

MCTS: Announces Manufacturer of Battery-Electric Buses

Posted on Thursday, Mar 11, 2021

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Contact: Kristina Hoffman

MCTS Director of Marketing and Communications

(414) 937-3250 | khoffman@mcts.org

MILWAUKEE — The Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) announced today that it has awarded a contract to the vendor who will build Milwaukee County's first battery-electric buses.

Nova Bus, a leading North American transportation manufacturer that's part of the Volvo Group, will produce up to 15 all-electric LFSe+ buses for MCTS. The first 11 state-of-the-art vehicles will run exclusively on the upcoming East-West Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line; four additional vehicles will be used along regular routes.

Passengers who board these ultra-modern buses will enjoy a quiet ride, comfortable seating, USB charging ports, off-board fare collection, and a bike rack. Additionally, the new clean-air vehicles have several features that strengthen accessibility and improve the experience of riders with disabilities:

- Riders who use mobility devices (or any rider, regardless of their ability) can enter the bus through the front or back door thanks to wider aisles and level boarding via new BRT platforms.
- Each bus is equipped with an industry-leading QUANTUM Self-Securement system, allowing passengers who use mobility devices to secure themselves independently, in addition to traditional driver-operated securement equipment.
- Because battery-electric buses are nearly silent when operating at low speeds, exterior and interior chimes will sound when the vehicle slows to under three miles per hour to ensure that passengers who are blind or low vision know the

bus is approaching a stop.

“Alternative fuel buses represent the future of public transportation,” said Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley. “We’re excited to transition towards greener, more sustainable, and more efficient transit for our community. Innovative technologies like this help in our mission to advance racial equity and enhance the quality of life through great public service.”

The battery-electric buses can operate up to 247 miles on a single charge. To help ensure optimum performance during winter months, diesel-powered heaters will keep the passenger compartment at appropriate temperatures. Batteries will be recharged at MCTS’s maintenance garages and at a designated charging station along the BRT route.

This is Nova Bus’ first order of LFSe+ vehicles in the United States. The groundbreaking buses are built on the company’s proven LFS platform, which has a safety track record of more than 20 years. The Nova Bus LFSe, on which the new LFSe+ is modeled, was the first electric bus in the industry to receive a passing score for a full test at Altoona in June 2018.

“As MCTS makes its first step to alternative fuel vehicles, Nova Bus will be there to support the technology that keeps Milwaukee moving,” said Martin Larose, Vice President and General Manager at Nova Bus. “Our Nova Bus LFSe+ buses represent our commitment to providing a more environmentally and economically efficient transit system. MCTS is leading sustainable mobility and shaping the community’s quality of life for the better. Together, we’re making the evolution a reality for Milwaukee County.”

Several key components of the buses will be built and assembled locally at businesses in Pleasant Prairie, Racine, Greendale, Pewaukee, Elkhart Lake, and Manitowoc.

The vehicles feature a traction motor and next generation powertrain from BAE Systems, a leader in electric drive propulsion.

“We are pleased to have been selected as Milwaukee’s technology partner in the County’s first battery-electric bus order,” said Steve Trichka, Vice President and General Manager of Power & Propulsion Solutions at BAE Systems. “Our Series-EV system will deliver clean, highly efficient operation and help Milwaukee County

achieve its environmental goals.”

The nine-mile East-West BRT, which is a first-of-its-kind undertaking in the Badger State, will allow MCTS to better connect major employment, education and recreation destinations through downtown Milwaukee, Marquette University, Milwaukee’s Near West Side, Wauwatosa and the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center. The BRT offers more efficient, faster service thanks to the utilization of battery-electric buses, dedicated bus lanes, traffic signal priority, off-board fare collection, optimized stop locations, and state-of-the-art platforms that allow for easy boarding.

BRT construction is slated to begin in Spring 2021, with revenue service starting as early as Fall 2022. The battery-electric buses are expected to arrive in Milwaukee in Summer 2022.