



EMBARK NOMINATION FOR

2016 APTA Outstanding Public Transportation System

PROVIDING 4 MILLION OR FEWER ANNUAL PASSENGER TRIPS

The Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority (dba EMBARK) has been Central Oklahoma's public transit provider for 50 years.

The City Council of Oklahoma City established the Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority (COTPA) in 1966 with only 18 buses.

Today, EMBARK provides a diverse family of multi-modal transit services to the greater Oklahoma City area. Services include Fixed-Route bus service (23 routes), ADA paratransit service, Ferry River Transit service and Spokies Bike Share service.

We are proud that our transit options connect people with their community, while easing traffic congestion, promoting health, walkability and reducing air pollution.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2001, the COTPA Board of Trustees developed a Long-Range

transportation plan to address service issues and look at the future transit needs of the state's capital city and its surrounding areas. That plan gave birth to Central Oklahoma's first Fixed Guideway Study and today's Fixed Guideway Plan.

From this plan, a vote was presented to the residents of Oklahoma City to self-fund a Modern Streetcar in Downtown Oklahoma City. On the heels of construction launch, more than \$120 million of local funds have been collected to build a nearly 5-mile two route modern streetcar system. Once operational in 2018, the OKC streetcar will represent the nation's largest modern streetcar initial system launch to-date.

Described as a "down-payment on a regional transit network," the OKC streetcar has excitedly spurred commitment from six neighboring cities to develop a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) task force. EMBARK, along with the task force, is laying the ground work

for the development of an RTA and a dedicated regional funding initiative.

SAFETY

Safety is the cornerstone of EMBARK's operations internally and externally. EMBARK continually strives to improve the agency's overall safety culture. Key to our success is data collection and analysis. Staff tracks every accident, or incident, through operator and supervisor reports, video collection and storage — all of which, are reported monthly in a database. The database is then used to spot trends and assess the safety and security vulnerabilities of the organization.

EMBARK has made great efforts to improve the quality of service and increase employee and customer safety through recurrent employee training. This past year, operators received training on items such as: system security, workplace violence, emergency action procedures and defensive driving. Daily safety messages are announced throughout

Spotlight Initiative

In 2013, EMBARK upgraded all bus CCTV cameras. The upgrade resulted in three additional camera views per bus, improved high definition cameras, increased retention of video by an additional week and improved efficiency by going wireless, thus no longer requiring employees to manually pull hard drives to view video. Additionally, staff now has access to telemetry data such as a GPS location, speed, turn signal usage, emergency and brake lights, as well as G-sensor that measures any significant movement of the bus. The upgrade also features a silent alarm that notifies the dispatcher of an impending emergency and flags video of the event for automatic download.

Other Recent Initiatives

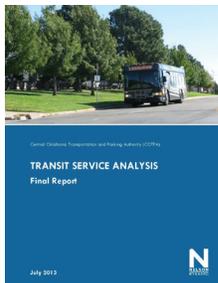
- Upgraded Intrusion Alarm System at all Facilities
- Installed Access Control on 80% of EMBARK Facilities
- Hi-Def CCTV Interior and Exterior System
- Emergency Response Training
- Implementation and Enforcement of Rider Conduct and Exclusion Policy
- TSA Tabletop Exercise

shifts and have been incorporated to provide operators with a daily reminder of operational safety hazards they encounter in the workplace. As a result, EMBARK has experienced a decrease in the number of recordable on-the-job injuries, thus decreasing the OSHA injury illness rate over the past eight years.

OPERATIONS

In 2012, EMBARK and the OKC City Council hired Nelson/Nygaard – an award winning transportation planning firm – to conduct, review and evaluate the operating efficiency of the bus system and make recommendations for improving the system without any additional resources.

Armed with the results of the study, a new Transit Service Improvement Strategy (TSIS) was approved in FY14 for providing transit services in the greater Oklahoma City area. Plans to realign nearly all bus routes, improve weekday frequency and re-



brand its family of services were implemented in late April 2014. Oklahoma City transit customers welcomed EMBARK with open arms. Customers were greeted by a new, high-profile customer information signage system. More than 2,000 bus stop signs and poles were removed and replaced. Coupled with these

improvements, the introduction of real-time travel information, clock-face headways for faster transfer times and 30-minute frequency on nearly every weekday route, ridership began to climb immediately.

ROUTE FREQUENCY

Prior to the TSIS we had varied frequencies – some up to 75 and 90 minutes and different frequencies for the same bus route depending on the time of day. In FY13 the average frequency of the system during the midday was 53 minutes, improving to 43 minutes during peak times. With implementation of TSIS, the average weekday frequency improved to 37.5 minutes in FY14 and even better in FY15 with just under 37 minutes and most weekday routes having 30 minute frequencies or less.

SERVICE HOURS

One of the ways EMBARK measures the efficiency of its services is by the number of riders per service hour (RPSH). RPSH allows us to compare performance year-to-year especially when service hours change.

For the last five fiscal years, EMBARK has increased its service hours. FY15 saw more than a 10.7% increase over FY14 (or 18% since FY11). Because we were able to maintain relatively flat RPSH numbers with the addition of almost 11% more service hours, we believe this



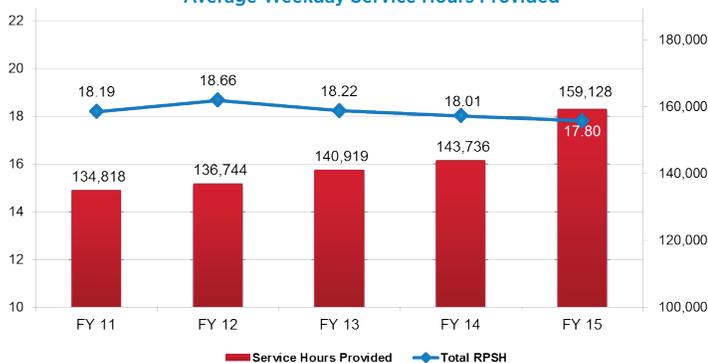


demonstrates how quickly our customers embraced the implementation of the TSIS.

Included in the expanded service hours is night service on two routes that started in January 2015. This is the first time night service has been offered in at least 30 years in OKC. Unsure how quickly customers would begin using the pilot service, staff hoped to attain at least half of our weekday riders per service hour within the first 12 months of the new service. Ridership steadily grew and reached the goal in just four quick months. Due to the success of the pilot service, EMBARK requested additional funding from the OKC City Council to allow night service to continue and add two additional night routes – they started January 2016.

WEEKDAY RIDERSHIP

of Riders Per Weekday Service Hours (RPSH) Compared to Average Weekday Service Hours Provided



IMPACTS TO RIDERSHIP

FY14 finished strong, but FY15 marked a record 9% growth in weekday ridership for the year. FY15 finished with more than 3 million passenger trips.

Contrary to national trends*, EMBARK has experienced 21 consecutive months of year-over-year ridership gains finishing FY15 up 9.5% or 11,108 trips per day in cumulative fixed-route M-F ridership and we are up 5.5% through 6 months of the current FY16 (11,628).

In total, we provided 3,085,663 in fixed-route trips FY15. This is the first time staff could determine that only fixed-route passenger trips exceeded 3 million, representing an 8.8% growth over the previous year.

CUMULATIVE RIDERSHIP

Total Fixed-Route Monday-Saturday Ridership



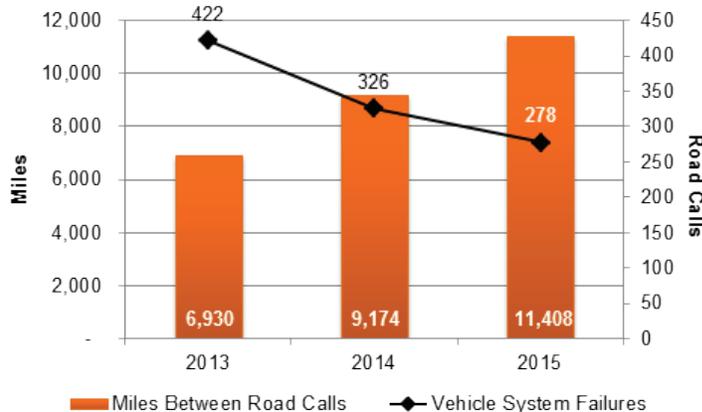
MAINTENANCE

EMBARK continually seeks innovative measures to gain efficiencies, improve reliability and minimize service disruption.

EMBARK's preventative maintenance (PM) program is the backbone of a healthy fleet. A strong PM program has allowed us to attain a constant overall improvement of miles between road calls each FY since 2013. Despite having 30% of our fleet beyond its useful life, EMBARK achieved a 64.6% improvement in miles between road calls in FY15 over FY13. Likewise, vehicle system failures decreased 34.1% in just three years.

MAINTENANCE

Miles between Road Calls compared to Vehicle System Failures



*Bus ridership has declined 2.8% nationally, APTA 2015 Ridership Report

Another contributing factor to our success is through strong bus-parts inventory management. The last fiscal inventory was on June 30, 2015, total dollar amount at that time was \$776,811.33 with 4,846 line items in stock. The results of the inventory were a less than one percent dollar variance and two percent line item variance. Staff takes great pride in making sure that mechanics have the necessary parts in stock to help ensure work orders are completed in a timely manner.

ACCESS

EMBARC partners with many community organizations to provide a wide range of transportation programs to meet the diverse needs of the community. Through these programs, qualified customers maintain independence by arranging their own transportation and depending less on family and friends.

For decades, EMBARK has administered senior adult transit programs. More than 62,000 trips were provided in FY15 through the following:

- Congregate Meal Transportation
- Daily Living Centers
- Helpline
- Interim
- RSVP Provide-A-Ride
- Senior Companion Program
- STEP (Shopping Shuttle)
- Share-A-Fare (Taxi Service)

Like other public transit providers, EMBARK Plus provides ADA paratransit services as required by the FTA. While the system's fixed-route service area is approximately 170 square miles, EMBARK provides service well beyond that requirement to ensure that all residents within OKC's 620 square mile boundaries have access to ADA door-to-door service. Over the last three years, EMBARK provided 138,896 Plus trips to qualifying customers.

EMBARC worked to draft a new street furniture ordinance that requires all future bus benches and shelters to be fully ADA compliant. EMBARK has constructed 38 new ADA compliant shelters with 7 additional under construction.

Beyond ADA, it is also EMBARK's mission to provide better access of public transit to LEP audiences in our community. While a predominantly English speaking community, Oklahoma City's population is diversifying to include Spanish, Vietnamese and Chinese speaking persons as well.

Providing practical access to service information to our entire community is a priority. In order to make the system as accessible and easy-to-use as possible, EMBARK is committed to overcoming language barriers with service that is safe, dependable, responsive and inviting to all. This is evident by providing all printed materials in service schedules in both English and Spanish.

EMBARC also understands that planning and land-use policy also impact the accessibility of transit services. Staff led a team of local planners to jointly study and develop a concept plan which identifies the potential for multi-modal public transit options in the NW Corridor of Oklahoma City. The goal of the concept plan is to increase mobility as well as improve community health through multi-modal transit options and land use strategies. As a result of this effort, EMBARK was recently awarded a SmartGrowth America grant to continue this work.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Public transportation is our business, but positive customer experiences are our mission.

At EMBARK, the customer experience is emphasized at every level and is the litmus for every issue that arises. We know that the customer experience impacts satisfaction, fosters loyalty, increases advocacy, increases revenue, and builds strong relationships.

EMBARC staff is in the practice of designing and



reacting to customer interactions for the purpose of meeting or exceeding their expectations. We strive toward this by listening.

From our 2011 bi-annual onboard rider survey, our board took action in the following budget year to implement two of the top requests received in the survey. They were more frequent service and later evening service. The resulting action was the TSIS, which is outlined for you under the operations section of this document.

Through ongoing dialogue with our customers and non-riders, we began investing in amenities important to these stakeholders. First of those is the installation of an Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) systems on all fixed-route and paratransit vehicles. Not only does this system aid in operational efficiency, it brought real-time arrival information to the fingertips of the public. Investments continued in the launch of a new website – embarkok.com, an interactive and device-responsive site. Built on open-source technology, the website is integrated with various other technology platforms, such as GovOutreach, NeoGov, TripSpark and Google. This is our first site to feature a journey planner with real-time integration and a developers portal whereby we're able to share open data with developers.

In FY13 EMBARK created a new Customer Relations division. This division is strictly focused on the day-to-day customer interactions across multiple channels (i.e. web, phone, face-to-face, social media, etc). One of those

is EMBARKConnect a customer relationship management system that allows inquiry tracking, geo-coded requests and image uploads. The system dramatically transforms customer service by giving customers 24/7 access to our services while providing staff the tools they need to manage the resolution process and provide automatic updates. Robust reports are generated to identify problem areas, used to commend employees who do well and are presented to the Board each month.



Another focus is the implementation of a Board approved Rider Conduct and Exclusion Policy. This policy provides a fair and equitable mechanism for staff, importantly Operators, to address customer behavior issues while utilizing our services. This system has been an effective tool for enhancing the onboard customer experience and decreasing operator stress.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

EMBARK staff and Board take the stewardship of its funding and assets very seriously. This is evident in the presentation of a balanced budget to the Board for adoption each year. EMBARK has independent firms conduct certifiable financial audits, A133 audits (Federal & Local grants), NTD reporting audit, and random contract audits. The results found no material weaknesses or deficiencies.

EMBARK has developed a funded 10-year bus replacement program. Using local funds and FAST Act 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities funding, EMBARK will replace all buses (30% of fleet) that are aged beyond their useful life by the end of calendar year 2018.

EMBARK has managed finances in order to close 11 grants in the last three years and eight grants in the current fiscal year. The last two FTA Triennial Reviews are free from Financial/Procurement findings.

FTA Region VI recently recognized EMBARK with an award for outstanding grants management.

SUSTAINABILITY

EMBARK has partnered with the City of Oklahoma City to promote sustainability principles and the responsible use of resources throughout the organization.

Recently the Board committed to transitioning our entire fleet to compressed natural gas (CNG). Funding is in place and design work is underway for a fast-fill and slow-fill fueling station. Six CNG buses are on order and another seven are slated to be ordered in the next nine months. By the end of calendar year 2018, all buses currently past useful life will be replaced with CNG vehicles.

FY15 set in motion the procurement of six electric modern streetcar rail vehicles. In effort to not only improve our local air quality, but to also raise awareness about air quality issues in our region, EMBARK has offered free fixed-route bus service on the third Friday of every month during the ozone season (April-September).

By scheduling free days during ozone season, EMBARK can more effectively educate the public on how transit can improve our air quality. It also serves as an opportunity to introduce transit to non-riders. In FY15, EMBARK saw a 10% increase in ridership for those Fridays over FY14.

We are strong believers in giving back and this is evident in the employee generated proceeds for our annual United Way campaign, Reading Buddies, toy drives, blood drives, and the employee hours donated to volunteer work at the Christmas Connection, Food Bank or in one of our neighborhoods.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

In order to effectively provide positive customer experiences, our workforce must be appropriately equipped to handle the dynamic reality of our day-to-day society.

From providing clean, attractive facilities to enhancing our family of services, EMBARK has several initiatives in place to develop and maintain a quality workforce.

EMBARK invests four weeks of classroom training and two weeks of field training in each new bus operator. This training involves CDL exam prep, customer service training, and operation of our fleet of buses. In addition, EMBARK requires participation of all employees in quarterly safety meetings with an emphasis on reviewing accidents and customer service interactions, both positive and negative, to remind all employees of the expectations of our organization. EMBARK conducted has 938 training classes since FY13.

Over the last two years, EMBARK has developed and implemented a bus operator training program to provide a higher quality of training in a real world environment. Current bus operators that meet the specific criteria

may apply to be a trainer. If selected and successfully trained, employees earn an additional \$3 per hour while performing training duties. Maintenance employees are provided resources to prepare for ASE Certification and provides an hourly incentive to employees who have earned or have a valid ASE certification. Similar certifications and incentives are offered to our parts and utilities (facilities) maintenance employees so they may have the opportunity to gain additional knowledge and skills that would benefit the organization. Employees are reimbursed testing expenses upon successful completion of a certification program.

All EMBARK employees are encouraged to continue their education with a \$1,250 tuition reimbursement per semester and professional development courses at local career centers are provided at no-cost to employees.

ATTENDANCE AND EMPLOYEE COSTS

Our Risk division has been successful in reducing work injuries and motivating employees to be safer at work.

In FY15, staff worked along side union leaders to negotiate a change to our employee benefits program that resulted in substantial savings. From the savings, \$427,000 was invested into the employee pension plan, resulting in the increase of the plan's funding level to 82%.

MINORITY AND WOMEN ADVANCEMENT

Over the last three years, EMBARK's operations workforce has turned upside down. In 2014, EMBARK saw a 32% increase in the number of women hired or promoted as an operations supervisor, four of which belonged to a minority.

The trend continued in the maintenance division as an increase in the percentage of female laborers hired increased from 11% in 2014 to 50% in 2015.

Minority and woman advancement is also encouraged through EMBARK's DBE program. As evidenced by exceeding our FY15 DBE goal for the first time.

MARKETING

Small, but mighty – EMBARK’s marketing team has implemented award-winning initiatives that engaged audiences and deepened relationships. Staff uses data-driven strategies to develop relevant and result-oriented campaigns that have helped boost ridership, elevate the status of the agency, build community support and position the organization as a key community partner.

Recent accomplishments in this area include:

- Successfully communicated the launch of realigned bus network while simultaneously launching new brand
- Facilitated numerous public meetings and community forums
- Developed re-branded print service materials and maps in English and Spanish
- Established a social media presence for the entire EMBARK family of services (four Facebook pages, four Twitter accounts, four Google+ pages, two Instagram accounts, one LinkedIn, one YouTube and one Nextdoor)
- Brand and message development for upcoming Modern Streetcar service
- Re-brand of Spokies Bike Share Service
- Advertising campaigns include:
 - > Let’s Keep Going - 50th Anniversary
 - > Nightshift - See ya Later
 - > Say Hi to Free Wi-Fi
 - > Forward Together (EMBARK Launch)[†]
 - > I Ride Because[†]
 - > It’s Different Than You Think[†]

[†]Received top APTA AdWheel Awards

*Received Local Addy Awards

An important facet of staff’s efforts also include media relations. This division is well respected and has strong relationships with the media.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

EMBARK is a community partner, a neighbor, and friend who understands the importance of developing and maintaining strong relationships. EMBARK works side-by-side with the City, neighborhood associations, non-profits, social service agencies and businesses to help ensure our community thrives. For example,

EMBARK staff serves in our Multi-Agency Coordination Center working alongside local, regional and state emergency management teams.

EMBARK collaborates with human service agencies to eliminate barriers and encourage transit use among refugees and minority groups. EMBARK hosts a community health fair at its Downtown Transit Center each fall for the last three years. Through partnerships, EMBARK is able to offer free flu vaccinations, dental screenings, diet and nutritional information, health assessments and other resources to its customers.

With more than 90% of the Oklahoma City Public School district at or below poverty, EMBARK created the Haul Pass program as the result of a joint partnership with the City of Oklahoma City and OKC Public School District. Most OKC middle and high school students struggle with getting to class and cite a lack of transportation as a reason. The program was designed to empower students with an affordable solution and to encourage school attendance. EMBARK’s Haul Pass provides students with unlimited rides for \$10/month – an 80% discount. This helps students save money, get comfortable navigating the city on public transit and get to school, games, work – wherever they need to go.

EMBARK is responsible to the customer and the communities it serves. Numerous staff members serve on non-profit boards, community committees and as liaisons who coordinate inter-local agreements among neighboring municipalities.

We are focused on enhancing the quality of life in the Greater Oklahoma City region by pressing forward with Transit Oriented Development (TOD) planning initiatives, partnering on local public works projects to include the build-out of transit shelter pads with nearly 70 miles of sidewalks under construction and improving pedestrian safety at crosswalks and high traffic corridors.

