

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: March 22, 2021

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of April 14, 2021

Subject: Authorize Contract with Gillig Corporation for 30-Foot Buses

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: 2021 Capital Budget, Capital Improvement Program (CIP), Authorized Capital Program

Staff Prepared/Presented: Nick Thompson, Director MTS (651) 602-1754
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Division/Department: Transportation/Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS)

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council Authorize the Regional Administrator to exercise bus purchase options utilizing the Commonwealth of Virginia's Contract E194-75548 MA2274 with Gillig LLC, to purchase up to twenty-six (26) replacement transit buses in an amount not to exceed \$12,820,000.

Background

The Council does not currently have an active thirty-foot bus contract with a vendor. The Council is an eligible participant to purchase buses using the State of Virginia bus contract which expires on May 31, 2021. The Virginia Contract and Request for Proposal are federally compliant. MTS uses these heavy-duty 30' buses because of their durability and size. Many of the routes these buses operate on are in service 16 – 18 hours a day and operate 6 to 7 days a week. The buses will operate on mostly suburban cross-town routes which have lower ridership and connect with urban local routes. Gillig is the only remaining manufacturer of the heavy-duty 30' bus. Although Gillig has introduced the electric propulsion system as an option on their 40' bus, the alternative fuel system has not been engineered for the 30' bus. Gillig does have plans to implement this technology on the 30' buses in the coming years.

Rationale

The twenty-six replacement vehicles operate on multiple routes throughout the metro area. The current contractor for these routes is First Transit. The buses that will be replaced include sixteen (16) thirty-foot low floor buses and ten (10) forty-foot low floor buses that have currently surpassed or will reach the minimum useful life threshold when buses are delivered in 2022. Given the 13-month lead time to order and build the buses, the Council expects to receive the first buses in June 2022.

Thrive Lens Analysis

This purchase enables the provision of reliable transportation alternatives for many residents throughout the metro area linking them to jobs, education, shopping, and many other opportunities (prosperity and equity).

Funding

Purchase of these buses is contingent on approval of the 2021 first quarter capital amendment which includes funding for this project. This purchase will use federal and local funds.

Known Support / Opposition

The Council and its members received communications and correspondence from members of the public and other interested persons voicing their concern about the proposed purchase of 60' biodiesel buses rather than electric buses. This business item is for the purchase of 30' heavy duty transit buses and there are currently no 30' heavy duty electric buses available in the market.