

Articulated Buses Coming to MTA? Committee Will Consider

(May 14, 2002) The Board's Operations committee will consider a plan, this month, to buy 272 articulated buses for use in the San Fernando Valley and for the planned expansion of Metro Rapid service into more areas of Los Angeles.

The committee is expected to vote on a motion authorizing the CEO to solicit proposals for up to 72 CNG-electric or CNG-hybrid 60-foot articulated buses. The buses would provide Bus Rapid Transit service, beginning in April 2005, in the 14-mile East-West Transit Corridor connecting the North Hollywood Metro station and Warner Center.

The motion also calls for soliciting proposals for up to 200 advanced design, 60-foot CNG articulated buses. These vehicles would be deployed along Metro Rapid routes and other high-ridership bus lines.

The MTA expects to add six new Metro Rapid lines within 12 to 18 months, and has identified a total of 25 existing bus lines suitable for articulated buses.

"Our interest in articulated buses is due to the MTA's success with Metro Rapid and to increasing passenger loads on our regular service," says Richard Hunt, deputy executive officer, Vehicle Technology. "We need higher capacity vehicles to carry more and more passengers."

If the Board approves the articulated bus plan, the MTA will issue requests for proposals in June and could present a contract award recommendation to the Board this fall. The Operations committee meets at 1 p.m., May 15.

Although articulated buses are in operation in San Francisco, San Diego and elsewhere, they haven't been seen on the streets of Los Angeles since the late 1980s. The double-length vehicles were in use here for only about a dozen years.

"The first generation of articulated buses had technical problems that made them difficult to operate in many circumstances, especially here in Los Angeles," says Hunt, who visited transit agencies in Europe earlier this year to study the use of articulated vehicles. "Now, technology has improved significantly. They are better designed to be far more maneuverable and more reliable."

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Ten Civis model articulated buses, manufactured in France by Irisbus, will be placed in service later this year by the Las Vegas RTA. The hybrid electric-diesel vehicle has a capacity of 120 passengers.



An SCRTD articulated bus pulls out of the Greyhound depot sometime in the 1980s. The 60-foot, diesel buses entered service in Los Angeles in 1978. Built by AM General from a German design, they cost \$191,000 and seated 65 passengers.