

Subject: DES- ART Bus Purchase

**FY 2021 Proposed Budget
Budget Work Session Follow-up**

4/22/2020

The following information is provided in response to a request made by Matt de Ferranti, regarding the following questions:

- 1) How many buses are we set to buy in FY 2021?
- 2) Can we delay buying buses due to reduced use to save money effectively?
- 3) What are the length of buses that we have in the fleet (35, 39, 40?)

I am not interested in the shortest ones that are van length, but what are the other length buses.

Bus Purchases

There are no bus replacement purchases planned for FY 2021. In FY 2020, we received and paid for 14 new buses.

In FY 2022, we will be purchasing twenty (20) 35-foot buses to replace existing buses that are retiring and six (6) 40-foot buses for expansion of existing and new service. The funding sources for these bus purchases in FY 2022 is \$9.3 million in state funding and \$4.04 million in NVTa local funding. Delaying the purchase from FY 2022 will not free up general fund dollars for the operating budget.

Bus Size

In our current fleet we have fifteen (15) 31-foot buses, thirty-four (34) 35-foot buses, and twenty-nine (29) 40-foot buses. These three bus lengths are referred to as “heavy-duty transit buses.” A heavy-duty transit bus is built on a heavy-duty bus chassis, has front and center doors, and normally has a rear-mounted engine. This is what is typically used for most fixed route bus systems. These buses can accommodate a higher seating and standing capacity as compared to a “Body-on-chassis” minibus. A heavy-duty bus also has a longer useful lifespan (12-15 years).

Passenger loads on buses can vary widely by time of day and between weekdays and weekends. The primary factors used to determine bus size needs are current ridership levels and ensuring the capacity can accommodate plans for future growth. The cost of service is nearly the same regardless of the bus size, as most of the operating expense is labor. The cost of the various sized heavy-duty buses is detailed on the following page

	Heavy-Duty Transit Bus (31')	Heavy-Duty Transit Bus (35')	Heavy-Duty Transit Bus (40')
Useful Life	12-15 years	12-15 years	12-15 years
Seating Capacity	28	32	42
Standing Capacity	up to 29	up to 33	up to 43
# of Passenger Doors	2	2	2
Unit Price (before add-on items) in 2020¹	\$448,000	\$463,000	\$470,400

¹ Figure is based upon State of Virginia Bus Contract prices (in 2018 dollars adjusted for inflation to 2020 dollars).