



CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 12/09/2025

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 RESOLUTION R-2526-87: A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF PANTOGRAPH CHARGERS FROM GILLIG IN THE AMOUNT OF \$772,100; BUDGET APPROPRIATION; AND AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER OR HIS DESIGNEE TO EXECUTE ANY DOCUMENTS ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF NORMAN TO EFFECTUATE THE AGREEMENT. (City)

BACKGROUND:

The City of Norman took over the operations of the City public transportation system on June 1, 2019, from the University of Oklahoma. Since then, staff has worked diligently to pursue federal grant opportunities to maximize local funding to replace the aged vehicles that were inherited as a part of the transition of service.

On May 22, 2019, the Governor of Oklahoma designated the City to be the direct recipient of federal funds to be used for the provision of public transportation services effective upon the date the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) formally approves the City eligible to receive such federal funds. On June 20, 2019, the FTA formally designated the City to be the direct recipient of such federal public transportation funds.

Department of Transportation's (DOT) National Infrastructure Investments [i.e., the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program] under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act ("Bipartisan Infrastructure Law" or IIJA) makes federal resources available on a competitive basis for surface transportation infrastructure projects that will have a significant local or regional impact and the City of Norman was recognized by the DOT as an eligible recipient of federal funds and is an eligible applicant of the RAISE Grant Program.

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 was 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 was reimbursed through a grant received from the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA’s) 2021 Low- or No-Emission Vehicle Program. 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 ensured that these buses are properly wired and outfitted for this additional charging solution if the City was able to procure and install the pantograph charging solution in the future. Both battery electric buses were delivered and put into service in the Norman Transit Fleet in spring 2023.

DISCUSSION:

On September 26, 2023, Council approved Resolution R-2324-60 to submit an application to the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) Public Fleet Conversion Grant Program for the purchase of pantograph charging infrastructure, which would allow the electric transit buses to be charged during a layover at a major stop or at the Norman Transit Center. The pantograph charging solution can be thought of as an awning the bus drives under, which extends and connects to the charge rails on the top of the bus. Both electric buses owned by the City are already outfitted with the required charging rails. There is a need for pantograph charging infrastructure in order to maintain sufficient charge levels to provide service with these vehicles throughout the day.

On Thursday, February 15, 2024, ACOG approved a ranked list of projects for funding. Because the City of Norman had submitted multiple projects, these were grouped together as a single project, which was ranked first out of nine projects that received funding. Overall ACOG awarded \$2,580,782 to the City of Norman through this grant opportunity. As part of the award, the pantograph charging project received \$1,078,880.

Of the anticipated total costs of \$1,348,600 for this project, 80% (\$1,078,880) would be provided in the Public Fleet Conversion Grant through ACOG and the remaining 20% (\$269,720) would be provided in local match. The \$1,078,880 in grant funding would be reimbursed to the City once the project is completed.

On March 26, 2024 Council approved the acceptance of the ACOG Public Fleet Conversion Grant Funding and contract K-2324-165 with ACOG. In addition, Council approved a budget transfer within the Public Transportation Fund (Fund 27) to cover the local match (\$269,720) for the project. Lastly, Council approved a budget appropriation of \$1,078,880 from the Capital Fund Balance to the Special Grants Fund (Fund 22) to ACOG Electric Bus Pantograph Chargers (Project BG0094) to cover the 80% grant amount until the project is complete.

Due to the local match being budgeted within the Public Transportation Fund (Fund 27) operating accounts, the \$269,720 was rolled into the Public Transit Fund balance at the conclusion of fiscal year 2024 since a purchase order was not issued encumbering the funds. Thus, the first recommendation is to appropriate the local match amount (\$269,720) from the Fund balance (account 27-29000) to Public Transportation Fund (Fund 27) Service Equipment – Bus (Account 27550276-45007).

Due to the pantograph charging equipment being somewhat specialized and unique, staff spent the majority of the time between grant acceptance and now identifying possible avenues for procurement. One such avenue recently found was a cooperative purchasing agreement through Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA; contract C-22-MT-001). Utilizing this previously-bid contract meets the bidding requirements of the City Code. Staff are being advised that pricing for the pantograph chargers will increase roughly 30% at the end of calendar year 2025 but current pricing, \$772,100 for two units and associated costs, can be locked in if a purchase order is issued before December 15, 2025. If the purchase is approved by Council and the purchase order is issued, the timeline is roughly 6 months for the equipment to be delivered.

Following the purchase, if approved, of the pantograph equipment, staff would work towards securing a contractor for installation. This would be through a bid process and would utilize up to the remaining funds for the project (\$576,500 total in both local and federal match) once the equipment is purchased. A contract for installation would come to Council for review and approval at a future date.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Staff recommends that City Council approve Resolution R-2526-87 appropriating \$269,720 from the Public Transportation Fund balance (Account 27-29000) to Public Transportation Fund Service Equipment – Bus (Account 27550276-45007).

RECOMMENDATION 2: Staff further recommends that City Council authorize the purchase of two (2) 300 kilowatt On-Route Pantograph Chargers from Gillig in the amount of \$772,100, utilizing the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority contract (C-22-MT-001).

RECOMMENDATION 3: Staff further recommends that City Council authorize the City Manager or his designee to execute any documents or agreements on behalf of the City of Norman necessary to effectuate the purchase of the pantograph chargers.