



ITEM ID: 2023-333-0

TRANSMITTAL DATE: October 20, 2023

MEETING DATE: October 27, 2023

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Paul Hubler, Chief Strategy Officer

SUBJECT: Sustainability Initiatives Update for 1st Quarter FY24

Issue

This report is the quarterly update to the Board on the sustainability initiatives and accomplishments.

Recommendation

Receive and file.

Strategic Commitment

This action aligns with the Strategic Business Plan commitments of:

- **Modernizing Business Practices:** We will improve our operational efficiency through transparency, objective metrics and streamlined governance, reducing over-reliance on subsidy while bringing our system into a state of good repair and investing in the development of our employees. Sustainability initiatives are focused on reducing environmental impacts, improving operational efficiencies and increasing engagement with our employees.
- **Advancing Key Regional Goals:** We will grow the role of regional rail in addressing climate change, air quality, and other pressing issues by advancing toward zero emissions, making rail a compelling alternative to single-occupant automobiles and advancing equity-focused opportunities for all communities throughout Southern California. The purpose of this action is to ensure the healthiest, safest and most fiscally responsible working environment possible by focusing on Metrolink’s sustainability and resiliency.

Background

On October 11, 2019, the Board authorized the Chief Executive Officer to sign up the Authority as an Entry-Level Signatory to the APTA Sustainability Commitment which was subsequently completed that November. The APTA Sustainability Commitment Program provides a path for signatories to obtain recognition for achieving higher levels of commitment. This requires demonstration of short- and long-term sustainability achievements and targeted improvements across key indicators.

Discussion

Quarter 1 FY24 Activity

CARB In Use Locomotive Regulation

The In Use Locomotive regulation was adopted and approved at the CARB board meeting on April 27, 2023. Subsequently, on August 8, 2023, CARB staff released further modifications to key requirements of the regulation which are more favorable to Metrolink and other passenger railroads. Some of the important modifications include:

- Regulation implementation date has been adjusted to January 1, 2026, extending the original date by two years.
- Requirement of California Air District level reporting has been removed which would have been a burdensome task for staff to effectively track and report.
- Operators can provide emissions reporting using fuel consumption data which is more readily available than the prior requirement of megawatt-hours (MWh).
- As part of the CARB Zero Emissions technical assessment of equipment and supporting infrastructure to be conducted in 2027 and in 2032, CARB will also include assessment of required safety improvements needed for Zero Emissions operations.

The Alternative Compliance Plan option remains available and unchanged. Metrolink intends to pursue an Alternative Compliance Plan which will include a strategy to reduce annual emissions in compliance with the regulation requirements without the financial burden of a forced spending account set aside. Alternative Compliance Plans are valid for five-year verification periods and with the recent modifications, the first plan will cover annual activity for the period of January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2030.

The two-year extension of the regulation implementation date will provide much needed time for staff to continue to vigorously pursue and secure additional grant funding to bridge the current gap needed for the procurement to replace the remaining 15 Tier 2 MP36 locomotives with Tier 4. This plan for a full fleet of Tier 4 locomotives is in accordance with the Board-approved strategy and is the best path available today for reducing emissions over the next 25 years that also will meet the compliance requirements of the CARB In Use Locomotive regulations.

California Clean Air Day

In addition to offering riders free fares on October 4th to celebrate California Clean Air Day, Metrolink staff collaborated with the City of Riverside Arts and Culture Affairs Division and the University of California, Riverside to participate in a community art mural project on October 3rd. The university requested a mural installation on their shipping containers which are used to provide free bike repairs to students on campus. The mural was designed by local artist Ekaterina Orlovie and was painted using cutting-edge technology of smog-eating paint. This photocatalytic paint has the ability to break down pollutants into harmless nitrates when exposed to sunlight and this mural is estimated to provide the same air quality benefits as 128 trees.

The art event was a relevant and fitting complement to the Coalition for Clean Air's campaign theme, as it encouraged event participants to engage in activities that specifically targeted students to take action and make a positive impact on air quality. This event was also another opportunity to strategically promote the Metrolink free fare Student Adventure Pass.

Next Steps

Staff will continue to provide quarterly status updates to the Board.

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Approved by: Paul Hubler, Chief Strategy Officer