



Agenda Item Report

City Commission - Mar 03 2020

Department	Staff Contact
Transit	Jessica Mortinger, Transportation Planning Manager

Recommendations

Consider authorizing City staff to submit a joint City of Lawrence/University of Kansas Low or No Emission Vehicle Program grant application to the Federal Transit Administration for battery-electric buses with the Center for Transportation and the Environment 501(c)3, Gillig Corporation and Charge Point Inc. as sole-source vendors and consider authorizing the Mayor to sign a Letter of Support for the application.

Executive Summary

On January 17, 2020, the Federal Transit Administration issued an opportunity to apply for grant funding to support the acquisition of Low or No Emission Transit vehicles and supporting facilities. In an effort to pilot zero-emission buses in Lawrence, Lawrence Transit, in coordination with KU, are proposing submitting a grant to the Low or No Emission Program (Low-No Program) for battery-electric buses and charging stations. The FTA [Low or No Emission Vehicle Program - 5339\(c\)](#) application is due March 17, 2020.

In partnership with the Center for Transportation and the Environment a 501(c)3, Gillig Corporation and Charge Point, Inc. as sole source vendors, per the federal grant requirements, submission with vendors and competitive selection of grant awards by Federal Transit Administration meets the federal requirements for competitive selection. This procurement allows us to maximize the technical capabilities of our service contractor for familiarity with Gillig buses and parts inventory relevant to our entire Lawrence Transit heavy-duty bus fleet. The partnership with the Center for Transportation and the Environment (CTE) a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with a mission to improve the health of our climate and communities by bringing people together to develop and commercialize clean, efficient, and sustainable transportation technologies ensures our team has the technical capacity to deliver a successful pilot project. CTE will serve as project manager/technical support and work with the project team for the duration of the project, including evaluation.

Projects for FTA funding in this grant application will be evaluated on the quality and extent to which they demonstrate how the proposed project will address an unmet need for capital investment in vehicles and/or supporting facilities and demonstrate how the proposed project will: reduce energy consumption; reduce harmful emissions; and reduce direct carbon emissions.

This grant would put the wheels in motion to explore the following project objectives:

- Assess how battery-electric technology performs in our operating environment

- Better understand operational implications (routes, charging, availability, etc.)
- Evaluate operating/maintenance costs vs. diesel
- Develop fleet electrification plan and timeline based on findings
- Further Lawrence's Climate Action Goals

Strategic Plan Critical Success Factor

Innovative Infrastructure and Asset Management
Sound Fiscal Stewardship

Fiscal Impact

The fiscal impact to the City will depend on the final scope of the grant application and partner contributions. The estimated maximum local contribution would be \$2,750,000. This item was not in the 2020-2024 Capital Improvement Program. The City of Lawrence portion of the matching funds will be provided through the Transit Reserve Fund and will have no impact on the general budget. These funds are being proposed as part of the 2021-2025 Capital Improvement Program and the purchase of the zero-emission vehicles are contingent on receipt of federal funding.

Action Requested

Authorize City staff to submit a joint City of Lawrence/University of Kansas Low or No Emission Vehicle Program grant application to the Federal Transit Administration for battery-electric buses with the Center for Transportation and the Environment 501(c)3, Gillig Corporation and Charge Point Inc. as sole-source vendors and authorize the Mayor to sign a Letter of Support for the application.

Attachments

[Electrify Lawrence Transit Letter of Support - Updated 03/02/20](#)
[Correspondence - Updated 03/03/20](#)



City of Lawrence

CITY COMMISSION

MAYOR
JENNIFER ANANDA, JD, MSW

COMMISSIONERS
BRADLEY R. FINKELDEI
COURTNEY SHIPLEY
STUART BOLEY
LISA LARSEN

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CITY MANAGER

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March 3, 2020

Mr. Victor Waldron
Office of Program Management
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Subject: Lawrence Transit Submission to FTA's FY 2020 Low or No Emission Vehicle Program

Dear Mr. Waldron:

I am writing to express my support for Lawrence Transit System's project "Electrify Lawrence Transit" submitted in response to the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) FY 2020 Low or No Emission Vehicle Program. This project is an exciting opportunity for our community and we look forward to the introduction of zero-emission buses in their fleet. Reducing emissions is of utmost importance in the efforts to slow down climate change, and this is a major opportunity to begin making the change to the city's transit fleet.

Sustainability is of great importance to the City of Lawrence, which recently committed to converting to 100% renewable energies in municipal operations — including public transit — by 2035. Beginning to convert our fleet to electric buses with this test case will be a great way to kick off these efforts. This will also be an excellent example of our continued cooperation with the University of Kansas in public transit.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this project. We fully support Lawrence Transit System and the University of Kansas in their efforts and look forward to the deployment of these zero-emission buses in our community.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ananda, J.D., M.S.W.
Mayor





March 2, 2020

Mr. Victor Waldron
Office of Program Management
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Lawrence Transit Submission to FTA's FY 2020 Low or No Emission Vehicle Program - 5339(c)

On behalf of the LiveWell Douglas County Healthy Built Environment work group, I am writing this letter of support for the City of Lawrence – Kansas/University Of Kansas proposal for the Low or No Emission Vehicle program grant to replace diesel buses with battery electric buses to develop a climate friendly community. We greatly support this grant application and its purpose of enhancing bus service and achieving greater energy efficiency.

The built environment work group of LiveWell Douglas County works to ensure fair and just opportunities for everyone in the community to lead healthy, active lives. We believe that by replacing diesel buses with battery electric buses, the community will benefit by reduced emissions and healthier air (as well as help reduce the climate change disruption caused by emissions). In the future it is even possible that an electric bus fleet would lead to system efficiencies that could enable the city to pursue a higher level of service and thereby promote higher levels of utilization of public transit, which could even further reduce vehicle emissions by reducing automobile dependency.

We urge the Federal Transit Administration to fund this application and allow our community to achieve greater energy efficiency via an improved bus service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Tilden".

Chris Tilden
Chair, Healthy Built Environment Work Group

Mr. Victor Waldron
Office of Program Management
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

3 March 2020

Re: Lawrence Transit Submission to FTA's FY 2020 Low or No
Emission Vehicle Program - 5339(c)

Dear Mr. Waldron:

The Sustainability Action Network, our Board and members, express our support for the Low or No Emission Vehicle Program grant application by the City of Lawrence to replace diesel buses with battery electric buses.

Lawrence has been developing climate friendly plans and programs for more than a decade, as well as expanding our transit services, and this grant will further our progress greatly. Just last month, the Lawrence City Commission adopted the goal of 100% renewable energy city-wide by 2035, indicating a strong commitment to reverse climate disruption. The City also is building a centrally located transit hub to enhance bus service and achieve greater energy efficiency.

The Sustainability Action Network is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit that advocates for energy conservation, renewable energy, multi-modal transportation, and locally grown food. We urge you to give much consideration to this grant application.

all the best,

Michael Almon, Secretary
for the Board and membership

2804 Oxford Road
Lawrence, Kansas 66049
March 1, 2020

Mr. Victor Waldron
Office of Program Management
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Mr. Waldron:

Re: Lawrence Transit Submission to FTA's FY 2020 Low or No Emission
Vehicle Program 5339 (c).

We are delighted to support our city's application for the FTA grant to convert our bus system to battery electric buses.

We are proud of the fact that Lawrence is now committed to 100 % sustainable energy by 2035 (the final reading of this ordinance will be at the city commission meeting March 3). Converting our bus system to electric power (along with the power company's commitment to use of sustainable electricity production—mainly wind) will be of immediate benefit and also will set an example for the other vehicle owners of the city.

The city already has demonstrated our commitment to sustainability by conducting an energy audit of all city owned buildings and subsequent major investment in making them energy efficient. That process will continue, but changes in transportation also will be essential for us to meet our goals.

We will appreciate your consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

Victoria B. Douglas and Joseph M. Douglas, M.D.

Bobbie Walthall

From: Thad Holcombe <tjholcombe@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2020 7:48 PM
To: City Commission Agendas
Subject: Fwd: LETUS Support for Electrifying Lawrence City and KU Buses

Clarification on previous email regarding LETUS support of grant....we were referencing **Low or No Emission Vehicle Program - 5339(c)**.

Thad Holcombe
LETUS Moderator

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Thad Holcombe** <tjholcombe@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Feb 28, 2020 at 1:01 PM
Subject: LETUS Support for Electrifying Lawrence City and KU Buses
To: <ccagendas@lawrenceks.org>

The Lawrence Ecology Teams United in Sustainability (LETUS) in Lawrence, Kansas would like to strongly support a grant proposal for electrifying both City of Lawrence and University of Kansas buses. This is in keeping with the recent action by the city to adopt a 100% Renewable Energy Policy for the city. We are an interfaith network of Jewish, Muslim, Protestant, Catholic, Protestant, Unitarian Universalist faith communities advocating eco justice and environmental sustainability actions by individuals and government. The LETUS faith communities are as follows: First Presbyterian Church, Lawrence Jewish Community Congregation, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lawrence, Plymouth Congregational church, Oread Friends Meeting, St. John the Evangelist Catholic Parish, Trinity Episcopal Church, Islamic Center of Lawrence.

Electrifying the bus system further encourages multi-modal forms of transportation in the city and also, very importantly, facilitates addressing the much needed maintenance of the city's infrastructure.

Thad Holcombe
LETUS Moderator
1817 Learnard Avenue
Lawrence, KS. 66044
Telephone: # 785-843-2574
Email: tjholcombe@gmail.com

Bobbie Walthall

From: Thad Holcombe <tjholcombe@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2020 1:02 PM
To: City Commission Agendas
Subject: LETUS Support for Electrifying Lawrence City and KU Buses

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