



CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 09/08/2026

REQUESTER: Taylor Johnson, AICP, Transit and Parking Program Manager

PRESENTER: Scott Sturtz, P. E., Public Works Director

ITEM TITLE: CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF R-2627-30: A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER OR HIS DESIGNEE TO SUBMIT A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION'S FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUS AND BUS FACILITIES 5339c PROGRAM FOR THE PURCHASE OF THREE 24-FOOT CNG CUTAWAY BUSES; AND EXPRESSING ITS COMMITMENT TO SEEK FUNDING FOR THE LOCAL MATCH IF SUCH GRANT IS AWARDED AND PROJECT APPROVED.

BACKGROUND:

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program (49 U.S.C. 5339) makes federal funding resources available to states and direct recipients to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities including technological changes or innovations to modify low or no emission vehicles or facilities. Funding is provided through formula allocations (5339(a)) and competitive grants (5339(b)). A sub-program, the Low- or No-Emission Vehicle Program (5339(c)), provides competitive grants for bus and bus facility projects that support low and zero-emission vehicles.

The City of Norman took over the operations of the City public transportation system on June 1, 2019, from the University of Oklahoma. On June 27, 2019, the City of Norman was recognized by the FTA as an eligible recipient of federal transit funds and is an eligible applicant of the 5339(b) Bus and Bus Facilities competitive grant program. Since then, staff have worked diligently to pursue federal grant opportunities to maximize local funding to replace the vehicles in the transit fleet.

A requirement of the Bus and Bus Facilities Program is to identify the source of local match to the federal funds and to provide evidence and commitment of those funds with the entity's application, such as through a Council resolution. When a project is selected, funds remain available for obligation for four fiscal years. This includes the fiscal year in which the amount is made available or appropriated plus three additional years.

DISCUSSION:

Vehicle replacement is critical to operate and maintain a safe, reliable, and cost-effective transit system. As the City of Norman replaces the vehicles in its transit fleet, staff has and will continue to identify opportunities to offset the cost of replacement by combining federal and local funds.

Included in the fleet of vehicles initially inherited from the University of Oklahoma was a series of three ADA compliant wheelchair accessible minivans as part of the paratransit fleet. When these units met their useful life, City staff replaced them with similar minivan units which were delivered in August 2023. These units have an expected useful life of 4 years and will be eligible for replacement in 2027.

Rather than replace these units with similar ADA compliant wheelchair accessible minivan units, staff suggest replacing these vehicles with larger 24-foot cutaway bus units which have a longer expected useful lifespan (7 years) and are able to seat and secure multiple passengers that utilize mobility devices. Additionally, this change would lead to a more uniform paratransit fleet of vehicles and could positively impact repair and maintenance costs by reducing the variety of replacement parts which need to be kept on hand.

Staff have obtained a quote of \$197,401 for one paratransit 24-foot CNG cutaway bus and are ready to submit a grant application for three of these units (at a total cost of \$592,203). This cost estimate includes the base price, estimated options, and other charges as appropriate and ensure that the replacement cutaway buses meet the same standard of equipment already available in the active transit fleet.

The standard cost share for this grant is 80% federal with 20% local matching funds. Staff are proposing a cost share for the grant application of 75% federal (\$444,152) and 25% local (\$148,051) to make the grant more competitive.

If the project is selected and the City receives such a grant, funding could be sourced from the Public Transit and Parking Fund, the General Fund, the Capital Fund, or any other available local funding source allowed by law.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that City Council approve Resolution R-2627-30 authorizing the City Manager or his designee to submit a grant application to the Federal Transit Administration's Fiscal Year 2026 5339c Low- or No-Emission Vehicle Program for the replacement of three 24-foot CNG cutaway buses and expressing its commitment to secure funding for the local match if such grant is awarded and project approved.