Public transportation took a hard hit when the pandemic last year, leaving working citizens worried about means of transportation to and from work.

If Embark had not taken such quick action on May 17, 2020 bus stops would have been empty indefinitely. At the time the best advice for dealing with the pandemic was wear a mask and practice social distancing. On average, the buses in Norman are 30 feet long and previously carried over 30 passengers.

"The Federal Transit Authority told us we're going to have to be on our A game to mitigate the spread", Megan Henderson, Marketing Strategist said.

Mask mandates was another safety measure Embark added for everyone's safety. Embark also cut the number of passengers to a maximum of 12 so routes could continue safely. The new limit on passengers has put a strain on passengers that have to be at work at a specific time. Frustrations from riders regarding the mandates have left the bus drivers to enforce the rules on their own.

"We furnish the masks but we have a hard time getting the people to use them right", Embark bus driver, Elvin Lowry said.

If the bus is already at maximum capacity, they cannot allow any more passengers on. Lowry explained that some riders that get left behind struggle with the fact that the bus drivers are simply following orders.

The pandemic has caused everyone to be frustrated at the circumstances. Numerous Embark bus drivers chose to quit when the pandemic started. These actions caused drivers to have extend their normal schedule by working extra days. A new system was put in place for Norman drivers to help compensate the workload.

Embark now use a three-day rotation for drivers on every route. This allowed Embark to still have the ability to give drivers adequate time off and still maintain business as usual.

Even though the pandemic is improving according to CNN, Embark has yet to set a timetable for pandemic mandates to be lifted. Embark will continue to provide a public service while doing their due diligence to help prevent the spread.