

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA

MEMORANDUM

TO: Michael Zito
Interim County Administrator

THROUGH: Phillip J. Matson, AICP
Community Development Director

FROM: Brian Freeman, AICP
MPO Staff Director

DATE: March 16, 2023

SUBJECT: Application for a Federal Transit Administration Grant for Low or No Emission Buses

It is requested that the information presented herein be given formal consideration by the Board of County Commissioners at its regular meeting of March 28, 2023.

DESCRIPTION, CONDITIONS, AND ANALYSIS

Indian River County's public transportation system consists of the GoLine (fixed route) and the Community Coach (demand response) transit services. Both GoLine and Community Coach are operated by the Senior Resource Association (SRA) through a contract with Indian River County.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides a majority of the funding for the public transportation system (approximately \$3-4 million annually in FTA funds in recent years). Through the Section 5307 (Urban Area) and Section 5339 (Bus and Bus Facilities) programs, FTA provides funding for all of the transit system's capital expenses and close to half of the operating costs, with the remainder of operating costs covered by grants from the Florida Department of Transportation and the County's local match.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act created the Low or No Emission Vehicle Program (aka "Low-No") to provide funding assistance to transit systems for the acquisition of electric and/or alternative fuel vehicles and facilities. "Low-No" is a competitive grant program. For FY 2023, FTA recently announced the availability of \$1.2 billion in funding nationwide (additional funds are expected to be made available in future years). "Low-No" funds can be used to acquire electric buses, charging stations, alternative fuel buses (such as CNG or propane powered vehicles), and fueling facilities.

The MPO's Transit Development Plan contains a vehicle replacement schedule, which is updated annually and is based on the useful life of vehicles in the transit fleet. Recently, County and SRA

staff have reviewed the potential to incorporate electric and/or alternative fueled vehicles as replacements for diesel vehicles that reached the end of their useful life (typically 7-12 years, depending on the type of vehicle). Over the next five years, fifteen GoLine buses will reach their useful life and are scheduled for replacement.

At the March 28th Board meeting, County staff and SRA will provide a presentation on the FTA “Low-No” program.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board of County Commissioners consider the presentation and provide direction to staff on application to FTA’s Low or No Emission Program.