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The Metro Board has approved the purchase of 142 Camry hybrids to replace the oldest sedans in Metro's fleet.

Illustration courtesy of Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A.

Board Agrees to Purchase Greener Metro Sedans

- Division 4 has received first of hybrid order

By JIMMY STROUP

(April 1, 2008) Nearly 150 of the oldest sedans in Metro's fleet will soon be replaced with new Toyota Camry hybrids. The new hybrids will replace Ford Taurus sedans more than six years old or with more than 100,000 miles traveled.

The new hybrids will cost \$3,751,400—approximately \$26,400 apiece—but bring an estimated savings of \$289,000 each year over the current models.

Non-Revenue Division 4 has already taken possession of the first of the hybrids.

"It's good for the environment in terms of miles per gallon," said Michael Stange, equipment maintenance superintendent in Quality Assurance. "The initial cost is a few thousand dollars more, but in the interest of being a good steward of the environment, that's the cost of doing business."

Stange said the Metro Board has made clear that any further sedan purchases will be hybrid vehicles. "I happen to think that's a good sound decision. The hybrids require no more maintenance than a gasoline-only vehicle."

Currently, the older Fords cost the agency between \$1,000 and \$3,000 in maintenance each year, totaling almost \$300,000. The hybrids will eliminate that maintenance cost with their new manufacturer warranties.

The maintenance savings aren't the only benefit Metro will see by switching to hybrids, which generally use about half as much gasoline as the average non-hybrid vehicle. The Camry has an estimated 33 miles per gallon (city). The present fleet has an estimated 18 miles per gallon (city).

The Camry is a full hybrid, meaning it can run entirely on gas, entirely on electricity or a combination of both. Short trips between divisions or to relief stops, for example, can be made on electric mode only.

The on-board computer informs the driver when the electricity is about to give out and will switch to a hybrid or full-gas mode, making sure employees never get stranded.

Green Car Journal, an environmentally-minded publication, gave the 2007 Camry its “Green Car of the Year” award. The Camry also received high marks in performance and reliability from several rating agencies.