THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE
STAFF REPORT

Council Meeting Date: February 24, 2026

Subject: FY27 BUILD Planning Grant Application

Staff Resources: Ashley Haire, P.E., Transportation Director
Lucy Crown, Transportation Planning Manager

Action Requested: Adoption of a resolution ratifying the submission of an application for a 2026 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant for $650,000 from the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) for a planning grant to study multimodal improvements for the Hilliard Avenue corridor, and if awarded, accept the funds and authorize the City Manager to sign all necessary documents to effect the grant.

Background:

- The call for projects is for funding through the 2026 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant program, a nationally competitive grant for which all government entities are eligible to apply.
- Eligible activities for BUILD planning grants include feasibility studies, small-area plans, conceptual designs, bike/ped plans, transit plans, traffic studies, local transportation asset inventories, economic impact analyses for transportation investments, and more, as defined by federal eligibility.
- The submitted project for the grant is a feasibility study for multimodal transportation improvements to Hilliard Avenue. This plan is intended to examine the existing extents of the Hilliard Avenue corridor from Clingman Avenue to Biltmore Avenue for future improvements, as well as coordinate future changes associated with NCDOT's I-26 Connector project, specifically addressing functionality changes on Patton Avenue and surrounding streets, including improvements at the Clingman Avenue and Hilliard Avenue intersection.
- The study will also investigate assessments of rights-of-way, above-ground and subsurface utilities, topography, accessibility needs, intersection improvements, and possible reconfigurations, along with planning-level cost estimates. This project is intended as a scoping analysis for future capital projects in the corridor.
- Hilliard Avenue is a top-ranked corridor for ADA improvements in the GAP Plan Prioritization List.
- The total cost of the proposed planning study is $650,000, with a grant amount of $585,000. Although the BUILD program does not require a match due to Hilliard Avenue's location in an Area of Persistent Poverty and an Opportunity Zone, the City of Asheville will provide $65,000 in matching funds to increase the City's competitiveness in this grant program. This match amount will be allocated from the CIP.
- The deadline for submitting the grant application is February 24, 2026.
- The Transportation Department recently requested that Council approve a similar grant application through the MPO for the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) submitted in January. Asheville did not win that award, so this is the same request from a different funding source.

Goal(s):

- Well-Planned and Livable Community
- Transportation and Accessibility

Committee(s):

- NA

Fiscal Impact:

- If awarded, the City of Asheville will provide a $65,000 local match. If needed, the City will allocate funds from the General Capital Projects Fund.

Suggested Motion:

- Motion to ratify the submission of an application for grant funding from the USDOT's Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant program, and if awarded, accept the funds and authorize the City Manager to sign all necessary documents to effect the grant, and fund the local match in an amount up to $65,000.

Attachment:

- Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 26-_____

RESOLUTION RATIFYING THE APPLICATION FOR AND, IF AWARDED, ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT FUNDING THROUGH THE BETTER UTILIZING INVESTMENTS TO LEVERAGE DEVELOPMENT (BUILD) GRANT PROGRAM FROM THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR A HILLIARD AVENUE MULTIMODAL STREETSCAPE PLAN

WHEREAS, the City of Asheville, through its Transportation Department and per N.C.G.S. § 160A-17.1, is eligible to apply for and expend said funds to conduct eligible transportation planning activities such as feasibility studies, small-area plans, and conceptual designs; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Transportation has issued a call for projects for funding through the competitive 2026 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant program to be used for planning projects of surface transportation projects; and

WHEREAS, the City's Transportation Department intends to seek funds for studies to be conducted on Hilliard Avenue for future implementation that will improve ADA accessibility and multimodal transportation within the existing corridor and guide improvements that will serve future traffic patterns on Hilliard Avenue and Patton Avenue created by the NCDOT I-26 project; and

WHEREAS, the BUILD program does not require a match, due to Hilliard Avenue's location in an Area of Persistent Poverty and an Opportunity Zone. However, the City of Asheville will provide $65,000 in matching funds as a competitive edge in this grant program; and

WHEREAS, the requested funds are for a total of $650,000, with $585,000 being the granted funds and $65,000 being the matching funds; and

WHEREAS, the deadline for submitting the grant application is February 24, 2026;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE THAT:

The submission of the grant application from the USDOT's BUILD grant program is hereby ratified, and the City Manager is further authorized to accept the funds if awarded, sign all necessary agreements and documents required to effect the grant, and to fund the local match in an amount up to $65,000.

Read, approved, and adopted this the 24th day of February, 2026.

_____ _____

City Clerk Mayor

Approved as to form:

_____

City Attorney