



## CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

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**MEETING DATE:** 09/26/2023

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

**PRESENTER:** Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works

**ITEM TITLE:** CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF RESOLUTION R-2324-59: A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, REQUESTING THAT THE ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS CONSIDER THE SELECTION OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF TEN (10) NEW BUS STOPS, AS A PROJECT CANDIDATE FOR FEDERAL FUNDING UNDER THE ACOG AIR QUALITY SMALL GRANT PROGRAM.

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### **BACKGROUND:**

Each year, the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) issues a Call for Projects for the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) – Public Fleet Conversion Funding cycle. The grant program is designed to help cities implement clean fuel projects that strive toward the improvement of regional air quality.

Transportation, especially transportation that utilizes fossil fuels, is a significant source of precursors such as volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides, the gasses that react to form ozone. Referred to as mobile source emissions, these precursors are emitted through vehicle exhaust and fuel evaporation, reacting to sunlight in windless conditions to create tropospheric ozone pollution. Research continues to demonstrate the effects of ozone pollution on all populations, but children, the elderly, and anyone with respiratory illnesses such as asthma are particularly vulnerable. Any reduction in ozone-forming emissions translates to increased quality of life for everyone in Central Oklahoma.

Every five years, ACOG, as the Metropolitan Planning Organization, completes a long-range, Metropolitan Transportation Plan that projects Central Oklahoma's growth over a three-decade period and identifies necessary changes to the region's transportation network. The most recent plan, Encompass 2040, adopted in 2016, included a series of goals and strategies to guide transportation planning efforts into the future. Of those strategies, ACOG's Air Quality Small Grant Program has been developed to address (1) the promotion of alternate modes of transportation, (2) investment in projects that enhance the efficiency of the existing transportation system, (3) provision of efficient connections within and between modes and facilities, and (4) encourage procedures that preserve traffic operations.

The Go Norman Transit Plan, adopted in June 2021, contains a series of recommendations and priorities for investments in the City's public transportation system. The recommendation to adjust the transit route network to make it easier to use for the passengers is already underway and nearing completion.

Projects eligible to receive the AQ Small Grant Funding include transit improvements, such as bus stops. Applications must be submitted with a minimum of 20% local match with additional points awarded for a higher local match. The AQ Small Grant Funding program is a reimbursement grant meaning that the amount of grant funding sought is reimbursed to the City following project completion.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Go Norman Transit Plan, adopted in June 2021, contains a series of recommendations and priorities for investments in the City's public transportation system. The recommendation to adjust the transit route network to make it easier to use for the passengers is already underway and nearing completion. With this route network adjustment, there was an estimated need to establish approximately 80 new bus stops, discontinue 49 existing stops, while leaving 63 existing stops unchanged. This would result in a total of 149 stops in Norman, an increase of 37 bus stops in the city.

On November 30, 2021, Council approved Resolution R-2122-54 to address this concern using the cost estimate provided at the time which averaged \$2,000 for each new bus stop, though some stop locations may cost more or less depending on site specific situations. Each bus stop will include a concrete landing pad that adheres to ADA standards and associated signage.

Unfortunately, the bus stop construction was paused to keep the improvements aligned with the new route network and the remodeling of the City's Transit Center which met with asbestos remediation delays. Due to the substantial inflation of material costs over the two years since the initial request for funding, only 59 new bus stops could be funded. Based on current cost estimates, an additional \$52,827.83 will be needed to fund the remaining 10 new bus stops. Note that the estimated bus stops to be installed decreased from 80 to 69 once staff evaluated each site more closely due to site constraints and other considerations. Staff is recommending a proposed cost share for this grant of 75% federal (\$39,620.87) and 25% local (\$13,206.96) to make the City's application more competitive.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of Resolution R-2324-59 requesting Air Quality Small Grant Funding for 75% of the anticipated \$52,827.83 construction cost.