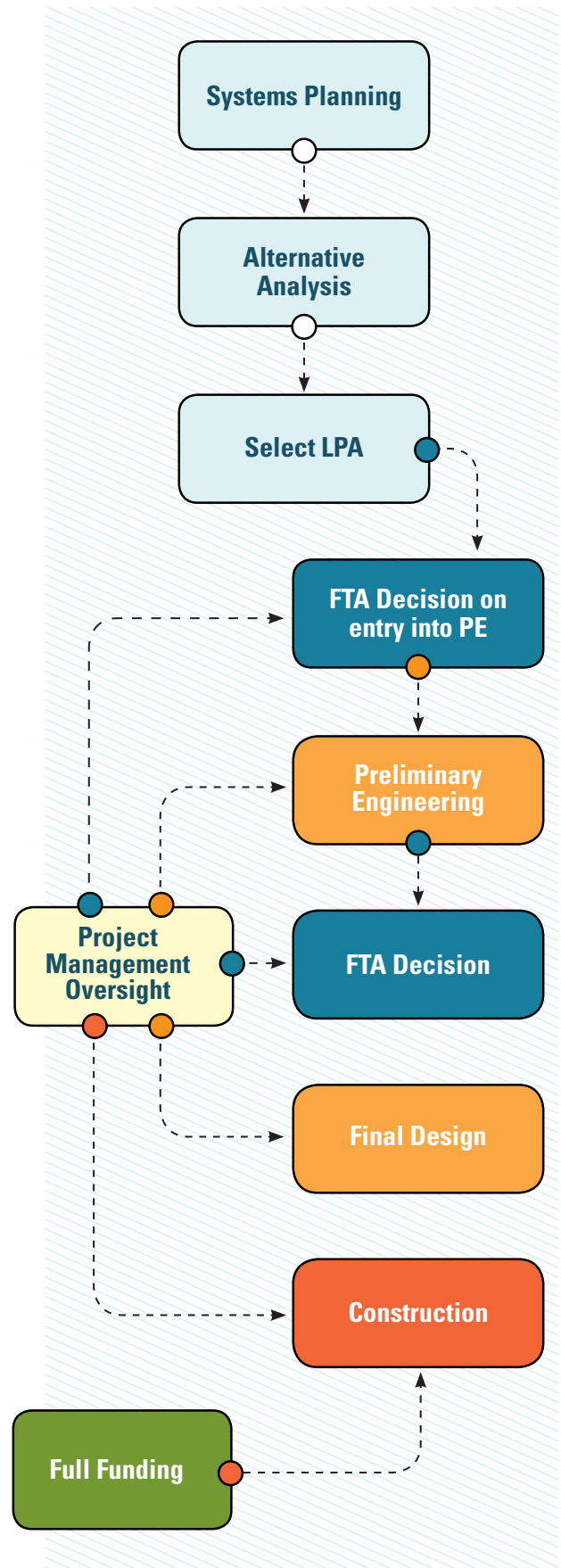


FIGURE 8.6: ENCOMPASS 2040 ILLUSTRATIVE TRANSIT PROJECTS

ILLUSTRATIVE TRANSIT PROJECTS

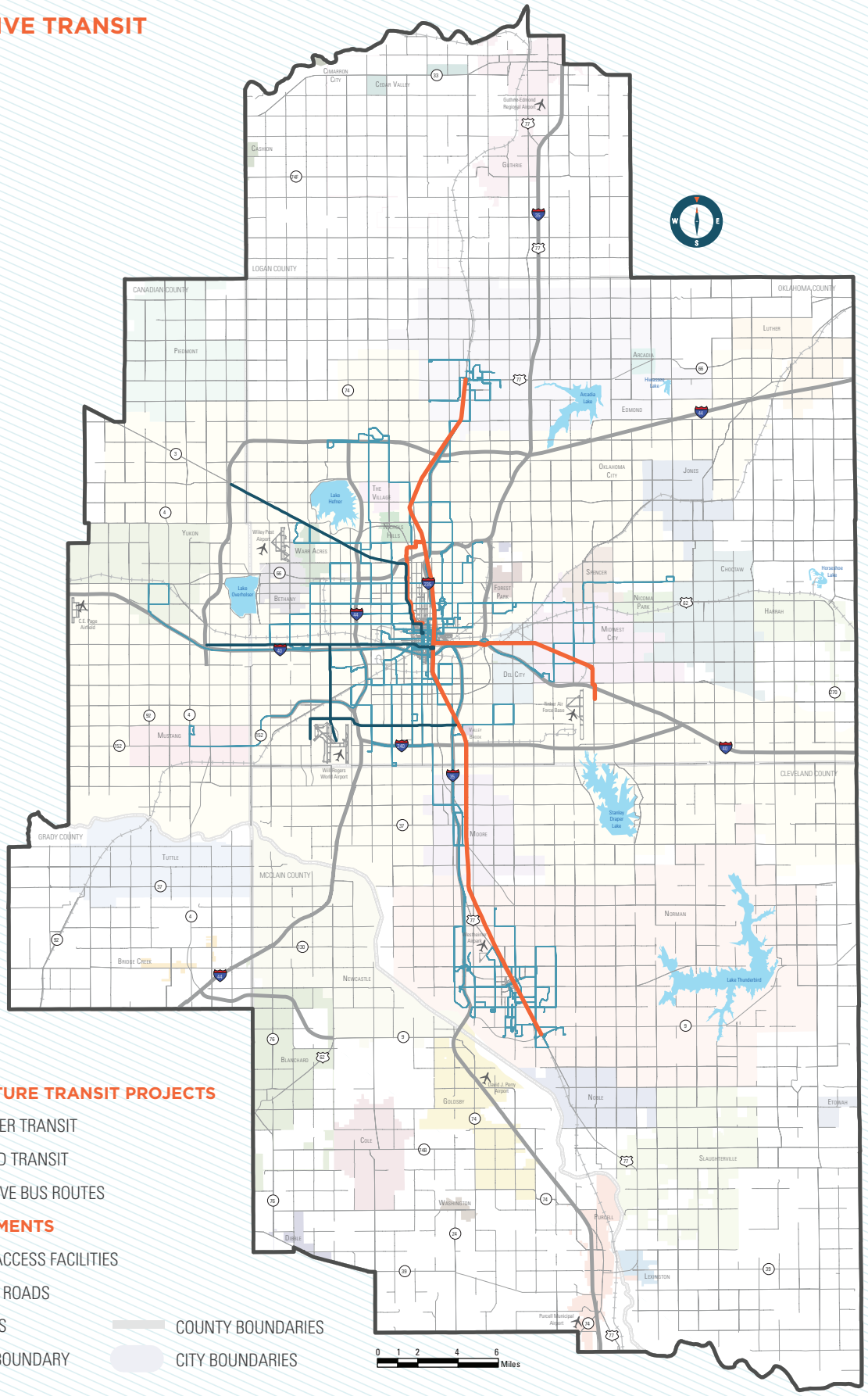
LEGEND

PROPOSED FUTURE TRANSIT PROJECTS

- COMMUTER TRANSIT
- BUS RAPID TRANSIT
- SUPPORTIVE BUS ROUTES

BASE MAP ELEMENTS

- LIMITED ACCESS FACILITIES
- ARTERIAL ROADS
- RAIL LINES
- COUNTY BOUNDARIES
- OCARTS BOUNDARY
- CITY BOUNDARIES



to protect riders from the weather pose problems for some potential bus riders. The City of Oklahoma City has greatly improved bicycle and pedestrian connections throughout their area, but the region as a whole still has a great deal of work to do to increase transit accessibility.

Safety and security are priorities for area public transit users and patrons of buses and Amtrak. Survey respondents indicated that they would be more inclined to use public transit if they were assured of safe buses, well-lit transit shelters, security at the Amtrak terminal, and reasonable cautionary arrangements at park-and-ride lots.

The biggest challenge to attaining the type of public transportation desired by area citizens is the lack of funding. Current funding levels are barely adequate to maintain the current level of service, much less grow it into the type of regional multimodal transportation system described in the previous sections. Central Oklahoma is one of only a few metropolitan areas which have no local funding source specifically dedicated to transit.