

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 9/25/2019

Staff Report No. 19-308

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager
SUBJECT: Public Hearing for Division 4 Zero-emission Modifications

ACTION ITEM

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider waiving the two-hearing requirement specified in Board Policy 110 and set a public hearing at 6:00 p.m. on October 23, 2019, regarding Division 4 modifications to accommodate battery electric buses as part of the 45 Zero Emission Bus Purchase - Initial Study/Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

Setting the public hearing does not have a fiscal impact on the District, other than the cost to publish the public notice. The purchase of 45 Zero Emission Buses (ZEBs) is funded by various state funds, including the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) and Senate Bill 1 Local Partnership Program (SB1 LLP) funds.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

AC Transit will purchase 45 ZEBs, install associated infrastructure, and operate ZEBs on corridors identified in the Board-approved Clean Corridors Plan, including the MacArthur-Grand Corridor and new Transbay service between the Emeryville Amtrak Station and the Salesforce Transit Center.

In February 2019, the Board directed staff to develop preliminary design for accommodating the 45 ZEBs without expanding the existing hydrogen fuel cell infrastructure. Staff estimates that AC Transit could add as many as 25 Fuel Cell Electric Buses (FCEBs) (for a total of 36 including the 10 new 40-foot New Flyer FCEBs and one demonstration 60-foot FCEB) without adding additional fuel cell infrastructure after the Division 2 Hydrogen fueling station modification. As part of the 45 ZEB purchase, AC Transit will procure between 20 to 40 Battery Electric Buses (BEBs) to fulfill the grant requirement.

Environmental Clearance

The District, as the lead agency for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance, authorized an Initial Study (IS) for the project, which has been completed. The IS determined that a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is warranted to satisfy CEQA requirements for environmental review of the proposed project. The MND prepared for this project clears the biggest potential physical impact, which assumes a maximum 40 BEBs at D4.

The new infrastructure would include installation of additional transformers, switchgear, charging equipment, and the construction of a new concrete deck to accommodate the new overhead charging stations. Overhead

charging stations would be fixed on the underside of the overhead deck such that buses can park underneath and connect to the charging unit via pantograph or overhead reel. The proposed project would also include paving a portion (110,000 square feet) of the AC Transit property located at 6235 Tevis Street to accommodate temporary bus parking during construction at D4. The Tevis Street site is currently used for truck parking and container storage, located directly east of the existing Maintenance Building. All buses will continue to access D4 via Seminary Avenue. The total number of buses assigned to D4 will not change as part of the 45 ZEB purchase.

Construction activities are scheduled to begin in January 2021 and expected to be completed in less than 12 months, prior to delivery of the BEB buses to D4.

The IS/Preliminary MND is included as Attachment 1. The Board is not adopting IS/Preliminary MND at this time. While a public hearing on this matter is not a required element of the CEQA process (CEQA Guideline 15087), staff requests holding one hearing in the interest of the public to receive comments on the Preliminary MND. Under Board Policy 110, two hearings are required for environmental matters; however, since a hearing is not required by CEQA, staff is requesting a waiver of the Board's two hearing requirement. It should be noted that holding a public hearing will not authorize a specific vehicle mix or associated infrastructure design. Eventual approval of the MND would clear a range of options currently being considered for the 45 ZEB purchase. Staff will bring a detailed discussion of the project to the Board at the October 30, 2019 Board Retreat.

Public Notification

Staff will inform the public, including members of the community, riders, and key stakeholders about the proposed project and the public hearing. Planned notification will include:

- Mailing the Notice of Intent (NOI) to residents, property owners and businesses within a quarter mile of the D4 facility and 6235 Tevis Street site. The NOI is provided as Attachment 2.
- Project information on the AC Transit website
- Digital, phone, and/or paper notices to stakeholders
- Posts on AC Transit's social media channels
- eNews
- Legal notice of Public Hearing
- Emails or other communication to any identified additional stakeholders

Schedule

- September 26, 2019 - File NOI
- September 26 - October 28 - Public Review Period
- October 23, 2019 - Hold Public Hearing
- January 2020 - Request Board acceptance of MND

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

The advantage of setting a public hearing is that it will allow the design and vehicle procurement process to continue as the environmental clearance is a required step. With CEQA clearance, staff can further develop the ZEB infrastructure design. Staff cannot identify any disadvantages in approving the setting of a public hearing.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

One alternative is to reduce size of the project so that a MND would not be required. Staff does not recommend this because the purchase of 45 ZEBs, including environmental clearance, is largely grant funded.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

Staff Report 18-208a - Preliminary Engineering Design and Implementation Plan for 45 Zero Emission Buses

Board Policy 110 - Public Hearing Processes for the Board of Directors

Board Policy 525 - Environmental Evaluations of Transit District Projects

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Initial Study/Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration
2. Notice of Intent
3. Public Hearing Notice

Approved by:

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