



Legislation Text

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State Infrastructure Bank Loan Application

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) was reauthorized by the federal Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st. Century (TEA 21) as one of 4 states to provide a State Infrastructure Bank (SIB). The SIB's function is to accelerate capital investments in transportation infrastructure, including the purchase of public transit vehicles, beyond the usual flow of federal capital assistance funds. Loans provided through the SIB are zero percent interest and 10 year terms.

The City of Gainesville has several existing capital needs that could benefit from a SIB loan. These include construction of the Gainesville Transportation Center, purchase of 25 low floor 40' buses, purchase of 15 paratransit vans, and purchase of 6 small hybrid electric buses.

In December 1998, the City Commission authorized the City Manager to file a loan application in the amount of \$800,000 for the Gainesville Transportation Center. Since that time, a new concept plan was prepared by Dover, Kohl and Associates as a product of the Kelly Power Plant Repowering Charette. The cost of construction for this new building design is anticipated to be an additional \$1.0 million. Therefore, if the City Commission desires to move forward with a redesign of the Transportation Center the requested loan should be approximately \$1,800,000.

The most pressing transit capital need at this time is the acquisition of 25 low floor 40' ADA equipped buses. The acquisition of 24 buses would provide the City with a fleet of 100% ADA accessible buses. The Florida Transit Association has established a statewide-pooled procurement program that provides these buses at a cost of approximately \$250,000 each. This is a very good price for a fully equipped low floor 40' bus, which includes radio, destination signs, farebox, etc. Because this procurement is part of a 1,000 bus statewide-pooled purchase, delivery schedules are generally accelerated from a typical 18 months to 12 months. The total estimated cost is \$6,250,000.

Loan funds could also be allocated to purchase 15 paratransit vans for the Community Transportation Coordinator to support both transportation disadvantaged and ADA Complementary Paratransit Services at an estimated cost of \$525,000.

Finally, funding would also be made available to obtain 6 small hybrid electric buses to use for a proposed downtown to campus shuttle route at an estimated cost of \$1,800,000.

The City currently has \$1,200,000 of federal funds allocated for the construction of the Transportation Center. In addition, the City has \$1,500,000 of federal funds allocated in FY 1999 for bus purchases and anticipate an additional \$1,000,000 in FY 2000. Therefore, the total loan request would be \$7,875,000.

The loan can be paid back using a combination of annual capital grants from Congressional earmarks and Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) over the next 10 years. Based on our record of obtaining Congressional earmarks over the past couple of years, staff expects that the City will continue to receive approximately \$1.0 million per year in federal transit capital grants over the next several years. The FDOT has allocated STP funds in the amount of \$1,250,000 for state fiscal year 2003-2004 for transit capital purposes. FDOT has indicated it will continue to allocate this amount to transit capital in future work programs. SIB loan guidelines allow for repayments to be skipped during any given year, as long as the loan is repaid by the tenth year.

The City Commission authorize the City Manager to: 1) file a loan application(s) on behalf of the City of Gainesville with the Florida Department of Transportation's State Infrastructure Bank for the acquisition of 25 low floor 40' buses, 15 paratransit vans, 6 small hybrid electric buses, and the construction of the Gainesville Transportation Center; and 2) execute any required documents related to acquiring the loan(s), subject to review by the City Attorney as to form and legality.