



CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

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-2324-60: A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, REQUESTING THAT THE ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS CONSIDER THE SELECTION FOR THE CONGESTION MITIGATION AIR QUALITY (CMAQ) PUBLIC FLEET CONVERSION GRANT FUNDING OF PANTOGRAPH CHARGERS AND ASSOCIATED COSTS.

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.

The CMAQ program was created by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991. It was continued by the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST) in 2015. The FAST Act continued to provide funding for transportation projects and programs to meet the requirements of Clean Air Act. The funding is available to reduce congestion and help improve air quality with respect to ozone, carbon monoxide, or particulate matter. For 2020, Central Oklahoma did not meet National Ambient Air Quality Standards for particulate matter and was close to nonattainment for ozone.

On February 24, 2009, the Norman City Council adopted the City's first Alternative Fuel Program which strongly supports the acquisition and operation of alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs). This set the City's goal to increase the usage of alternative fuel vehicles each year as technology

allows while monitoring each new technological advancement to suit the application and departmental needs. At that point in time fully electric vehicles were not an option, but the technology has now advanced in this direction and the City of Norman is still striving to be a leader in the implementation of alternative fuel technology. This is also in accordance with the "Ready for 100" resolution passed by Council on May 28, 2018, which set a goal of 100 percent renewable energy sources for transportation by 2050.

An authorization to purchase the City's first battery electric vehicle, a transit bus, was approved at Council's May 25, 2021 meeting. Approximately 50% of the vehicle purchase price will be reimbursed through a grant received from the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality through the Volkswagen Settlement Fund.

An authorization to purchase the City's second battery electric transit bus was approved at Council's August 10, 2021 meeting. Approximately 70% of the vehicle purchase price will be reimbursed through a grant received from the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) 2021 Low- or No-Emission Vehicle Program. The City's project was 1 of 49 projects selected in the nation.

On December 14, 2021 Council approved funding for additional costs on both buses to add charge rails to the top of the buses. Adding the charge rails to the buses ensures that they are properly wired and outfitted for this additional charging solution if the City is able to procure and install the pantograph charging solution in the future. Both busses have been delivered.

DISCUSSION:

Charge rails, when paired with a pantograph charging solution, allows the buses to be charged in service during a layover at a major stop or transit center. The pantograph charging solution can be thought of as an awning the bus drives underneath that extends and connects to the charge rails on the busses. There is a need for pantograph charging infrastructure in order to maintain sufficient charge levels. Staff anticipates an estimated cost for two pantograph chargers to be \$960,810 and installation would be approximately \$400,000, equaling \$1,360,810 in total cost.

Projects eligible to receive the Public Fleet Conversion Grant Funding include transportation projects and programs that work to alleviate air pollution, such as EV charging infrastructure. Applications must be submitted with a minimum of 20% local match with additional points awarded for a higher local match. This project is being submitted with a 20% local match. The Fleet Conversion Grant Funding program is a reimbursement grant, meaning that the amount of grant funding sought is reimbursed to the City following project completion. The proposed cost share for this grant is 80% federal (\$1,088,648) and 20% local (\$272,162). Funding for the City's local match could be provided through the General Fund, Public Transit Sales Tax Fund, or Capital Fund, if the project is selected.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of Resolution No. R-2324-60 requesting ACOG Congestion Mitigation Air Quality-Public Fleet Conversion Grant funding for 80% of the anticipated \$1,360,810 cost for the Pantograph Chargers and installation.