



The East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) operates GoBus, a rural demand-response public transit system serving a vast 10,000-square-mile region across 14 counties in East Texas, including Anderson, Camp, Cherokee, Harrison, Henderson, Marion, Panola, Rains, Rusk, Upshur, Van Zandt, Wood, and the non-urbanized areas of Gregg and Smith Counties. With approximately 30 vehicles on the road, GoBus facilitates 500 to 800 trips daily, five days a week, providing essential services like public transportation, charter rentals, free veteran rides, and connections to medical facilities such as Overton Brooks VA Hospital in Shreveport, LA. Fares are affordable at \$2 per trip and \$1 for additional stops, making it a lifeline for commuters, students, shoppers, and those needing medical transport.

Situation: ETCOG's Path to In-House Efficiency

Over the past few years, GoBus services had experienced significant growth, straining existing operations. The organization relied heavily on outsourced maintenance, which led to longer repair times, higher costs, and reduced vehicle availability, directly impacting service reliability and the ability to meet rising demand.

A 2021 feasibility study by the GoBus team highlighted the need for a dedicated in-house maintenance facility to cover the eastern region, with plans for a future acquisition to serve the western region. These challenges hampered efficiency, increased operational expenses, and limited proactive vehicle inspections, ultimately affecting the quality of life for East Texas residents dependent on safe, reliable transit.

ETCOG's goals were ambitious: build a new facility to enable in-house maintenance, reduce outsourcing costs, improve repair turnaround times, enhance vehicle safety, and support fleet



expansion. They needed space for more efficient operations, faster return of vehicles to service, and the capacity to handle growing transit needs while maintaining high standards of friendliness and dependability. With funding support from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the project aimed to create a home base for administrative and maintenance teams, equipped with tools for ongoing needs.

Initially, ETCOG considered various construction options, including traditional building methods, but sought cost-effective, timely solutions suitable for a public-sector project. They worked through an architect representing ETCOG to award the project to SCI Construction as the general contractor. Tyler Building Systems (TBS) was then awarded the metal building component from SCI Construction, based on TBS's reputation for delivering pre-engineered metal buildings (PEMBs) that met stringent specifications.

Solution: Selection, Implementation, and Resolution

The original request from ETCOG, via the architect and SCI Construction, was for a pre-engineered metal building solution to serve as the core structure for the new GoBus Transportation Facility. This included a design supporting two work bays, a dedicated wash bay, training rooms, additional fleet parking, and fully equipped for maintenance operations, all tailored to the eastern region's needs.

TBS offered a customized PEMB solution that addressed the challenges of efficiency, cost, and timeline adherence. The structure was designed for durability, functionality, and scalability, incorporating features like spacious bays for bus repairs, insulation for climate control, and integration points for specialized equipment. Expectations included on-time delivery to meet the owner's completion date, budget compliance, and modifications as



needed without derailing the schedule. Key requirements were quick turnaround on drawings, fabrication, and delivery to align with TxDOT funding timelines and operational urgency.

With a heavy focus on cost-effective pricing, a metal building solution from Tyler Building Systems helped secure the award for partner SCI Construction. Their proven expertise in public infrastructure projects, and the ability to provide erection-friendly accuracy were reinforced by TBS's track record with similar facilities and their flexibility in handling modifications made them the ideal choice over competitors.

The implementation process unfolded step by step:

- **Project Award and Planning:** Following the architect's selection of SCI Construction, TBS was awarded the PEMB contract. TBS collaborated with the general contractor and architect to review plans and specifications, ensuring alignment with ETCOG's vision for a proactive maintenance hub.
- **Design and Approvals:** TBS's in-house design team created anchor bolt plans, erection drawings, and shop drawings tailored to the facility's needs, including bays for vehicle work and administrative spaces.
- **Fabrication and Modifications:** After approval drawings were executed, TBS delivered a quick and efficient turnaround to move into fabrication. They handled any necessary modifications, such as adjustments for equipment integration, while staying on schedule despite potential supply chain uncertainties.
- **Delivery and Erection Coordination:** TBS expedited delivery of the PEMB components, ready for erection by SCI's crews. Close coordination ensured seamless rollout, with TBS adapting to on-site requirements for a smooth handover.

Obstacles exist in every project. This one included tight timelines post-approval and the need for rapid fabrication amid industry fluctuations. TBS overcame these obstacles through agile processes, local supplier ties in East Texas, and proactive communication, ensuring the project remained on track for summer 2025 completion.



Success: In-House Operations Transform GoBus Services

The tangible results were immediate and impactful. The facility opened in summer 2025, on schedule and within the \$3.3 million budget, allowing GoBus to transition to in-house operations after just five weeks of occupancy. Teams finished up requests for proposals (RFPs) for maintenance equipment, including tool chests, tires, and other essentials, enabling full operational ramp-up.

The TBS metal building has helped ETCOG achieve initial goals by bringing maintenance in-house, eliminating outsourcing dependencies, and reducing costs associated with external repairs. And faster vehicle turnaround times, more thorough inspections, and enhanced safety directly supported GoBus's mission to provide reliable transit across the 14-county region.

Now, with ample space for growth, ETCOG can invest in themselves by hiring in-house technicians and overseeing maintenance quality for their assets. The cost-quality balance of the PEMB provided a durable, efficient structure that improves the overall customer experience through uninterrupted service and better resource allocation. The facility's design offers a modern, functional environment that boosts staff morale and operational precision.

The metal building system has fundamentally changed how GoBus operates by enabling self-sufficient maintenance, reducing expenses on third-party entities, and fostering proactive fleet management. GoBus can now perform all repairs internally, ensuring vehicles stay on the road longer and services remain dependable.

Christy Fowler, ETCOG Transportation Program Specialist weighed in. "This facility allows us to take a more proactive approach to vehicle maintenance and safety. Having the ability to complete repairs in-house means we can get vehicles back on the road faster and continue providing safe, reliable and friendly transportation services."

**Talk with Tyler Building Systems at (903) 561-3000
for metal buildings made easier.**