

**City Council, Standing Committee and Commission  
Conseil, comités permanents et commission**

☒ **Motion**

☐ **Notice of Motion / Avis de**

Committee / Commission:

☒ **Council / Conseil**

Report / Agenda: City Council Agenda 6 – February 1, 2023

Item / Article: 15.1 – Financial Update for Zero-Emission Bus Program Funding

**Re: Updated Accessibility Impacts Section**

Moved by / Motion de: **Councillor G. Gower**

Seconded by / Appuyée par: **Councillor S. Menard**

**WHEREAS at its meeting on February 1, 2023, Council will consider a report titled, “Financial Update for Zero-Emission Bus Program Funding”; and**

**WHEREAS information pertaining to accessibility was inadvertently omitted from the report’s Accessibility Impacts section;**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the report’s Accessibility Impacts section be amended to include the following:**

Accessibility has been integral to the procurement process for zero-emission vehicles. Staff have considered the concerns expressed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee and other accessibility stakeholders about the low levels of noise produced by electric vehicles and the increased risk this poses to pedestrians, particularly those who are blind or partially sighted.

Staff mitigated this risk by outfitting the City’s first four pilot battery-electric buses with sound-emission technology. This technology emits a sound from an exterior speaker at the front of the bus, which is intended to mimic that of an internal combustion engine. The sound is generated when the bus is idling, and when it is moving at 32 km/hour or less, for example, when it is leaving or approaching a bus stop or intersection. In addition, the battery-electric buses included the same accessibility features as the fleet’s newer bus models, including allocated spaces for customers using mobility devices equipped with “theatre-style” flip-down seats; an additional visual next-stop-announcement sign mounted at the rear entrance; and interior and exterior speakers with improved sound quality.

Once the pilot buses entered service in early 2022, two orientation sessions were coordinated by OC Transpo staff to familiarize accessibility stakeholders

with the buses' sound-emission technology and other accessibility features. Representatives of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, CNIB, Alliance for the Equality of Blind Canadians, Canadian Council of the Blind, Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada, CNIB Guide Dogs and the City's Accessibility Office participated in the 1.5-hour sessions, which included testing the sound-emission technology on-street in different locations and under different scenarios. The feedback from participants was positive: indicating that the sound generated by the bus's sound emission system was clearly audible, distinct and identifiable, and was useful to customers in identifying that a bus was passing or approaching a stop or intersection. In addition, stakeholders were supportive of the existing on-board accessibility features.

Based on the feedback received, OC Transpo will: equip all future zero-emission buses with the equivalent sound-emission technology; ensure consistent sound, where possible, and volume of sound emission across all zero-emission buses; continue to equip all new battery-electric buses with the same on-board accessibility features; and, monitor new developments in legislation, regulations and emerging technology in sound-emission. OC Transpo will also continue to monitor and respond to feedback from accessibility stakeholders and customers with disabilities as the buses enter service.