



## SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 5/23/2023

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**To:** Board of Supervisors

**Department or Agency Name(s):** Sonoma County Public Infrastructure - Transit Division

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Johannes J. Hoevertsz, 707-565-2231

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**Supervisorial District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

Clean Transit Zero-Emission Bus Rollout Plan

**Recommended Action:**

Adopt a Resolution approving Sonoma County Transit's Innovative Clean Transit Zero-Emission Bus Rollout Plan and authorizing the Transit Systems Manager to submit the plan to the California Air Resources Board in accordance with Innovative Clean Transit regulations.

**Executive Summary:**

The Innovative Clean Transportation (ICT) Zero-Emission Bus Rollout Plan is required by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). The ICT regulations require California's transit agencies to begin transitioning to a zero-emission fleet no later than January 1, 2026, and for all new fleet purchases to be zero-emission after January 1, 2029. Sonoma County Transit's plan is the first of several plans that will be updated periodically as Transit makes progress in its transition from a fleet comprised mostly of compressed natural gas (CNG) coaches to one comprised of battery-electric powered coaches.

The plan identifies that by 2035, Sonoma County Transit can be fully transitioned to a zero-emission fleet when all vehicles currently covered by the ICT regulations are replaced. Combined with replacing its fleet of CNG coaches, new electric charging facilities and backup generators will need to be purchased and installed. Combined, the projected cost of the fleet replacement is over \$50 million. The projected cost of the infrastructure improvements to support the new zero-emission fleet exceeds \$9 million. These cost projections are exclusive of a sixteen-bus purchase and development of charging facilities to support these vehicles that has been funded and which is included in Transit's FY 2023-24 budget.

**Discussion:**

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) adopted the Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) regulations in December 2018 and they became effective on October 1, 2019. The regulations require that each transit agency gradually transition its fleet to a zero-emission fleet. The regulations permit the purchase of other than zero-emission buses until 2029. After January 1, 2029, all buses purchased by California transit operators must be zero-emission vehicles.

The current regulations apply to vehicles exceeding 14,000 gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR), which includes the majority of Transit's fleet. Most of Sonoma County Transit's paratransit vehicles are excluded from the ICT

regulation as their GVWR is less than 14,000 lbs. It is expected that CARB will reassess how these lighter duty vehicles are addressed in an ICT update in 2026.

To fully implement the plan, receipt of state and federal discretionary capital funds will be essential in order to meet its goal of achieving a zero-emission fleet by 2035. Traditional formula-based capital funding sources do not provide the capital funds necessary to meet this goal.

Over 40% of SCT routes serve communities of concern which is identified using poverty level data. Well over 40% of passengers representing a disadvantaged group will directly benefit from this project. SCT will continue to use data sets such as public outreach, ridership data, and environmental data to monitor the benefit and response from the community.

Presently, Sonoma County Transit is pursuing capital assistance from the state Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) and federal Low or No Emission vehicle (Low-No) capital funding program. Currently, 13 buses are requested under a TIRCP application submitted earlier this year and 21 buses and charging equipment are requested under a federal “Low-No” grant request submitted in April.

Sonoma County Transit received TIRCP funds in 2022. Combined with several years of accumulated federal 5307 funding and other local funds, a total of sixteen zero-emission buses are currently on order and are expected to be delivered between June 2023 and August 2024.

If unsuccessful in receiving the requested funds in 2023, Sonoma County Transit will continue to request funding from these programs and similar state and federal programs annually. Of the projected \$60M in needed funds, current grant requests equal approximately \$26M. While our goal is to have the fleet be fully zero-emission by 2035, CARB’s requirement is by 2040. Over the next 12 to 17 years, fleet electrification will be Sonoma County Transit’s top capital priority. This plan will be updated in fiscal year 2025-26 to reflect progress made towards the 2035 goal, discuss outstanding issues and make a projection for the next five-year period.

The plan is required to be submitted to CARB by July 1, 2023. Prior to submittal to CARB, the Rollout Plan must be approved by the transit agency’s governing body through the adoption of a Resolution.

**Strategic Plan:**

N/A

**Prior Board Actions:**

None.

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

There are no fiscal impacts associated with this recommended action. The plan calls for the investment of over \$60 million to fully implement and support a zero-emission fleet by 2035 therefore, future costs will be included with recommended budget requests.

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**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

None.

**Attachments:**

Resolution

Sonoma County Transit Zero Emission Bus Rollout Plan

**Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:**

None.