

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 5/8/2019

Staff Report No. 19-135

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager
SUBJECT: Application for FY 2019 FTA Low-No Funds

ACTION ITEM

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider authorizing the General Manager or his designee to file and execute grant applications and funding agreements with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Low or No Emission Vehicle Program for the purchase of five battery electric buses.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

The District is applying for up to \$1 million to purchase five battery electric buses with approximately 250 mile range of operations, along with purchase and installation of charging units for these buses. The buses will be depot-charged as opposed to en-route, with charging occurring nightly at one of the District's maintenance divisions. The total project cost is estimated to be \$5.75 million.

If the project is awarded, the District will have to provide \$4.75 million in District or other local, regional or state funds for the Low-No funding match requirement and to complete the project. Staff anticipates this match will be provided through a combination of state and regional programs such as the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program, the Transit Capital Priorities Program and Hybrid and Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project (HVIP).

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

The FTA issued a Solicitation of Project Proposals for \$85 million of FY 2019 Low or No Emission Program (Low-No) funds on March 18, 2019. The main purpose of the Low-No Program is to support the transition of the nation's transit fleet to the lowest polluting and most energy efficient transit vehicles. The Low-No Program provides funding to State and local governmental authorities for the purchase or lease of zero-emission and low-emission transit buses, including acquisition, construction, and leasing of required supporting facilities.

The District partnered with Gillig to apply for last year's Low-No grant and plans to do so again for this application. The advantages of partnering with Gillig include:

- Teaming up with the only local, heavy-duty transit bus manufacturer in the Bay Area for expansion of the District's zero emissions bus fleet.
- Expanding the development of battery electric buses to another high-volume transit bus manufacturer.

- Expanding the current zero emission bus analysis to a third technical platform, so that the District would have ten New Flyer fuel cell buses, five New Flyer battery electric buses, and five Gillig battery electric buses.
- Collaborating with a local transit bus manufacturer in developing advanced technical training for zero emission bus maintenance.
- Timely technical and parts related support for any warranty issues encountered on the battery electric buses, since Gillig will be producing these buses right outside of our service area.

The District also plans to partner with Charge Point for the infrastructure portion of the project to remain consistent with the infrastructure being installed for the first five battery electric buses currently being procured.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

Staff cannot identify any disadvantages to applying for the funds. Not applying would cause the District to forgo the opportunity of competing for FTA funds to expand our zero-emission bus fleet, and to evaluate various battery electric buses alongside fuel cell buses.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

Staff considered the following alternatives to the recommendation to partner with Gillig on the production of five battery electric buses:

- The District could partner with New Flyer on the purchase of five fuel cell buses with a 300 mile range. New Flyer is manufacturing ten fuel cell buses and five battery electric buses (with a 200 miles range) for delivery to the District in 2019 and continuing to partner with New Flyer would provide for a consistent fleet of buses for the zero emission bus analysis along with replacement parts compatibility. Staff decided against recommending this alternative since the current hydrogen fueling infrastructure is designed for 12 buses per division (24 total buses), and the District will be operating a fleet of thirteen Van Hool, ten New Flyer 40 foot, and one New Flyer 60 foot fuel cell buses by the end of 2019. There is an active project to upgrade the hydrogen fuel station at D2 to fuel more buses; however, staff is recommending completing this project and test the new station equipment upgrades before expanding the fuel cell fleet further.
- The District could partner with a different manufacturer on the purchase of five depot charge battery electric buses. Staff is recommending partnering with Gillig since the addition of a new manufacturer (to the District) into the fleet for only five buses would require a disproportionately large investment in new stock parts and different mechanic and driver training. The District already has Gillig buses in the fleet, and while the Gillig battery buses would require some new parts and training, much of the District's existing stock and training materials would stay the same.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

SR 15-277 CARB Zero Emission Truck and Bus Pilot Commercial Deployment and FTA Low or No Vehicle Emission Deployment Program Grant Applications.

SR17-167 Application for FY2017 FTA Low-No Funds

SR18-140 Application for FY2018 FTA Low-No Funds

ATTACHMENTS:

None

Approved by:

Claudia L. Allen, Chief Financial Officer

Reviewed by:

Denise C. Standridge, General Counsel

Salvador Llamas, Chief Operating Officer

Joe Callaway, Director of Capital Projects

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