

CTA to buy more electric buses



A new electric bus is displayed outside CTA offices at 567 W. Lake St. on Oct. 29, 2014. (Phil Velasquez / Chicago Tribune)

By **Brianna Gurciullo** · Contact Reporter

Chicago Tribune

JANUARY 22, 2016, 1:11 PM

The [Chicago Transit Authority](#) announced plans Friday to spend between \$30 million and \$40 million to buy 20 to 30 new all-electric buses over the next several years.

The CTA has operated two 40-foot buses, powered by lithium-ion batteries, on routes across the city since October 2014. The buses have carried about 100,000 passengers on 13 routes.

According to CTA officials, the buses so far have reduced emissions by an amount equal to removing 14 cars from the road. They say the buses also provide a smoother, quieter ride.

Officials project each all-electric bus will create about \$25,000 in fuel savings a year, or \$300,000 over the 12-year life span of a single bus. In addition, they estimate that each bus will create \$55,000 a year in "health benefit savings" by reducing the occurrence of respiratory diseases, according to a CTA release.

The average market price for a standard-size electric bus is about \$800,000, CTA spokesman Jeff Tolman said. That's hundreds of thousands of dollars more than a traditional diesel bus. Tolman said the timeline of the purchases will depend on a bid process among manufacturers.

The CTA expects to request proposals from manufacturers later this year. New Flyer Industries Inc., based in Canada with facilities in the United States, made the first two buses used by the CTA. But New Flyer may not make the new batch of CTA buses.

"The contract will be decided through a competitive bid process," Tolman said.

The first two buses each cost about \$1 million, or about twice as much as a diesel bus, and started on six downtown routes. A grant from the Federal Transit Administration helped fund the \$2.5 million project. The CTA plans to use a "combination of federal funding sources" to underwrite the new purchases, according to the release.

The CTA hopes to install "en-route charging systems," according to the release, so buses can charge at stops along their routes instead of at a garage. The current buses take three to five hours to charge.

On a single charge, the buses have been able to run 80 miles. An average CTA bus travels 100 miles a day.

Tolman said 86 percent of CTA buses are diesel and 13 percent are hybrid diesel-electric, which have a 20 percent greater fuel efficiency.

[*bgurciullo@tribpub.com*](mailto:bgurciullo@tribpub.com)

Twitter @brigurciullo

Copyright © 2016, Chicago Tribune

A version of this article appeared in print on January 24, 2016, in the News section of the Chicago Tribune with the headline "CTA to buy more all-electric buses - Each projected to create \$25,000 in fuel savings a year" — Today's paper | [Subscribe](#)

This article is related to: [Chicago Transit Authority](#)