




Tempe testing new bus for possible use in Orbit system

TEMPE, Ariz. (Jan. 4, 2019) – This January, the City of Tempe will partner with Valley Metro, Arboc Specialty Vehicles and Creative Bus Sales to test a new medium-duty transit bus on all Orbit routes. If successful, this bus will be a candidate for replacing some of the aging light-duty Orbit fleet.

The test bus is alternatively fueled by compressed natural gas (CNG), has a larger seating capacity and is wheelchair accessible with a low floor, allowing easy access for passengers with mobility devices. The rear-engine design is expected to improve air conditioning performance, improving passenger and operator comfort.

Additional bus specifications are listed in the table below.

<i>Specifications</i>	<i>Original Orbit Bus (Light-duty)</i>	<i>2017 Orbit Bus (Heavy-duty)</i>	<i>Prototype Test Bus (Medium-duty)</i>
			
Length	25' – 7"	31' – 10.5"	29' – 10"
Width	8' – 0"	8' – 5"	8' – 4"
Height	10' – 2.5"	11' – 4"	9' – 0"
Seats	17	23	22
Standing Capacity	Maximum of 6	At least 12	At least 12
Wheelchair Accommodations	Two wheelchair positions/vertical lift	Two wheelchair positions/extending ramp	Two wheelchair positions/extending ramp
Entry	Single door, high floor, step entry	Two doors, low floor with kneeling function	One door, low floor with kneeling function
Bike Racks	Two bike positions	Three bike positions	Two bike positions

Tempe's Orbit bus system includes some of the highest ridership routes in the city. Tempe's older light-duty buses often reach passenger capacity, having to turn away riders. These older buses are also unable to operate a full day, requiring additional buses to enable mid-day refueling and several buses operate on unleaded gasoline, not clean burning fuel. They are currently scheduled to be replaced incrementally over the next three years.

During the testing phase, Tempe and Valley Metro will analyze maneuverability, operating range, mechanical performance and seek feedback from passengers, bus operators and service technicians. If the testing is successful, and the prototype bus meets the necessary Orbit operating range of approximately 250 miles between refueling, the city can potentially reduce the Orbit fleet size by up to five vehicles while maintaining current service levels.

This test phase is part of Tempe's ongoing effort to right-size the Orbit fleet. In September, Tempe tested another bus, the Grande West Vicinity, which is also a candidate to replace Orbit vehicles. Buses were selected due to a balance between sustainability, passenger capacity and neighborhood suitability.

Get a sneak preview of the bus by visiting <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35eg1VFeZQ>. For more information, or to comment online Jan. 14 through Feb. 3, please visit tempe.gov/orbit.

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