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Business Item

Transportation Committee



Committee Meeting Date: May 8, 2023

For the Metropolitan Council: May 24, 2023

Business Item: 2023-68

Adoption of MTS & STA Zero-Emission Bus Transition Plan

District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	Minnesota Statute 473.3927
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Division/Department:	Transportation / Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS)

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council adopt the Metropolitan Transportation Services and Suburban Transit Authority Zero Emission Bus Transition Plan as required by Minnesota Statute 473.3927.

Background

The Zero Emission Bus Plan (ZEBTP) is a framework to identify how Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS) and the Suburban Transit Authorities (STAs) will plan for a transition to a zero-emission bus (ZEB) fleet. As described in the plan, the Council will develop zero-emission deployment models tailored to MTS' unique services and fleet types. The plan complements ZEB planning underway by suburban providers in coordination with Council staff; the plan covers the entire MTS fleet that currently includes over 1,156 Council-owned transit vehicles including 326 operated by the suburban providers. An information item detailing the project process and plan highlights was presented to the Transportation Committee on April 24, 2023.

Four guiding principles and seven supporting actions were established as the framework for the Transition Plan and for use in defining the successful criteria toward transitioning to ZEBs. The guiding principles are Scalability, Technical Viability, Equity and Environmental Justice, and Fiscal Impact.

- Scalability: Develop zero-emission deployment models tailored to unique service/fleet types, facility ownership status, and limited duration transit operating contracts
- Technical Viability: Strive to achieve a level of service where zero-emission buses and diesel buses are referred to as just 'buses' rather than by their propulsion type.
- Technical Viability: Partner with electric utilities to assess and upgrade electrical infrastructure for bus operation and maintenance facilities.
- Equity and Environmental Justice: Implement and prioritize zero-emissions bus service reflecting transparent fact-driver community engagement and education.
- Equity and Environmental Justice: Target zero-emission bus investment in communities where air pollution, racial, and socioeconomic disparities are greatest while also balancing the challenges of new technology.
- Fiscal Impact: Operate and invest within fiscal means by planning for and optimizing capital

and operating expenditures while pursuing new funding streams.

- **Fiscal Impact:** Deploy zero-emission buses in a fiscally efficient manner to maximize use of vehicles and infrastructure.

The ZEBTP examines a variety of challenges and opportunities for MTS and the STAs. For example, to move towards an electric fleet, the Council and Suburban providers need to own garages or utilize long-term leases, a significant change from current practices. A study of facility ownership business, infrastructure, and location factors is one of the next planned steps for MTS services.

Near-term opportunities may include electric bus pilots in two STAs (MVTA and SWT) who own their facilities allowing for a faster implementation of large bus electric fleet. Because a significant number of buses owned by MTS have a five-year replacement cycle, the transition period from fossil fuels to zero emission can occur over a relatively short time span once the technology matches the service needs.

Rationale

MTS is developing the plan in accordance with Minnesota Statute 473.3927. Council adoption of the Zero Emission Bus Transition Plan will establish the Council's vision for ZEB implementation through 2028.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The Zero Emission Bus Transition Plan will advance all five of the Thrive Outcomes.

- **Stewardship** – through the Guiding Principles of Technical Viability and Fiscal Impact to ensure that the Council is responsibly managing our region's finite resources and leveraging transit investments.
- **Prosperity** – through the Guiding Principle of Equity and Environmental Justice to ensure the Council is fostering the conditions for shared economic vitality.
- **Equity** – through the Guiding Principle of Equity and Environmental Justice by working to build a more equitable region, creating choices for all, and engaging the community in decision making.
- **Livability** is addressed by all aspects of the plan to promote healthier communities.
- **Sustainability** is addressed by all aspects of the plan to provide leadership in climate change mitigation.

Funding

The development of this plan was paid for through local funding.

Small Business Inclusion

Adopting the plan does not include contracting, so there is no small business inclusion tied to this action.