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Mason Transit Reveals HYBRID Buses

Mason Transit Authority (MTA) unveiled two Gillig Hybrid buses with a brand-new look.



The buses were funded by the Buses and Bus Facilities Infrastructure Program 5339 (b) which is a federal grant program that provides funding for bus replacement and infrastructure. Each bus cost \$760,238 of which 80% was funded by the grant with MTA providing the remaining 20% of the funds needed.

The benefits of utilizing a hybrid bus are substantial and not limited to, saving on fuel consumption, lowering emissions by as much as 75%, decreasing maintenance costs and ultimately giving the riders a better experience. The electric hybrid technology allows the engine to go off operation and into electric mode, which saves on fuel consumption. The purchase of hybrids lines up with MTA's Greenhouse Gas Reduction policy and the move to bio-diesel fuel two years ago. It is one more step in enhancing the quality of life in the community with environmentally sustainable technology.

"We are excited to have our first hybrid buses in service and look forward to better fuel economy as well as lower emissions for environmental protection and preservation. Adding hybrid vehicles to our

fleet helps in complying with the goals of Washington state to transition all publicly owned vehicles to electricity or biofuels along with supporting our internal policies," said Danette Brannin, MTA's General Manager.

These buses will be utilized in the Worker/ Driver Program, which is a "premium" commuter service for employees working the day shift at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard (PSNS). MTA offers four routes that serve PSNS, three originate in Shelton and one in Belfair. Together they serve Olympic Highway North, Highway 3, Grapeview Loop Road, State Route 300 and Old Belfair Highway, as well as Pickering Road, The Bridge Church and Roy Boad Road Park & Rides.

Brannin said, "Drivers are reporting the buses drive and handle nicely and are quiet for the riders' comfort. The new look is also exciting and is a kickoff to rebranding MTA buses. Future buses will have the updated, fresh look along with taglines promoting MTA and its services. The graphic design was done by Berg Marketing, located in Rochester, WA and the look of the new design was exactly the outcome we had hoped."

The hybrids went into service in March and are already showing signs of fuel economy and high performance.

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