



# **CITY OF FLAGSTAFF**

## **STAFF SUMMARY REPORT**

To: The Honorable Mayor and Council

From: Charles M Hernandez II, Deputy Chief – Criminal Investigations

Co-Submitter: Megan Dales

Date: March 13, 2025

Meeting Date: May 6, 2025

### **TITLE:**

Consideration and Approval of the Project Sponsor Agreement between the City of Flagstaff and the Arizona State Parks Board for approval of award of the Off-Highway Vehicle Supplemental Grant.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Approve Project Sponsor Agreement with the Arizona State Parks Board for the Fiscal Year 2025 Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Supplemental Grant in the amount of \$93,738.00 for the Flagstaff Police Department to utilize for the purpose of Law Enforcement Programs. The grant funds will be utilized for outreach in heavily trafficked OHV locations. Additionally, the department will enhance patrol and enforcement efforts in off-highway areas and support the Coconino County Sheriff's Office during holidays and special events related to OHV operations. Grant funds will be used for the following items: Overtime patrol, 1 side by side vehicle (SXS) with upgrades, SXS communication package with install, SXS LE lighting package with install, Officer PPE.

### **Executive Summary:**

Approval of the Project Sponsor Agreement will allow the Arizona State Parks Board to channel Off-Highway Vehicle Supplemental Grant funds to the City of Flagstaff Police Department to purchase the OHV vehicle, equipment, and compensation for overtime operations.

### **Financial Impact:**

There is no significant financial impact to the City of Flagstaff in terms of expenditures. This grant funding is budgeted in FY 2025 in the amount of \$93,738.00 account number 001-04-062-6278-2-4305. **A minimum 10% match** is required for reimbursement. City of Flagstaff Police Department will provide up to \$66,212.00 in cash and/or in-kind match in the form of staff time and supplies for this project. We have historically and are currently performing work through various patrol operations that will meet this match staff time and supplies requirement. (ex. Woods Watch, Camping Resource Pamphlets...etc)

### **Policy Impact:**

The Agreement and grant funds aim to strengthen public safety by enhancing the Flagstaff Police Department's OHV law enforcement capabilities to ensure compliance with on-roadway and off-highway safety regulations, in addition to minimizing environmental impacts within the community and open spaces. Additionally, we will improve response times and effectiveness to OHV involved incidents that occur in remote areas where conventional vehicles cannot access. Lastly, we will educate the public on responsible OHV usage to mitigate risks and promote environmental stewardship. We believe the best prevention is education before enforcement. To achieve voluntary compliance with the laws and regulations governing OHV equipment and operations, it is our intention to participate in and host community events to provide educational materials and in-person question and answer events to boost community awareness and safety related to OHVs on the roadway and in our open spaces. We will work with local vendors of OHV's to ensure educational material can be distributed to community members at the time of their purchase, offering reference contact information for purchasers to reach out and obtain more information related to safe OHV operations within our community.

### **Connection to Council Goal, Regional Plan and / or Team Flagstaff Strategic Plan:**

The OHV Supplemental Grant Agreement aligns with the **Flagstaff Regional Plan Policy PF.3.1**, which emphasized maintaining high quality, effective, and efficient law enforcement, fire, and emergency services. This policy underscores the importance of balancing public safety services with the operational goals, government plans, policies, population needs, and available funding.

By leveraging Fiscal Year 2025 grant funds, this agreement directly supports this policy by ensuring the Flagstaff Police Department has the resources necessary to deliver enhanced public safety services. This approach will allow our agency to optimize our effectiveness and coordinated efforts to ensure alignment with population demands and regional public safety goals. Furthermore, the transparent use of these funds reflects a commitment to sound fiscal management, ensuring services remain sustainable and in line with public policies and budgetary limitations. This grant initiative strengthens the region's ability to meet evolving public safety needs while upholding the policy's focus on quality and efficiency.

**Has There Been Previous Council Decision on This:**

No, this grant has not been presented to council in the past.

**Options and Alternatives:**

- Approve the Agreement between the City of Flagstaff and Arizona State Parks Board
- Not Approve the Agreement between the City of Flagstaff and Arizona State Parks Board

**Background / History:**

The State OHV Recreation Fund, established in 1991, provides a legislatively set percentage (0.55 percent) of total license taxes on motor vehicle fuel from the Highway User Revenue Fund for OHV management. Approximately \$2 million is available annually through Arizona State Parks for OHV projects. In 2009, new OHV legislation was enacted to provide more regulation of OHV usage and additional funds to support law enforcement and facility development. All vehicles weighing less than 2,500 pounds and designed primarily for travel over unimproved terrain are required to display an indicia (sticker) distributed through the Department of Motor Vehicles. The \$25 cost of the sticker is added to the OHV Recreation Fund. State Parks receives 60 percent of the money in the fund for projects.

**Key Considerations:**

In January 2024, the Consumer Federation of America issued a press release titled, “2023 Fatality Data: Another Devastating Year for Off-Highway Vehicle Riders and Occupants”, citing that there were 498 off-highway vehicle (OHV) fatalities in 2023. Additionally, “children fifteen years and younger accounted for nineteen percent of all deaths”. Lastly, the release advised, “OHV fatalities disproportionately occur on-road”, meaning the vehicles are operated on public streets when they are manufactured, designed, and intended for off-highway use. Multiple fatalities and significant head injuries are related to the crashes involving OHV’s on-road due to operators and passengers being “less likely to wear protective gear, such as helmets”.

An analysis of our roadway traffic and off-highway arterial trails indicates an intertwined vehicle transit system not easily navigated by traditional roadway patrol vehicles. The increase in OHV usage within our city and surrounding forests has led to a rise in safety concerns and environmental impacts in the City of Flagstaff and Coconino County jurisdictions. Currently, our law enforcement agency lacks adequate resources to effectively monitor and enforce OHV regulations across remote and challenging terrains located within the City of Flagstaff and surrounding open spaces within Coconino County and the Coconino National Forest land. This gap compromises public safety, environmental conservation efforts, and overall community welfare due to our limited equipment capabilities to access off-highway roadways in open

spaces.

Within the City of Flagstaff jurisdiction, there are approximately (14) fourteen miles of identified OHV trails; consisting of legs within the Cinder Hills OHV Loop (aka Cinder Hills OHV Area). In addition to this OHV recreation area, the City of Flagstaff has numerous unpaved roadways and trail systems within the city limits that OHV and off-road motor vehicles utilize with authorization and without.

It is our intention to utilize grant funding to fill gaps in our enforcement efforts and bolster the safety and educational efforts by using a procured OHV to engage with the public and use the engagement as an opportunity to educate on safety and laws related to OHV operations and safety. To accomplish this objective, we will increase our patrol efforts of off-highway OHV enforcement, while simultaneously bolstering our on-road enforcement efforts ensuring proper safety equipment is present and ensuring on-highway laws are adhered to. During the directed patrols, we will also ensure good environmental stewardship of open spaces within the community while additionally ensuring fire prevention and education activities are conducted. We are committed to utilizing these resources efficiently to promote a safer, more informed, and resilient community.

**Expanded Financial Considerations:**

The Fiscal Year 2025 Arizona State Parks Off-Highway Supplemental Grant funds have been awarded in the amount \$93,738.00 of which the City will agree to terms of the Agreement.

**Community Benefits and Considerations:**

The Agreement between the City of Flagstaff and Arizona State Parks Board enables the Flagstaff Police Department to leverage Fiscal Year 2025 grant funds to enhance crime prevent and control, support justice administration, prevent environmental impacts of open spaces, and provide education to OHV owners and operators. This contributes to a Safe and Healthy Community by providing public safety services with resources, staff & training which is responsive to the community's needs.

**Community Involvement:**

Inform the Council and public on the successful application and award of this grant and intended use of these funds.

**Expanded Options and Alternatives:**

1. Approve as recommended
2. Disapprove the Agreement with the Arizona State Parks Board and potentially funding of this project.