



## CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

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**MEETING DATE:** July 25, 2023

**REQUESTER:** Katherine Coffin

**PRESENTER:** David Riesland, Transportation Engineer

**ITEM TITLE:** CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF RESOLUTION R-2324-21: REQUESTING ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS (ACOG) SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM – URBANIZED AREA (STBG-UZA) FUNDING FOR ENHANCEMENTS TO THE CITY'S PUBLIC TRANSIT FLEET

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### **BACKGROUND:**

The Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG), which serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the greater Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area, is responsible for coordinating with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT), area local governments, and transit providers, such as the City of Norman, to implement the applicable Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). As the MPO, ACOG is also responsible for coordinating the selection of projects for many federal grant funds that are allocated to our central Oklahoma urbanized area. On Thursday September 1, 2023, ACOG will announce the annual Surface Transportation Block Grant Program – Urbanized Area (STBG-UZA) call for projects.

The Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) promotes flexibility in state and local transportation decisions and provides flexible funding to best address state and local transportation needs. ACOG is currently estimating \$40 million in STBG-UZA funds for this year's call for projects, which will be available in federal fiscal years ending (FFE) in 2026 and 2027. Eligible projects include road widening, road new construction, road intersections, road resurfacing, bridges, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, transit, and safety. 10% of STBG-UZA funds are set aside for safety projects. There is also a cap of 10% for bicycle and pedestrian projects, as well as a separate 10% cap on transit projects. All projects must be located on a functionally classified road and be included in, or be consistent with, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

Entities can submit a total of 20 applications requesting up to \$7.5 million per project and no one entity may receive more than 56% of the total amount of funding available. Submitted project applications will be chosen based on the Project Scoring Criteria, developed by ACOG member entities and approved by the ACOG MPO Policy Committee. The deadline for grant application is October 31, 2023, and it is anticipated that grant awards will be made in March 2024.

**DISCUSSION:**

The City took Norman's public transit operations from the University in July 2019. Since that time the City has submitted a request for transit bus replacement for every STBG-UZA call for projects. This allows the City to maximize local funding for transit fleet replacement as split for STBG-UZA projects is usually 80% federal and 20% local. The City has been successful in the past, with securing funds for a bus replacement in the FFE 2021 and FFE 2022 call for projects.

For this STBG-UZA call for projects cycle, staff is requesting to continue to submit a project for replacing one transit fixed route vehicle with a new 35 foot CNG unit. Staff have obtained a quote from Gillig in the amount of \$706,526 each. Due to the volatility of the current supply chain and the uncertainty regarding inflation, City and Gillig staff have done their best to estimate how much these units would cost in FY 2026.

Local City match funds to be made available for the project are currently estimated at \$141,305.20 or 20%. City Council has annually allocated funds to the Transit and Parking Fund to replace 1 fixed route unit with 100% local funds. However, over the past 3 years since taking over the service, staff have been able to stretch those local funds as match to federal funds and purchase more than 1 vehicle per year. It is proposed that these funds be used as local match for this future purchase if the project is selected and the purchase is authorized, if that is the desire of Council.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of Resolution R-2324-21 requesting ACOG STBG-UZA funding for enhancements to the City's transit fleet.