



**December 9, 2019**

**To:** Members of the Board of Directors

**From:** Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

**Subject:** Approval to Release Request for Quotes for the Purchase of Paratransit Buses

### **Overview**

The Orange County Transportation Authority operates a fleet of 248 22-foot cutaway buses to provide OC ACCESS paratransit service. These vehicles have a useful life of seven years or 200,000 miles, and 116 of them are nearing the end of that useful life. A request for quotes has been developed to purchase buses through the California Association for Coordinated Transportation/Morongo Basin Transit Authority Purchasing Cooperative. Staff is seeking Board of Directors' approval to release the request for quotes.

### **Recommendation**

Approve the release of Request for Quotes 9-1570 to purchase up to 116 22-foot gasoline-powered cutaway buses for OC ACCESS paratransit service, with an option for ten additional 22-foot cutaway buses from qualified vendors under the California Association for Coordinated Transportation/Morongo Basin Transit Authority Purchasing Cooperative.

### **Discussion**

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) is currently operating 248 22-foot gasoline-powered cutaway buses under its contracted services operation for OC ACCESS paratransit service. Of the 248 cutaway buses, 17 were delivered and deployed in revenue service beginning in 2013, and another 99 cutaway buses were delivered and deployed in revenue service in 2014. These 116 cutaway buses have a useful life of seven years or 200,000 miles and will meet or exceed their useful life within the next three years. The option for ten additional cutaway buses is intended to accommodate potential service expansion based on projected service demand.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) defines the minimum useful life of cutaway buses as either five years/150,000 miles or seven years/200,000 miles based on the gross vehicle weight ratio of the different 22-foot models. During the recession, the Board of Directors (Board) directed that the 22-foot cutaways used for OC ACCESS service be used for a minimum of seven years as a cost savings measure. Consistent with the Boards' direction and the OCTA Fleet Plan, the 116 22-foot gasoline-powered cutaway buses will be replaced at seven years/200,000 miles.

On June 10, 2019, the Board approved the OCTA Fiscal Year 2019-20 Budget, which includes funding to replace these 116 22-foot cutaway buses for OC ACCESS paratransit service. The new buses will include equipment needed to carry five passengers using mobility devices such as wheelchairs, a fire suppression system, on-board video surveillance, and radio communication systems. The cutaway buses will be covered by factory and manufacturers' warranties that will contribute to lowering the overall operating cost.

The cutaway style vehicle has been part of the OC ACCESS fleet since implementation of the service in the 1990s. OCTA has been utilizing gasoline cutaways for this service since 2010. Staff evaluated different fuel technologies available for cutaway style vehicles as part of the preparation of this request for quotes, including gasoline, propane, compressed natural gas (CNG), and electric. The analysis indicates that the total cost of ownership for the gasoline vehicles makes the gasoline vehicle a better selection compared to CNG and propane. While the electric cutaway models compare more favorably from the cost perspective, at present, a limited number of models exist and there are no electric cutaway vehicles that have completed Altoona testing. Altoona testing is required by the FTA to ensure the safety and reliability of new transit buses. The details of this evaluation were presented to the Transit Committee on November 14, 2019, under Discussion, and with concurrence from the members present, staff proposes to move forward with the purchase of gasoline cutaway vehicles with this request for quotes (RFQ).

The California Association for Coordinated Transportation/Morongo Basin Transit Authority (CalACT/MBTA) Purchasing Cooperative includes this class of vehicle offered by two vendors. Other transit agencies, such as OCTA, may elect to participate in the cooperative and are then allowed to purchase vehicles under this competitively procured purchasing cooperative. Staff recommends that the RFQ include an option to purchase ten additional buses to accommodate planned service expansion based on projected ridership demand. In addition, based on an analysis conducted by staff on fuel types and infrastructure availability, the cutaway buses will be procured in the same gasoline configuration as the current vehicles.

The RFQ will include all OCTA required equipment and branding, to be installed following delivery and acceptance of the buses. The estimated value of this purchase is approximately \$14.7 million, excluding the option for the ten additional buses.

### ***Procurement Approach***

The OCTA Board-approved procurement policies and procedures allow for two options to purchase new vehicles. OCTA can either issue a request for proposals (RFP) or partner with another public agency and use its existing bus agreement, as long as the agreement contains purchase options.

Using the first option, OCTA issues an RFP containing detailed vehicle specifications. The advantage of this procurement method is that OCTA can specify exactly the type of bus desired. The disadvantage of this procurement option is the timeline, which may take up to 12 months from when an RFP is issued to the time when the first article is received, and then an additional 12 months to receive the remaining vehicles.

Using the second option, OCTA identifies an existing contract with another agency for the type of buses desired containing exercisable options and issues an RFQ to the participating firms. The advantage of this procurement method is a shortened timeline, and OCTA can begin receiving buses in a much shorter period of time; in some cases, this could reduce the vehicle delivery for the entire bus order by as much as six months. In addition to the base configuration of the vehicles under the existing contract, OCTA is able to include standard fire detection and suppression systems and radio hardware consistent with OCTA's existing fleet.

Based on the immediate need and established service demand, staff recommends that the cooperative contract procurement option is the most advantageous to OCTA due to the shortened procurement and vehicle delivery time. It was determined that CalACT/MBTA completed a cooperative procurement that specified a vehicle with similar specifications to OCTA's requirements. The procurement included a contract participant list, including OCTA as a participant, and, as such, OCTA is able to utilize this cooperative agreement.

### **Fiscal Impact**

This project was approved in the OCTA Fiscal Year 2019-20 Budget, Operations Division, Account 2114-9024-D2108-000.

***Summary***

Board approval is requested for the release of RFQ 9-1570 to purchase up to 116 22-foot cutaway buses for OC ACCESS paratransit service, with an option for ten additional buses from qualified vendors under the CalACT/MBTA Purchasing Cooperative.

***Attachment***

- A. Draft Request for Quotes (RFQ) 9-1570, CalACT Class B – 22-Foot Cutaway Buses

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