

FY 2018 Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Infrastructure Investment Program 5339(b)

Applicant and Proposal Profile

Is this a resubmission due to an invalid/error message from FTA? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Section I. Applicant Information

Organization Legal Name: City of Round Rock

FTA Recipient ID: 6631

Applicant Eligibility: ☒ Designated recipient
☐ State
☐ Tribe (Federally recognized Native American Tribe)

Project Location: ☐ Small Urbanized Area
☒ Large Urbanized Area
☐ Rural

Description of services provided and areas served.

The City of Round Rock introduced fixed-route bus service on August 21, 2017. Initial transit service consists of three bus routes operating within the City and connecting to bus and commuter rail facilities in North Austin. A commuter express bus route connecting Round Rock with downtown Austin began service on November 13, 2017. Located two blocks from the center of downtown, the Round Rock Transit Center is the primary connection point for existing and planned local and regional bus routes.

Route 50: Round Rock - Howard Station

Route 50 provides local weekday service between Austin Community College, the Round Rock Transit Center, and Howard Station. The route connects neighborhoods with key destinations throughout the City. Service on route 50 includes 12 daily trips in both northbound and southbound directions, with hourly departures beginning at 6:30 AM. Connections to Capital Metro Route 243 and Capital Metro Red Line are available at Howard Station and the planned Round Rock-Austin express Route 980 at the Round Rock Transit Center.

Route 51 Round Rock Circulator provides weekday service along collector streets in west, south, and central Round Rock. This route connects neighborhoods with medical, educational, shopping, and recreational destinations. Service on Route 51 includes 12 daily trips with hourly departures beginning at 6:30 AM in the westbound direction and 7:04 AM in the eastbound direction.

Route 52 Round Rock - Tech Ridge Limited provides a connection between Tech Ridge Park-and-Ride and the Round Rock Transit Center, with three local stops at employment centers in the southwest corner of Interstate 35 and SH 45. Two weekday morning and two weekday evening trips in both directions provide reverse-commute options between Round Rock and Tech Ridge. At the Tech Ridge Park-and-Ride, connections are available to Capital Metro Route 243 and MetroRapid Route 801.

Route 980 Round Rock - Howard Express is a commuter express bus service between the Round Rock Transit Center and downtown Austin. The route provides two morning southbound trips and two afternoon northbound trips, with an estimated trip time of 45 minutes. A significant share of Round Rock residents that currently drive to Howard Station or Tech Ridge Park-and-Ride in North Austin to access Capital Metro express bus and commuter rail services are expected to shift their trip to the Round Rock Transit Center.

The City is considering adding two additional service hours to Route 50, one additional morning and one additional afternoon trips to Route 980.

Section II. Project Information

About the Project

Project Title: Round Rock Transit Center Expansion

Project Executive Summary: (Short sentence explaining request)

The Round Rock Transit Center is the primary connection point for local and regional transit. The expansion will provide additional parking capacity for now and the future.

Project Statement of Work: (Description of Project)

Scaleable project to construct additional parking levels to accommodate current and future parking needs for local and regional transit. There is also an option for a retail component.

Project Type:

- ☐ Bus replacement
- ☐ Bus rehabilitation
- ☐ Bus expansion
- ☐ Bus facility replacement
- ☐ Bus facility rehabilitation
- ☒ Bus facility expansion
- ☐ Bus equipment
- ☐ Other

If Other, specify:

For vehicle replacement/facility rehabilitation projects only:

VIN/Unique Identifier	Make/Model	Length	Year Put in Service	Current Vehicle Mileage
n/a				

Facility Description	Years Facility Used by Applicant	Facility Construction Date	Last Renovation Date
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Project Budget

Description	QTY	5339(b) Amount	5339(b) Match Amount	Other Federal	Other	Total Cost
3-Floor expansion with ground floor retail conversion	1	6,542,560	1,635,640	0	0	8,178,200

Total:	6,542,560	1,635,640	0	0	8,178,200
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Project Scalability

Is Project scope scalable? ☒ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, specify minimum 5339(b) Funds necessary: 3,263,040

Provide explanation of scalability with specific references to the budget line items above.

Round Rock Transit Center expansion is scalable in terms of additional parking floors and the potential conversion of the ground floor to retail use. The City has identified four options, which are identified, in detail, in the attached document titled "Round Rock Transit Center Expansion". Each of the options would enable the facility to meet projected 2030 park-and-ride demand of 200 spaces plus additional space for ride share, car share and bike share.

Option 1, the minimum request, would provide 198 new parking spaces, for a total of 308 parking spaces. This option does not include the retail build out. The funding for this option is \$3,263,040 in federal dollars and \$815,760 in local dollars.

Option 2, would provide 198 new parking spaces with the retail build out. The retail build out on the first floor will eliminate the existing 49, however the economic benefit offsets this loss in spaces. The funding for this option is \$4,911,040 in federal dollars and \$1,227,760 in local dollars.

Option 3, would provide 297 new parking spaces, for a total of 407 parking spaces. This option does not include the retail build out. The funding for this option is \$4,894,560 in federal dollars and \$1,223,640 in local dollars.

Option 4, the maximum request, would provide 297 new parking spaces, for a total of 358 parking spaces. This option does include the retail build out on the first floor, which reduces the parking by 49 spaces, however the economic benefit offsets this loss in spaces. This option also represents the maximum build out. The funding for this option is \$6,542,560 in federal dollars and \$1,635,640.

Matching Funds Information

Matching Funds Amount : (Must match Project Budget Amount) 1,635,640

Source of Matching Funds.

The City has a voter approved Transportation and Economic Development Corporation (Type B), which is funded by one-half cent of sales tax dollars. The Type B budget includes money which is set-aside for unidentified projects. The local match for the expansion of the Round Rock Transit Center will be funded from these funds. The anticipated construction start date is Summer 2020 through Summer 2021 and for the two fiscal years the project spans, there is approximately \$51.7 million in the unidentified projects line item. The local match for the expansion of the Transit Center will come from these funds.

Supporting Documentation of Local Match.

Attached to this application is the Type B 5-Year budget forecast and City Council Resolution supporting this grant application.

Project Timeline (Please be as specific as possible)

Timeline Item Description	Timeline Item Date
FTA Project Selection - Fall 2018	10/31/2018
CAMPO TIP Amendment Process - Spring 2019	05/31/2019
TxDOT Statewide TIP - Summer 2019	08/31/2019
Grant Application Process - Fall 2019	11/15/2019
Prepare Bid Documents and Bid Project - Winter 2020	02/20/2020
Select Contractor - Spring 2020	03/31/2020
Contract Signatures/Notice to Proceed - Summer 2020	07/01/2020
Construction - Summer 2020 to Summer 2021	07/10/2020

Section III . Evaluation Criteria

*****Address each of the evaluation criteria as described in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.*****

Demonstration of Need

Parking availability is an important component of park-and-ride commuter express bus service. An analysis of current Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics (LEHD) data indicates that 3,596 Round Rock residents currently work within downtown Austin. Applying a commuter bus mode share of 3% to this employment figure results in a projected 108 daily riders, which equates to 97-102 occupied spaces, assuming 5-10% of riders are dropped off. This projection suggests that the transit center could approach maximum capacity within the first year of service.

The City of Round Rock Planning and Development Services projects a 46-percent population increase from 2017 to 2030. Assuming that the percentage of Round Rock residents employed in downtown Austin remains constant and the commuter bus mode share increases from 3% to 4% due to ridership maturation and increased service levels, the parking demand for the Round Rock Transit Center is projected to nearly double to 200 spaces by 2030.

Aerial photography from November 2014 to May 2017 reveals that Howard Station (served by Capital Metro MetroRail Red Line) and Tech Ridge Park-and-Ride (served by Capital Metro Route 935 Tech Ridge Express) have each averaged between 200-225 occupied parking spaces on weekdays. Howard Station has been over capacity for several years and is scheduled to be expanded by 85 parking spaces in Fall 2017. Round Rock Transit Center will provide Interstate 35 and MoPac/Loop 1 Expressway commuters with a third park-and-ride option that will likely prove to be the most convenient for many existing and potential transit users.

Expanding the Round Rock Transit Center would extend the useful life of the facility by meeting long-term parking needs, and eliminate the need for additional park-and-ride facilities along the congested Interstate 35 corridors in Round Rock.

Maintaining reliable schedules requires safe and efficient bus loading operations. The loading/unloading area at the Round Rock Transit Center currently consists of an open, paved area level with the ground floor of the parking structure. While the area provides sufficient space for buses to access the facility, it lacks a curb and sidewalk.

The addition of a curb and sidewalk in the bus loading area in conjunction with facility expansion would improve accessibility by reducing potential conflicts between passengers and vehicles by creating a safe, visible area for passengers. Curb-level loading also makes stepping onto or off the bus easier for riders of all ages and abilities, thereby reducing dwell time. As bus service and passenger activity at the transit center increases, the need for managing foot and vehicle traffic within the loading area will increase significantly.

Demonstration of Benefits

In addition to meeting future parking demand and improving passenger safety and operational efficiency, expansion of the Round Rock Transit Center would yield several benefits for residents of Round Rock and the greater Central Texas region.

The City of Round Rock completed a Transit Master Plan in November 2015 that included extensive community outreach in the form of public meetings, stakeholder discussions, a project website, and an online survey for Round Rock residents. Over 200 existing Capital Metro riders as well as 1,200 non-transit riders completed the online survey and overwhelmingly identified commuter express bus service to Austin as the highest transit priority for Round Rock.

The Round Rock Transit Center is centrally located and accessible by auto within ten minutes from most areas of the city, whereas Tech Ridge Park-and-Ride and Howard Station are within ten minutes from only the southernmost neighborhoods of Round Rock. Therefore, it is likely that the transit center will be the primary choice for potential commuter bus riders. By expanding the Round Rock Transit Center, the city will have the ability to increase the number of commuter express bus trips to meet anticipated future demand.

Transit center expansion would enhance the opportunity of establishing the facility as a local and regional mobility hub. Mobility hubs can include a range of amenities and services such as:

- Vehicle and bike connections
- Ride share pick up/drop off zones
- Car share parking
- Electric vehicle charging stations
- Bike share stations
- Bus layover zones (existing)

- Information/Signage
- Wayfinding
- Real-time transit information
- Wi-Fi
- Retail

A full five-story buildout of the transit center would provide up to 297 new parking spaces on floors 3-5, which could allow the facility to function as more than a park-and-ride and transfer point. Designated space for ride share, car share, electric vehicles and bike share would benefit a significantly larger segment of the community and downtown Round Rock itself.

In addition to boosting the downtown economy, the potential conversion of the ground floor to retail space would allow riders to incorporate non-travel-related activities into their daily commutes, such as purchasing food or running errands. These conveniences have the potential to convert more personal auto users to bus service directly reduces harmful emissions by taking cars off the road, and increases system performance by boosting daily ridership. Wayfinding and real-time information are amenities that make transit connections easier for riders.

Planning and Local/Regional Prioritization

Capital Area Rural Transportation System (CARTS), the region's rural transit provider also provides interurban service across nine counties and operates out of the Round Rock Transit Center.

The City of Georgetown (GoGeo Transit) has expressed an interest in extending their respective bus services to the Round Rock Transit Center within the year.

The nearby City of Hutto recently adopted a Transit Development Plan that includes a planned Highway 79 Flex route, which would connect to the Round Rock Transit Center.

Local Financial Commitment

The City of Round Rock is prepared to meet its financial obligations upon award of 5339 grant funds. City Council and City Management are in support of the project to expand the Round Rock Transit Center. They believe the expansion will help meet the needs of future commuter bus riders. The City has a voter approved Transportation and Economic Development Corporation (Type B), which is funded by one-half cent of sales tax dollars.

The Type B budget includes money which is set-aside for unidentified projects. The local match for the expansion of the Round Rock Transit Center will be funded from these funds. The anticipated construction start date is Summer 2020 through Summer 2021 and for the two fiscal years the project spans, there is approximately \$51.7 million in the unidentified projects line item. The local match for the expansion of the Transit Center will come from these funds.

Project Implementation Strategy

Round Rock Transit Center expansion would require a construction period of approximately twelve months. This condensed timeline is because parking expansion and ground floor retail conversion plans were created as part of the original facility design.

Full implementation would span three years from FTA award to completed construction and includes the following actions:

- FTA Project Selection (Fall 2018)
- CAMPO TIP Amendment Process (Spring 2019)
- TxDOT Statewide TIP (Summer 2019)
- Grant Application (Fall 2019)
- Bid project (Winter 2020)
- Select bidder (Spring 2020)

- Contract Finalization/Notice to Proceed (Summer 2020)
- Construction (Summer 2020 to Summer 2021)

Can this project be obligated within 12 months? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Technical, Legal, and Financial Capacity

The City has a Transit Coordinator who oversees all activities associated with Round Rock's transit program, including grant funds. The City's Finance Department provides support to the Transit Coordinator by performing draw downs and providing audit oversight. The City files financial reports timely, spends down FTA grants in the order they are awarded (as required), adheres to FTA deadlines, requests extensions timely if needed, and keeps FTA informed of grant activities.

The City has a contracted law firm to ensure all activities of the City are legally conducted. Each year, they review the certification and assurances and provide clearance to city management to execute the certifications and assurances. They prepare all contracts, with the Transit Coordinator's assistance, pertaining to federal regulations, and approve such for Council to take action on.

The City is fiscally responsible and budgets conservatively. The City has earned four Transparency Stars from the Texas Comptroller's Office recognizing the City's efforts to be transparent and make information readily available. Additionally, the City has been awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for 31 consecutive years and received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its annual budget document for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2016. These awards are issued by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada. Additionally, the City has a history of clean Single and Financial Statement Audits.

Departmental Objectives

If applicable, describe how this application addresses one or more departmental objectives addressed in the announcement

Project enhances/supports economies of downtown businesses and surrounding communities, supports state of good repair. Round Rock is an accountable recipient.

Congressional Districts (Place of Performance)

Congressional District

TX-031