



County of Rockland

Office of County Executive C. Scott Vanderhoef

NEWS RELEASE

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County Executive Unveils First of County's New Hybrid Electric Transit Buses

New City, NY – Rockland County Executive C. Scott Vanderhoef today unveiled the first low-floor, hybrid electric bus to enter the Transport of Rockland (TOR) fleet.

At a late morning event held outside the County Office Building in New City, Vanderhoef announced that the new bus is part of the County's acquisition of 16 new hybrid-electric buses. The buses will replace older buses in the TOR fleet and all 16 buses will be in service by the end of this year. The buses were purchased with Federal Transit Administration (80%), NYS Department of Transportation (10%) and other transportation dollars allocated to Rockland County (10%) at an average cost of approximately \$550,000 each. No County tax funds were used to pay for the vehicles.



Vanderhoef and County Transit Administrator Mike Gurski point out the bike rack on the new bus

"Transitioning the TOR fleet to hybrids is just the latest step Rockland County is taking to do its part in reducing emissions and improving our environment," said Vanderhoef. "Coupled with our bus fleet retrofit project, which will install particulate filters on our existing diesel engines, and our use of Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel Fuel, these are the cleanest and greenest buses on the road in Rockland County."

"I am also pleased to announce that the County has just ordered four more hybrid buses for TOR, thanks to a \$5,547,824 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant awarded to us by the Federal Transit Administration," said Vanderhoef.

The ARRA grant, in combination with an FTA grant previously awarded to the County, will fund a total of nine hybrid buses. In addition to the four buses just ordered for TOR, three 45-foot hybrid commuter coaches will be purchased to replace buses retiring from the TAPPAN ZExpress (TZx) fleet. Two additional hybrids for TOR will also soon be ordered. All nine buses are expected to arrive in late 2010. Ten percent of the ARRA grant will also be used to offset operating costs for the TOR system. The ARRA grant is 100% Federal funding and requires no local match.

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The GILLIG hybrid electric low floor transit buses, manufactured by the Gillig Corporation of Hayward, CA, come already equipped with particulate filters and will also utilize Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel Fuel, which Rockland County's TOR fleet has been using since 2006. In addition, the electric motor incorporated in the new hybrid buses assists the engine, thereby reducing fuel consumption and exhaust emissions while ensuring a quieter and smoother ride. The hybrid technology also uses a smaller 6.1 liter engine, compared to the 8.4 liter engines on the buses being retired from the TOR fleet.

"In addition to the environmental benefits, transitioning the TOR fleet to hybrids also offers operational advantages," said Michael Gurski, Transit Administrator. "The hybrid electric technology actually works at its best in the stop-and-go type of operation common to most bus systems. As a result, these new buses are a perfect match for TOR. We look forward to having the entire TOR fleet transitioned to hybrids by 2016."

The electric motor develops maximum torque at slow speeds and is ideally suited for frequent quick starts. The Allison EP 40 Drive system recaptures normally lost braking energy by converting it into electricity and storing it in the batteries. This "regenerative" braking system ensures the NiMH (nickel metal-hydride) battery packs stored on the bus roof remain charged. The regenerative braking system also provides longer brake lining life, thereby significantly reducing maintenance costs and reducing the volume of parts required to operate the bus.

The buses are equipped with a Cummins 260 HP ISB engine with Particulate Matter filter. The bus is outfitted with a Lift-U ramp instead of a lift, which can be deployed to assist boarding and exiting – it mechanically opens in under 30 seconds and can be manually opened with just one hand. The "Low Floor" feature means no steps at the entrance or exit doors. The buses also feature a special styling package to enhance appeal without compromising function, performance, reliability or parts commonality, while at the same time offering more visibility and greater safety thanks to a full, one-piece windshield and additional side windows allowing the operator improved visibility.

The hybrids feature contemporary, ergonomically designed passenger seats, LED exterior lamps and auxiliary stop lamps to provide increased road visibility, and a GPS-activated automatic announcement system which provides real-time, onboard passenger information. The ADA-compliant, LED full-color destination sign system provides real-time route information with increased visibility. A 5-camera video surveillance system provides state-of-the-art, onboard passenger and operator security and includes a camera that "looks" out the windshield and is linked to an impact sensor.

Other features of the new hybrid buses include:

- ✓ Quick-change body skirts allowing for easy change if there is an accident. This reduces down time and results in less repair materials being used – both of which help the environment.
- ✓ The latest in multiplexing technology allowing for much easier and reliable troubleshooting of the bus electrical system.
- ✓ Standard size tires versus the low-profile tires used on most low-floor buses. Standard size tires reduce curbing and tire damage, and because standard size tires last longer, fewer tires are going to landfills.
- ✓ Stainless steel chassis for long life and resistance to our winter weather conditions. The stainless steel understructure of the bus helps combat corrosion so at the end of its service life, there is more left to recycle.
- ✓ LED interior lights with ambient sensor (they get brighter as needed) including LED lighting at the rear steps to upper platform for safety.
- ✓ Sportworks bicycle racks - able to open or close with one hand.

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The 16 new hybrids arriving this year will replace buses in the TOR fleet that have met or exceeded the end of their useful lives and include two 40-foot buses, eight 35-foot buses and six 30-foot buses.

Transport of Rockland (TOR) operates 11 routes within Rockland County. The County also operates the TRIPS paratransit bus service within Rockland and the TAPPAN ZEEExpress (TZx) commuter bus service between Rockland and Westchester.

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