



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### METRO TRANSIT UNVEILS ORBT DESIGN DETAILS

**Omaha, Neb** – Metro today provided a glimpse into the final design of its new Omaha Rapid Bus Transit (ORBT) project.

During a news conference in the Metro lobby, Executive Director Curt Simon said the complex project has reached the 60% design level, meaning Metro has established the station locations, station design elements, and final route.

“ORBT is a new opportunity to connect people to jobs, education, medical facilities, entertainment, and businesses. It will move Omaha toward its transportation goals and the need for the project is reinforced by the Omaha Chamber’s 2040 plan and MAPA’s Heartland 2050,” Simon told the audience.

Mayor Jean Stothert echoed Simon’s remarks and added, “ORBT is important to Omaha’s economy because for every \$1 invested there is an estimated \$8 return. It’s an opportunity to build our urban core and grow the transportation options that are important to the talent we want to recruit and keep in Omaha.”

The project stretches from 10<sup>th</sup> Street to Westroads Mall along Dodge and Douglas Streets, Omaha’s busiest transportation spine. Simon said collaboration with businesses along the route, stop locations, station and vehicle design, utility coordination, and technology for the 12 station pairs on the 10-mile corridor is work that takes time, care, and detailed planning.

The new ORBT station design includes an impressive list of technology and other enhancements for passengers, including:

- covered platforms
- real-time arrival signage
- ticket kiosks for prepaid boarding
- WiFi
- conductive concrete to improve winter safety

- level boarding, meaning the station platform is the same height as the bus floor
- Heartland B-cycle stations & bike racks

The buses will be 60-foot, articulated vehicles, powered by compressed natural gas (CNG). ORBT buses will serve stations every 10 minutes during rush hour and feature onboard Wi-Fi and bike racks. A prototype of the bus was parked outside the building for viewing.

Additional enhancements include Transit Signal Priority (TSP) at major intersections, which will allow traffic signals to stay green longer for buses, and Business Access & Transit (BAT) lanes, which are semi-dedicated lanes along parts of the route that still allow for right turns by other vehicles.

Commuters will have a convenient Park & Ride lot at the Westroads Transit Center adjacent to Westroads Mall to provide efficient travel downtown and back.

To help riders and the community locate information about ORBT, a dedicated website was created and can be found at [www.rideORBT.com](http://www.rideORBT.com).

According to Simon the final design is underway and construction is expected to begin in fall 2018, with the system launching in fall 2019.

**BACKGROUND:** In September 2014, Metro was awarded a federal TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grant to build Omaha's first rapid transit line along Dodge Street, the spine of the city's transportation system. The ORBT brand, which represents the rapid transit line, was launched in the fall of 2017. The project is in the final design phase.

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