

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 23, 2021
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METRO's Newest Buses Pilot Air Purification System

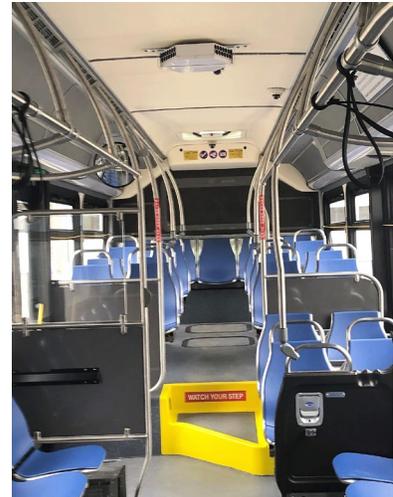


(Portland, Maine) – Greater Portland METRO is adding two new buses to its fleet, replacing older 2004 vehicles. The buses were funded through a competitive [FTA grant program](#) and supported by Maine Senators Collins and King and Congresswoman Chellie Pingree.

The two new vehicles have a purification system, installed on the ceiling (see below photo), that disinfects the area by using UV light to kill airborne viruses and bacteria. These new units [use proprietary technology](#) to create advanced purification, safely sanitizing both air and surfaces, without leaving harmful residue behind.

Now that these buses are in service, METRO staff will develop a protocol to review effectiveness and determine if this equipment should be installed as a safety improvement on the entire fleet of 44 buses. If a decision is made to proceed with a fleet-wide install, Funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act would be requested to cover the cost. The CARES Act provides for payments to navigate the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.

“These two new replacement buses continue METRO’s years of long work to build a modern transit fleet that riders feel comfortable using and take pride in,” said METRO Executive Director, Greg Jordan. “We are optimistic that testing of the onboard UV light Air Purification System will demonstrate effectiveness in improving air quality on the bus. If so, this technology will be one more tool in our toolbox as we work to stop transmission of COVID-19.”



NFI Parts, the manufacturer of the new system, tested the new technology on an in-service bus with the City and County of Honolulu with positive results. ([Mass Transit – 3.12.21](#))

The new low-floor, 40-foot buses are larger than the buses they are replacing and are equipped with Automated Voice Announcement (AVA) systems to ensure consistent communications to all riders, including passengers with visual impairments. The two vehicles also include “yield-to-bus” digital signs, introduced on two new METRO buses in [November 2020](#). A law passed in Maine mandates that automobiles yield to buses that have activated these digital signs.

AVA technology and ‘yield-to-bus’ signs will be installed in future buses, including two new electric buses expected to join the fleet in late 2021.

Greater Portland METRO provides public transit service throughout the municipalities of Brunswick, Falmouth, Freeport, Gorham, Portland, South Portland, Westbrook, and Yarmouth. Prior to the onset of the pandemic, METRO’s ridership exceeded 2.1 million in boardings in 2019, which represented a 45% increase compared to 2013.

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