

**CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA**



Agenda Date:	August 5, 2024
Action Required:	Resolution
Presenter:	Kristel Riddervold, Director of the Office of Sustainability
Staff Contacts:	Kristel Riddervold, Director of the Office of Sustainability Tray Biasioli Climate Program Specialist Garland Williams, Director of Transit Taylor Harvey-Ryan, Grants Program Manager
Title:	Resolution to appropriate EPA Clean School Bus Program rebates - \$420,000 (1 of 2 readings)

Background

In May 2024, the City of Charlottesville was notified that its application for rebates was selected for \$420,000 in funding through the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean School Bus (CSB) program to support the acquisition of two electric school buses (ESBs). This program was established as part of the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and provides funding for replacement of diesel-fueled buses with no- or low-emission school buses. In coordination with other relevant departments, Office of Sustainability staff applied for rebates to support acquisition of two ESBs. These ESBs will provide cleaner air for students, bus drivers, and school staff, in addition to reducing carbon emissions, supporting the City's climate and sustainability goals.

Discussion

Authorized CSB funding will assist with the purchase of two ESBs in Charlottesville's pupil transportation fleet. These buses will provide cleaner transportation solutions to Charlottesville's students, reducing diesel pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. These new ESBs will replace two older diesel buses (model years 2012 & 2013) that are ready for retirement from service.

Office of Sustainability staff have communicated with Dominion Energy regarding charging infrastructure for these buses. Dominion will design, install, and maintain this infrastructure at their expense, in coordination with City staff. Staff trainings on operation and maintenance of ESBs is available through our bus distributor, Sonny Merryman, and will be provided at the time of bus delivery.

The total upfront costs of the two ESBs will be \$808,576. After applying the CSB funding, the cost to the City will be \$388,576. These funds will come from the CCS pupil transportation budget, which has budgeted \$623,800 for the purchase of buses in FY 25. Including the grant funds, the ESB purchases will be \$65,218 more expensive than purchasing 2 equivalent diesel buses. Following purchase, the

City will be eligible for an \$80,000 reimbursement via the federal Commercial Clean Vehicle Credit. Including the value of this reimbursement, the total cost to the City will be \$14,782 less than the cost of purchasing 2 traditional diesel buses.

ESB purchase orders will be submitted in the next few months with the goal of having them placed in service during the 2025-26 school year. Rebate payment request forms can be submitted once the purchase order is placed and are due by November 29, 2024. Bus delivery is expected 9-12 months after the purchase order is submitted. Buses must be placed in service and two retired diesel buses must be sold or scrapped by close-out deadline of May 29, 2026.

Alignment with City Council's Vision and Strategic Plan

This action is in direct alignment with the City's new Strategic Plan Framework's outcome area, *Climate Action*. Incorporation of ESBs into the pupil transportation fleet will advance climate action, improve student and bus driver health through the elimination of diesel tailpipe emissions, and provide students an opportunity to learn about clean transportation technologies. Additionally, this bus acquisition is supported by the City's 2023 Climate Action Plan. A Key Action in Chapter 6 of the Climate Action Plan calls for the City to "*evaluate and begin integrating EV School Buses into the City's pupil transportation fleet*" (CAP, pg. 68).

Additionally, the purchase of ESBs is in alignment with City Council's Green City Vision and the City's Comprehensive Plan: Chapter 7 (Environment, Climate, and Food Equity).

Community Engagement

There has been substantial community engagement around the topic of transit buses as part of CAT's fuel transition planning. During that process, there was extensive public support for bus electrification. While these discussions primarily focused on transit buses, school buses were frequently mentioned, emphasizing the broad support for ESBs within the community.

Additionally, in May 2022, School Superintendent Gurley asked the City to explore the conversion of the pupil transportation fleet from diesel to electric, indicating school district support of these buses.

Budgetary Impact

A local match of \$386,292 is required and will be paid from funds previously appropriated for the purchase of buses.

Recommendation

Staff recommends City Council approval and appropriation of the funding in the amount of \$420,000 from the EPA CSB Program for purchase of 2 new electric school buses.

Suggested motion: "I move to approve the RESOLUTION for the City of Charlottesville to accept EPA Clean School Bus Program funding."

Alternatives

City Council could decline to accept funding and instead pursue purchasing buses funded with 100% local funds.

Attachments

1. Resolution_EPA CSB Rebate