



CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 04/12/2022

REQUESTER: Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager

PRESENTER: Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works

ITEM TITLE: CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF RESOLUTION R-2122-107 AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER OR HIS DESIGNEE TO SUBMIT A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S FYE 2022 REBUILDING AMERICAN INFRASTRUCTURE WITH SUSTAINABILITY AND EQUITY (RAISE) GRANT PROGRAM FOR PANTOGRAPH CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE; EXPRESSING ITS COMMITMENT TO SEEK FUNDING FOR THE LOCAL MATCH (\$272,162) IF SUCH GRANT IS AWARDED AND PROJECT APPROVED.

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") 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 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. Delivery of both busses is expected to be July-August 2022.

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 price for two pantograph chargers to be \$960,810 and installation would be approximately \$400,000, equaling \$1,360,810 in total cost.

The application process for the RAISE grant program requires identification of the source of the local match to federal funds and commitment to provide those funds if the project is selected for funding. The minimum cost share for this grant application can be 100% federal, however, as a competitive grant program the proposed cost share for this grant is 80% federal (\$1,088,648) and 20% local (\$272,162) to make the City's application more competitive. 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 that City Council approve Resolution R-2122-107 authorizing the City Manager or his designee to submit a grant application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program for pantograph charging infrastructure, and expressing its commitment to secure funding for the local match (\$272,162) if such grant is awarded and the project approved.