THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

STAFF REPORT

Council Meeting Date: April 14, 2026

Subject: Tourism Development Authority to accept Legacy Investment from Tourism (LIFT) Grant

Staff Resource(s): Jaime Matthews, Assistant to the City Manager

Action Requested: Adoption of a resolution to authorize the City Manager to submit an application to the Tourism Development Authority Legacy Investment from Tourism (LIFT) Grant for 3 city projects, to accept said grant funds if awarded; and enter into any agreement documents necessary for such acceptance.

Background:

- The Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority's LIFT Fund provides financial investment through grants, loan guarantees, or pledges of debt service to tourism-related capital projects that will increase patronage of lodging facilities and benefit the community at large in Buncombe County.
- The 2026 cycle for LIFT funding opens on April 1, 2026, with applications due on May 1, 2026.
- Staff has identified 3 potential projects for applications for LIFT funding:
    - Biltmore Village Sidewalk/Streetscape - $2,300,000
    - Eagle Market Sidewalk/Streetscape - $1,500,000
    - Craven Street Bike/Ped Bridge - $1,515,800

Council Vision 2026 Focus Area(s):

- Transportation and Accessibility
- Clean, Safe and Healthy Environment
- A Well-Planned and Livable Community
- Thriving Local Economy

Council Recovery Priorities:

- Infrastructure & Environment

Committee(s):

- None

Pro(s):

- Grants from the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) provide the City with opportunities to leverage funds for tourism-related capital projects.
- The City aligns capital needs with the allowable uses for TDA grant funding.
- Proposed 2026 LIFT Applications would provide the follow benefits:
    - Infrastructure recovery project that will enhance safety, accessibility, and overall streetscape quality in Biltmore Village.
    - Investments in The Block will improve safety and accessibility, support cultural expression and public art, and strengthen neighborhood identity—all aligned with the community's vision.
    - New bicycle and pedestrian bridge over the French Broad River to improve safe, non-vehicular crossings

Con(s):

- Timelines for construction and access limits during construction of infrastructure projects.
- Aligning processes and timing with other large recovery projects.

Fiscal Impact:

- If awarded, funds will be added to the budget through the budget process or a budget amendment.
- Matching funds are from the City CIP, NCDOT TIP funding and other grant funding.

Suggested Motion:

- Motion to adopt a resolution to authorize the City Manager to submit an application to the Tourism Development Authority Legacy Investment from Tourism (LIFT) Grant for 3 city projects, to accept said grant funds if awarded; and enter into any agreement documents necessary for such acceptance.

Attachment(s):

- Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 26-____

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY LEGACY INVESTMENT FROM TOURISM (LIFT) GRANT FOR 3 CITY PROJECTS, TO ACCEPT SAID GRANT FUNDS IF AWARDED; AND ENTER INTO ANY AGREEMENT DOCUMENTS NECESSARY FOR SUCH ACCEPTANCE.

WHEREAS, the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority's LIFT Fund provides financial investment through grants, loan guarantees, or pledges of debt service to tourism-related capital projects that will increase patronage of lodging facilities and benefit the community at large in Buncombe County; and

WHEREAS, in April 2026 the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority Board opened the Legacy Investment from Tourism application process, and applications are due by May 1; and

WHEREAS, the City of Asheville will submit three projects the in total request $6,315,000 in LIFT funding; and

WHEREAS, the application for funding will include the following projects:

Biltmore Village Sidewalk/Streetscape - $2,300,000
- Eagle Market Sidewalk/Streetscape - $1,500,000
- Craven Street Bike/Ped Bridge - $1,515,800

WHEREAS, these projects will enhance the experiences of local and out of town visitors by providing improved and enhanced infrastructure;

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

The City Manager is authorized to submit an application to the tourism development authority legacy investment from tourism (lift) grant for the three city projects described herein, to accept said grant funds if awarded; and enter into any agreement documents necessary for such acceptance.

Read, approved, and adopted this 14th day of April, 2026.

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City Clerk Mayor

Approved as to form:

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City Attorney