



CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 05/23/2023

REQUESTER: Katherine Coffin

PRESENTER: David Riesland, Transportation Engineer

ITEM TITLE: CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION, APPROVAL, ACCEPTANCE, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF RESOLUTION R-2223-134: A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER OR HIS DESIGNEE TO SUBMIT AN SS4A GRANT APPLICATION TO FUND CONSTRUCTION OF THE 36TH AVENUE N.W. 2012 TRANSPORTATION BOND PROJECT.

BACKGROUND:

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Pub. L. 117–58, November 15, 2021; also referred to as the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” or “BIL”) established the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Discretionary Grant Program (BIL Section 24112) and appropriated funds to the United States Department of Transportation (the “USDOT”) under Division J, Title VIII of BIL to implement the program. The funds are available to provide Federal financial assistance to support local initiatives to prevent death and serious injury on roads and streets, commonly referred to as “Vision Zero” or “Toward Zero Deaths” initiatives.

The USDOT published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (the “NOFO”) to solicit applications for Federal financial assistance in Fiscal Year 2023 for the SS4A Discretionary Grant Program (87 Fed. Reg. 31606 (May 24, 2022; subsequently amended in 87 Fed. Reg. 47818 on March 30, 2023).

The purpose of this award is to improve roadway safety by significantly reducing or eliminating roadway fatalities and serious injuries through safety action plan development or projects focused on all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, motorists, personal conveyance and micromobility users, and commercial vehicle operators. The parties will accomplish that purpose by achieving the following objectives: (1) timely completing the Project; and (2) ensuring that this award does not substitute for non-Federal investment in the Project.

DISCUSSION:

On August 28, 2012, Norman Voters approved a Special Election of Transportation Projects. Below is a summary of those approved projects:

1. West Lindsey Street from Pickard Avenue to 24th Avenue SW (Completed)
2. 24th Avenue East from Robinson Street to Lindsey Street (Completed)
3. 36th Avenue NW from Tecumseh Road to Indian Hills Road (**Pending**)
4. 12th Avenue SE from SH 9 to Cedar Lane Road (Completed)
5. Main Street Bridge over Brookhaven Creek (Completed)
6. Alameda Street from Ridge Lake Boulevard to 48th Avenue East (**Nearing Completion**)
7. Cedar Lane Road from 12th Avenue SE to Black Locust Place (Completed)
8. Franklin Road Bridge over Little River (Completed)

All of these Bond Projects were conceived with the idea to secure Federal Funding to assist with the construction. This has proven to be a difficult proposition on the last two projects yet to be completed. The Alameda Street Bond Project is being completed with only local funds. The gap remaining to complete the 36th Avenue NW Bond Project is sizeable without the availability of Federal funds. Staff is seeking to apply for a Federal SS4A to close the remaining gap in the funding needed to complete this project.

The ultimate goal of the SS4A grant program is to reduce or dramatically reduce the number of roadway fatalities and serious injuries toward a nationwide goal of zero roadway fatalities by 2050. Staff intends to complete this application from multiple angles. First, the application will focus on the importance of an alternative route when an incident occurs on Interstate Highway 35 (I-35) in Norman. Provision of an adequate alternative route to I-35 incidents will reduce the number of roadway injuries and fatalities on I-35. Second, the project will involve the provision of a ten-foot wide pedestrian/bicycle multi-modal path from Ruby Grant Park north to the city limits. This path will be a significant step toward the provision of a regional path from Norman through Moore and Oklahoma City to Edmond. At the same time, there will be significant safety improvements between vehicular traffic and the more vulnerable transportation modes of pedestrians and bicycles. Third, a number of safety elements have been incorporated into the 36th Avenue project including three new traffic signals, the City's first HAWK Pedestrian Beacon Crossing system, and fiber optic interconnection between Indian Hills Road and Tecumseh Road for communication as well as future traffic surveillance. Fourth, the application will be a joint submittal from the City of Norman and the City of Moore because the project needs extend across the jurisdictional boundary and a joint application is viewed as a stronger submittal than from a single entity (a location map is provided).

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that City Council approve Resolution R-2223-134 endorsing the grant application for submission to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Safe Streets and Roads For All (SS4A) grant program, no later than Monday, July 10, 2023. Grants will be announced sometime in the fall 2023 with project construction to begin during calendar year 2024, upon grant approval.