

**CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF: April 16, 2024**

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To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: City Administration
Subject: Approval of Letter of Support for Sonoma County Transit Low-No Grant

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RECOMMENDATIONS: That the City Council approve the Letter of Support for Sonoma County Transit Low-No Grant

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Sonoma County Transit requests support from the City of Sebastopol for its application to the Federal Transit Administration seeking Low-No Grant funding for seven 40’ all-electric transit coaches. The new coaches would operate on Sonoma County Transit’s intercity routes, which provide service to Sebastopol.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) recently announced a grant program with the availability of \$1.5 Billion in grant funding to support American transit vehicle manufacturing – including zero-emission buses – help build bus facilities, and promote workforce development. Investments such as this will help transit agencies replace aging buses, reduce air pollution, provide good-paying jobs, and improve the reliability of transit systems.

This grant program helps transit agencies, such as Sonoma County Transit, buy or lease U.S.-built zero-emission and low-emission transit buses along with charging equipment and supporting facilities. This grant supports transit agencies in buying and rehabilitating buses and vans and building bus facilities. In Fiscal Year 2024, \$1.1 billion will be authorized for the Low-No Program and \$390 million for grants for buses and bus facilities.

As part of FTA's commitment to build a diverse and skilled public transportation workforce and help upskill workers for new bus technologies, five percent of each grant for zero emission projects is set aside for workforce development and training.

This funding opportunity also gives priority consideration to projects that advance environmental justice under the Administration’s Justice40 Initiative, and to projects that will catalyze a broader shift toward low- and zero-emission options across the transit sector.

Sonoma County Transit will be applying for this grant and is requesting support from the City of Sebastopol as new buses would provide service to Sebastopol.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

As part of the climate action framework approved by the City Council, “The City is committed to Procurement Decisions which Minimize Negative Environmental and Social Impacts The procurement of products and services by the City and Sebastopol residents, businesses and institutions results in environmental, social and economic impacts both in this country and in other areas of the world. The City will abide by an environmentally and socially responsible procurement policy that emphasizes long-term values and will become a model for other public as well as private organizations. The City will support other local agencies, businesses and residents adopting

sustainable purchasing practices”. Staff recommends support of the request as the funding provides for low- and zero-emission options across the transit sector.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

This item has been noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to schedule meeting date. The City has also used social media to promote and advertise the City Council Meeting Agenda Items.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact with approval of this item tonight.

OPTIONS:

1. Approve Letter of Support
2. Approve Letter of Support with edits
3. Deny request

ATTACHMENTS:

Letter of Support

APPROVALS:

Department Head Approval: Approval Date: 4-9-2024

CEQA Determination (Planning): Approval Date: 4/9/24

The proposed action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Administrative Services (Financial) Approval Date: 4-9-2024

Costs authorized in City Approved Budget: Yes No N/A

Account Code (f applicable) _____

City Attorney Approval: Approval Date: 4-9-024

City Manager Approval: Approval Date: 4-9-2024

City Council

Mayor Diana Gardner Rich
Vice Mayor Stephen Zollman
Councilmember Neysa Hinton
Councilmember Sandra Maurer
Councilmember Jill McLewis



City of Sebastopol

Agenda Item Number: 3

City Manager

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April 17, 2024

Kirsten Wiard-Bauer, FTA Program Manager
FTA Office of Program Management
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: Support for Sonoma County Transit Low-No Grant

Dear Ms. Wiard-Bauer:

At the April 16, 2024 City Council Meeting, the City of Sebastopol City Council voted to support the Sonoma County Transit's application for an FTA Low-No Grant that seeks funding assistance for the purchase of seven 40' battery electric buses. The total request of the grant is \$8,746,500 which includes 5% for workforce development.

The new buses will be deployed on Sonoma County Transit's intercity routes which provide links to all cities and downtown Santa Rosa where transfers to local and regional bus and rail connections can be made. Funding for these buses will allow for timely replacement of existing buses and will significantly aid in transitioning Sonoma County Transit's fleet to be fully zero-emission before 2035.

Battery-electric vehicles are more efficient and have lower operating and maintenance costs than the buses they replace. If awarded, these electric buses will enable our region to realize the significant performance, public health, and financial benefits that fleet electrification provides.

The City has established goals and policies related to reducing emissions. Electrifying our countywide bus fleet in an expeditious manner is a key component to meeting those goals.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Diana Gardner Rich
Mayor