

March 22, 2013

To: Executive Board

Subject: **Bus Livery**

Summary

At the December 2012 meeting of the Foothill Transit Executive Board, the board authorized a review of Foothill Transit's bus livery for discussion at the Executive Board Retreat. An opportunity to enhance the visibility and appeal of the livery presented itself with the upcoming delivery of 64 new, advanced-style buses, the launch of the agency's 25th anniversary campaign, the update of the agency's overall branding and advances in decal and paint technology.

The initial timeline for this project was developed to allow the Board the flexibility to take advantage of a very small window of opportunity to change the livery for the 64 buses that the agency has on order should this be desired. This timeline was set by the bus manufacturer, North American Bus Industries (NABI) based on their own internal deadlines for processing changes and design freezes. As such, including a new livery on the current bus order would have required a decision at the February Board Retreat. Given the magnitude of this kind of a change, the Board elected not to make a selection at the Retreat.

At the February Executive Board Meeting, staff sought direction regarding the continuation of livery review and discussion and a preferred approach. A decision was made to conduct a study session to include a review of national livery trends, technology, and agency visibility in our communities.

Following the February meeting, Director of Maintenance and Vehicle Technology Lauren Cochran Festner visited the NABI manufacturing facilities in Anniston, Alabama to a pre-production meeting and review the production timeline. A revised timeline was discussed and agreed to after a thorough review of the decal specs and costs. NABI has agreed to extend a final design deadline for the current production vehicles. This would provide the option but absolutely no requirement for Foothill Transit to make changes to its livery. If the Executive Board elected to make any changes, Foothill Transit would have to supply the final, to-scale livery design to NABI no later than April 12th. If no changes are desired, the current livery would be applied to the fleet.

The six initial livery designs that the Board considered at the retreat are provided in Attachment A.

I. Livery Overview

Foothill Transit's bus livery– the external paint and decal scheme – has remained unchanged since the agency's founding in 1988 and consists of a simplified striping with bright white base paint and centered Foothill Transit logo.

When the livery was initially designed, significant importance was placed on ensuring the appearance of a clean, bright public transit vehicle that would show the local communities that a Foothill Transit vehicle was not an average bus. While the main color may appear to be "white" it was actually a specially formulated white paint called "Base white Imron Elite 822641," known in the industry to be exceptionally bright and reflective. It isn't commonly used among transit agencies since its brightness, while attractive and crisp, also quickly shows dirt and scratches and requires special maintenance consideration. Extra attention is paid to ensure that this paint remains clean and has been an integral part of the agency's high standards of quality. In fact, North American Bus Industries, the manufacturer of Foothill Transit's 1600, 1700, 1800 and 1900 series buses, refers to this white as "Foothill White." Decaling was limited to a simple stripe application in part because of 1988 design limitations and to give the bright white paint supremacy.

Decaling was limited to a simple stripe application in part because of 1988 design limitations and to give the bright white paint supremacy. However, public relations firms have been given the creative capacity to create much more elaborate and relevant designs to respond to customer preferences and changing graphic tastes.

Advancements in decal development have necessitated a parallel evolution in decal application and maintenance options. The invention of vinyl "wrap" technology has also made design concepts that were once thought to be impossible to execute not only possible, but more cost effective.

The upcoming purchase of 64 new transit vehicles, the newly implemented bus purchase and retirement plan, the agency's 25th anniversary, and significant advances in decal and paint technology have converged to create a singular opportunity to evolve the Foothill Transit livery and promote the agency's commitment to quality and innovation.

II. Design Recommendation

Foothill Transit staff reviewed over 100 livery design options, researched national bus livery trends and decal technology advances, discussed agency visibility and perception in our communities, and possible costs and timelines.

The six concepts ultimately presented to the Executive Board at the February Executive Board Retreat met several requirements of an improved livery design. Key criteria included safety and visibility, a respect for the clean, bright image the agency has developed over the past 25 years, bolder lines and shapes that connoted forward motion, a modern, reinvigorated progression of our logo and/or colors, and the expansion of the design area to include other, previously untouched parts of the bus. A total of six final concepts were presented have been forwarded to the Board for consideration. The Board could elect to choose any of these options or could re-look at other options that were developed.

Staff recommends Mural Design 2. Mural Design 2 incorporates and modernizes the current Foothill Transit “mountains” and striping, stretching the stripes into active arches that reflect motion while simulating the communities that Foothill Transit serves. The inclusion of a green accent color plays into the environmentally friendly aspects of public transportation and reflects some of the design components already in place with the Foothill Transit Ecoliner, strengthening and extending our “green” visibility and paying tribute to the environmental stewardship of the agency. The special bright white paint the agency is known for still dominates, providing a crisp, bright backdrop for the new livery while still playing a leading role in the vehicles’ presence on the street.

III. Possible Timelines and Conversion Considerations

Potential fleet conversion plans are outlined in Attachment B, should the Executive Board elect to move forward with a new livery design. Foothill Transit currently has a fleet of 308 buses (three different makes, six different models) that are managed according to the adopted Bus Replacement Plan implemented in FY 2013. This plan maintains a steady vehicle replacement plan which stabilizes the fleet age and bus mileage to reduce maintenance costs, promote efficiency and maintain a positive customer perception.

To effectuate the fleet replacement plan, an option was exercised on an existing contract with North American Bus Industries (NABI) for the purchase of 34 42-foot CNG buses. Delivery will begin in November 2013 and these buses will replace the remaining 17 diesel buses in the Foothill Transit fleet and will begin to replace the 1200 series, Foothill Transit’s first CNG buses.

Foothill Transit managed a competitive procurement and in December 2012 a separate contract was awarded to NABI for the purchase of 30 buses with an option for 120 additional buses that can be purchased over the next five years. These two orders, a total of 64 buses, will be manufactured simultaneously and will constitute Foothill Transit’s 2100 series coaches.

In reviewing feasible conversion options, Maintenance and Vehicle Technology staff considered the following:

- RFP process for decal vendor/paint refresh
 - Two to four months
- RFP process for bus stop signs decals
 - Two to four months
- Timing/Logistics for bus stop sign replacement
 - Dependent on contract terms
- Bus delivery timing
 - Dependent on make/model of bus
 - Anticipate longer application process for 1300, 1400, 1500 to accommodate design refitting for older models (Option 2)
- NABI delivery specs
- Bus Paint/Decal application timing

The table in Attachment B details two possible conversion plans – a partial fleet conversion of only newer series buses that assumes the eventual retirement of original livery vehicles and a complete, phased conversion of the entire fleet -- with a third “no action” option.

IV. Fiscal Impact

These conversion plans are for the existing fleet and do not include the vehicles scheduled for delivery in November 2013. Estimates for conversion were supplied by Complete Coach Works (CCW), a local industry decal manufacturer and applicator.

If the Executive Board chooses a new livery design in time for the April 12th final spec delivery, the new NABI vehicles (2100 series) will be delivered with the new livery. The cost for decals and labor is built into the cost of the bus. The only additional cost would be if the decals were significantly elaborate, though preliminary estimates indicate the recommended design may be implemented at a minimal cost. Mural Design 1 is estimated to be \$1500 more per bus than the recommended Mural Design 2. Mural Design 3, being similar to Mural Design 2, could be implemented for the same cost. Per-bus estimates based on the Mural Series are listed below:

Mural Design 1

Decals/graphics \$4,300.00
Decal removal \$650.00
Decal installation \$1,900.00
Estimated Total per Bus: \$6,850.00

Mural Design 2 and 3 (2 is the recommended design)

Decals/graphics \$3500.00
Decal removal \$650.00
Decal installation \$1200.00
Estimated Total per Bus: \$5,350.00

Basic cost estimates for fleet conversion are also available in Attachment B.

Initial estimates for the Wave designs were unavailable for the completion of this report, however initial discussion suggested that the Wave designs were considered elaborate and could significantly impact both the cost and the timeline for delivery of the 2100 series vehicles.

V: Literature Review and Local Agency Comparison

A review of recent press releases and industry literature indicates that many transit agencies around the country are taking innovative steps to update their outdated exterior livery schemes. Agencies note safety, visibility, marketing refresh, and design accessibility as the reason for this change. Local operators who have recently refreshed their livery include Omnitrans and Long Beach Transit. Example images of their old and new schemes are provided below.

Omnitrans



Long Beach Transit



A common theme that emerged during this review, and as evidenced in the images above, is the incorporation of bright colors to increase visibility and utilize the full extent of the vehicle's surface area. Additionally, transit agencies are utilizing vehicle livery essentially as a 42 foot moving billboard, advertising their own brand during daily system operations.

It is also important to note the existence of bus livery as a topic of discussion in less formal documents, namely in social media outlets. Many customers post pictures, make comments, and provide unsolicited opinions on bus livery. Some agencies have even held competitions to have their livery designed by riders.

The literature also stresses the importance of bus stop signage as a strategic marketing tool for agencies. Beyond providing necessary passenger facts such as routes and customer service contact information, bus stop signs are now used as additional space to promote the agency's brand. One article entitled *The Anatomy of a Perfect Bus Stop* compared bus stop signs to the iconic signs of McDonalds and Shell gasoline, noting that in successful signage campaigns "the merest part of the sign immediately conjectures images of the company as a whole." Foothill Transit seeks to take advantage of its own bus stop sign space as creatively and effectively as possible.

In sum, a thorough review of industry trends solidifies the importance of using vehicle livery and bus stop signage as strategic marketing tools. These two, often overlooked elements, are often the most common and familiar interaction customers have with the agency and our brand.

VI: Bus Stop Signage

Foothill Transit's current bus stop signage is provided below. The design elements of this signage have been utilized since the later 1980s and correspond to the current bus livery for brand identification purposes.



Foothill Transit's updated signs will incorporate the design elements of the chosen livery to maintain consistency in branding and imaging.

VII. Possible Next Steps

The Board has several options available regarding next steps including:

The Board could elect to study this topic further and consider additional livery options. If a decision is postponed, the 2100 series vehicle can be delivered with white paint only and receive decal application by a secondary contractor after delivery. This could delay service availability of the new vehicles and potentially increase labor costs for application.

The Board could elect to move forward with a livery change. The specific livery and design and transition option would need to be selected. Should the Board wish to move forward, staff recommends Mural Design 2 and Option 2 for fleet conversion of existing

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vehicles as it includes a bus refresh for the older (1300, 1400, 1500) vehicles that would include new seat fabric and flooring and interior paint touch ups.

The Board could elect to make no changes to the livery which would incur no additional costs.

Sincerely,



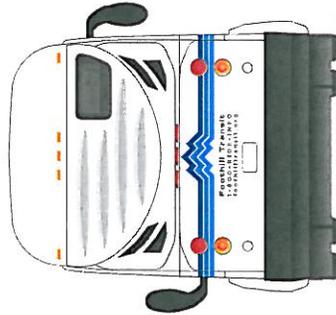
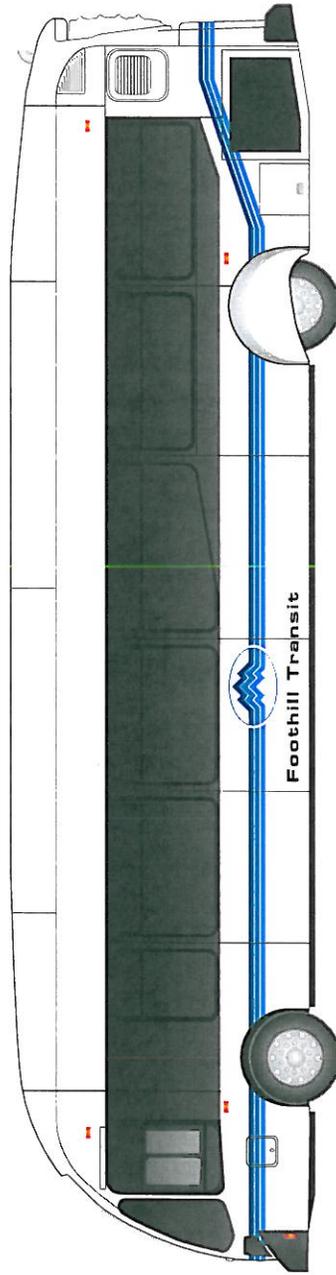
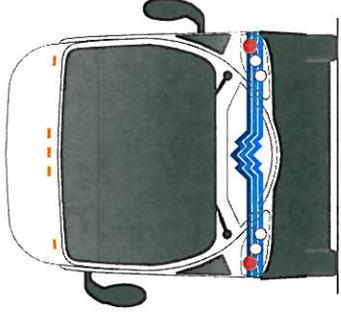
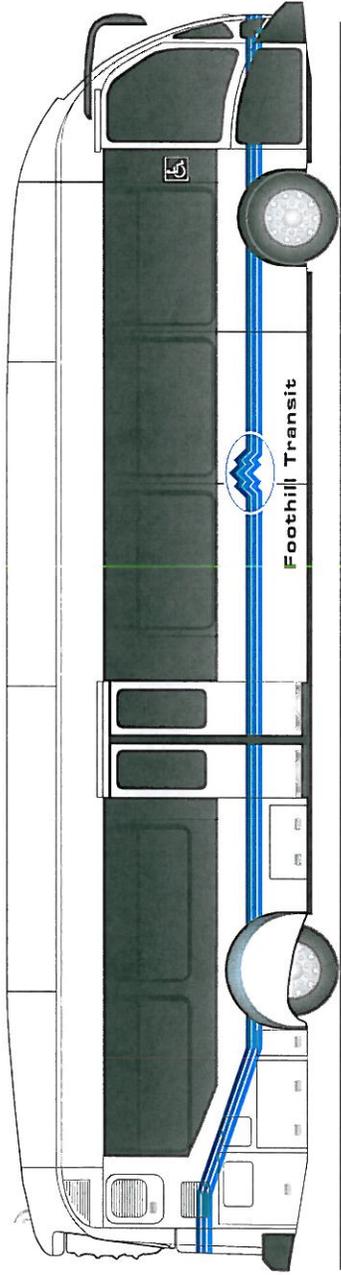
Felicia Friesema
Director of Marketing & Communications



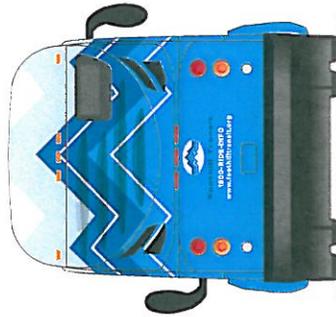
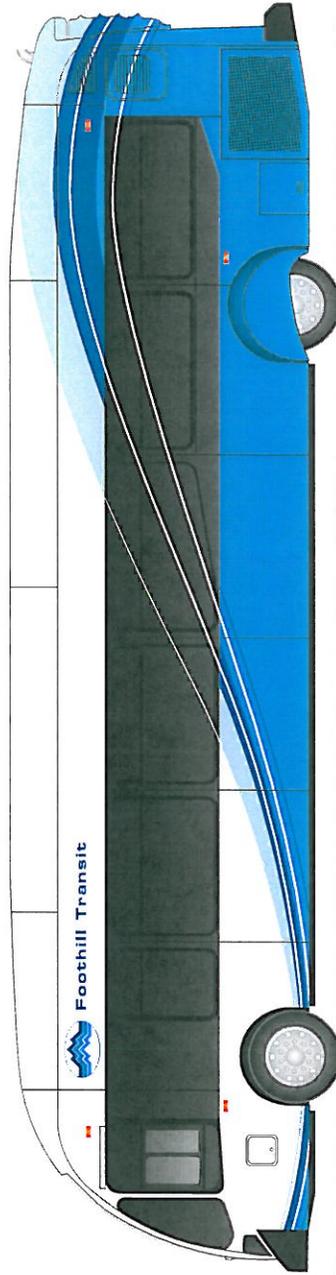
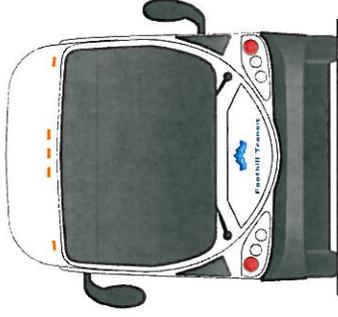
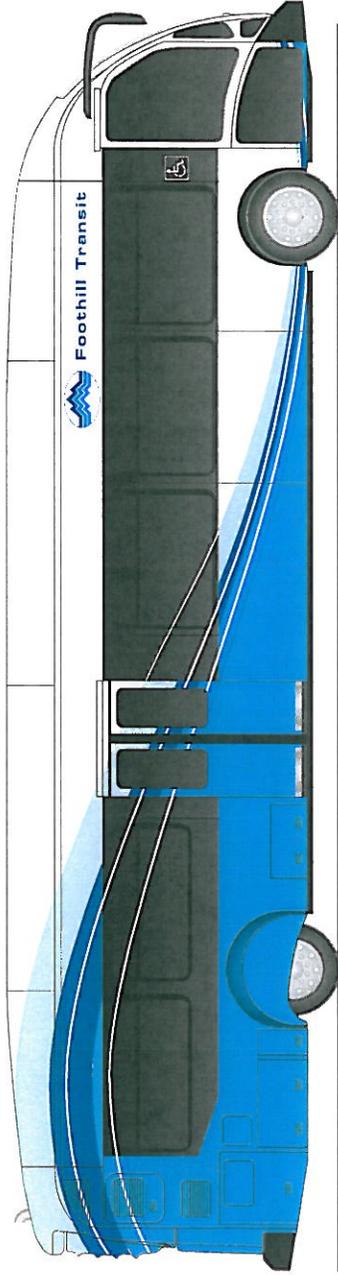
Doran J. Barnes
Executive Director

Attachments

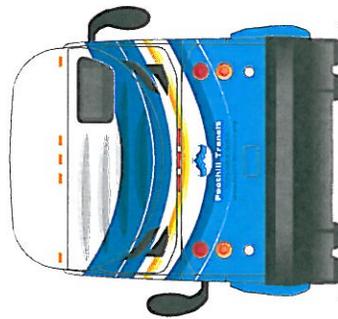
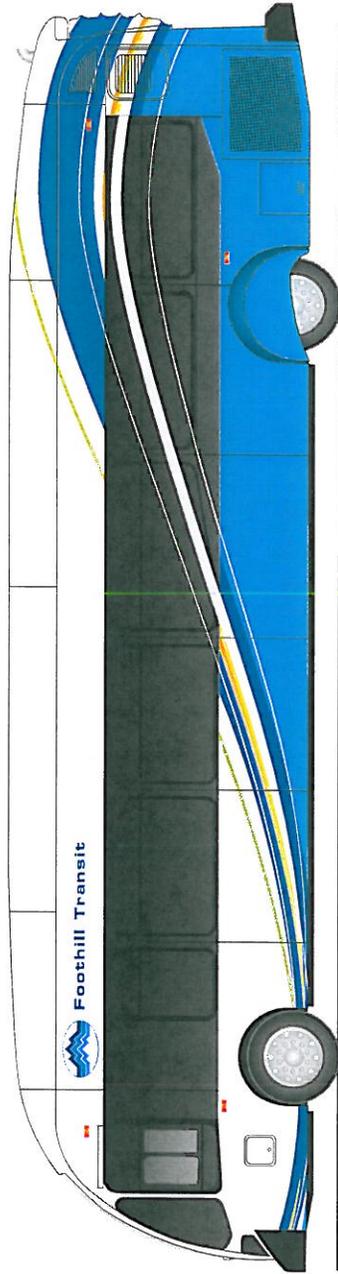
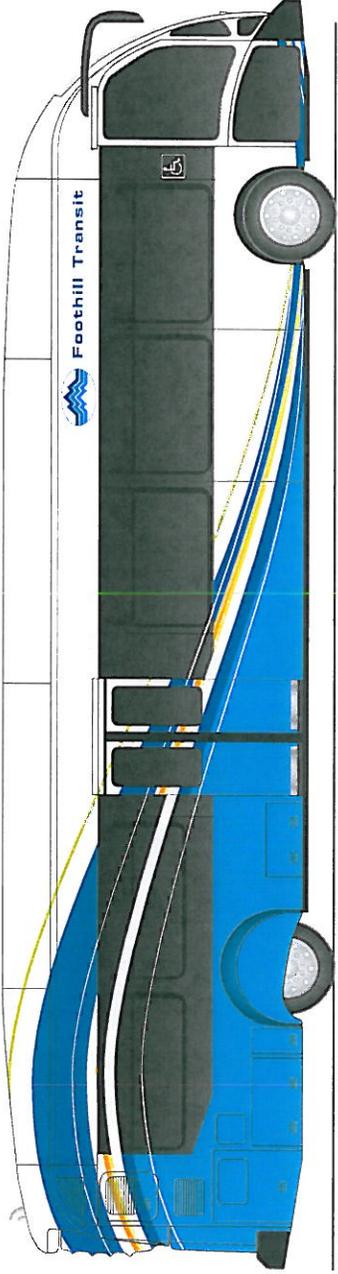
CURRENT FOOTHILL TRANSIT BUS LIVERY -- ATTACHMENT A



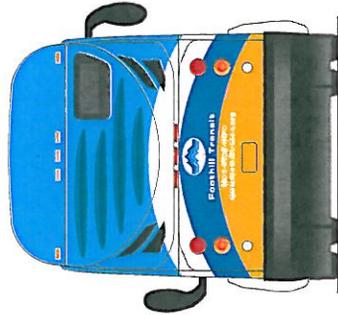
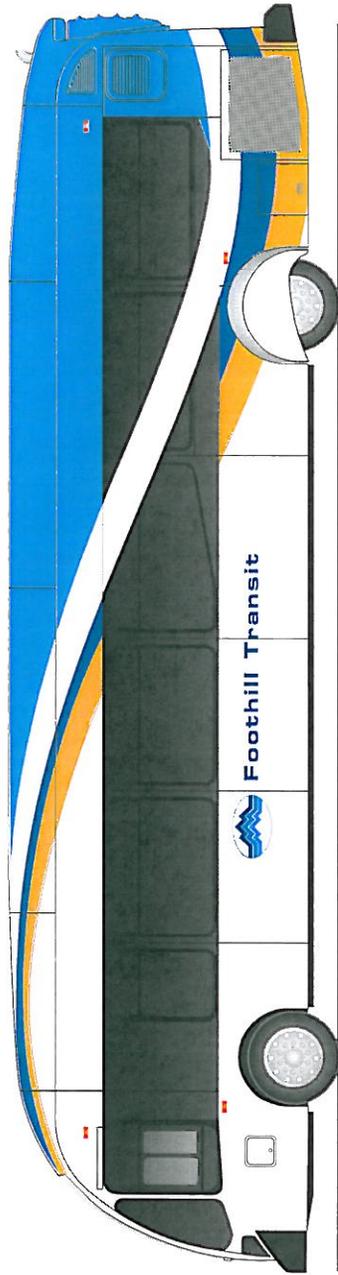
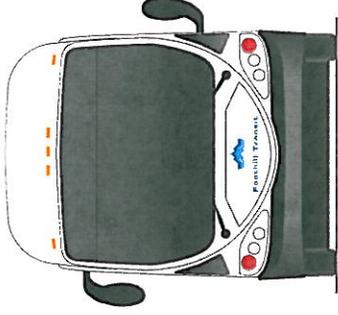
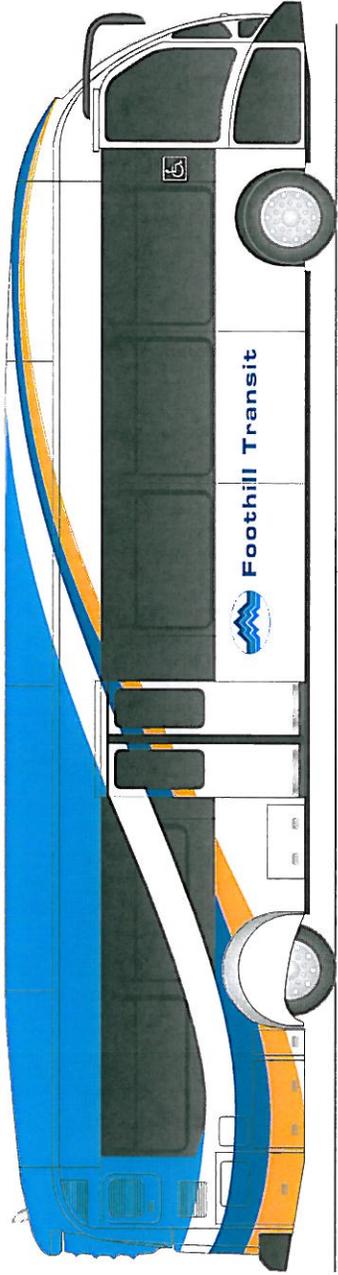
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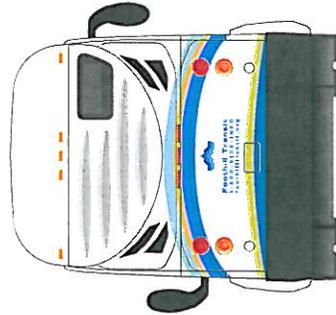
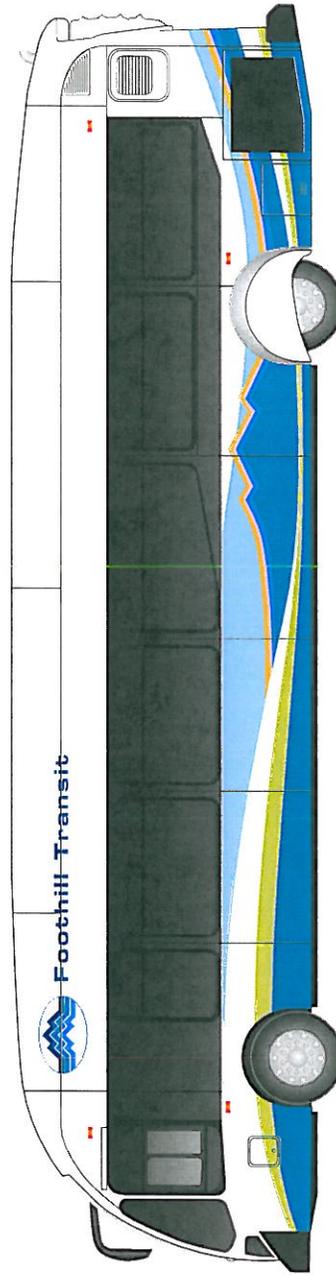
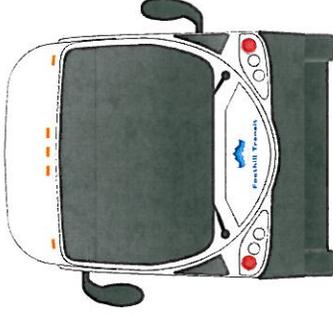
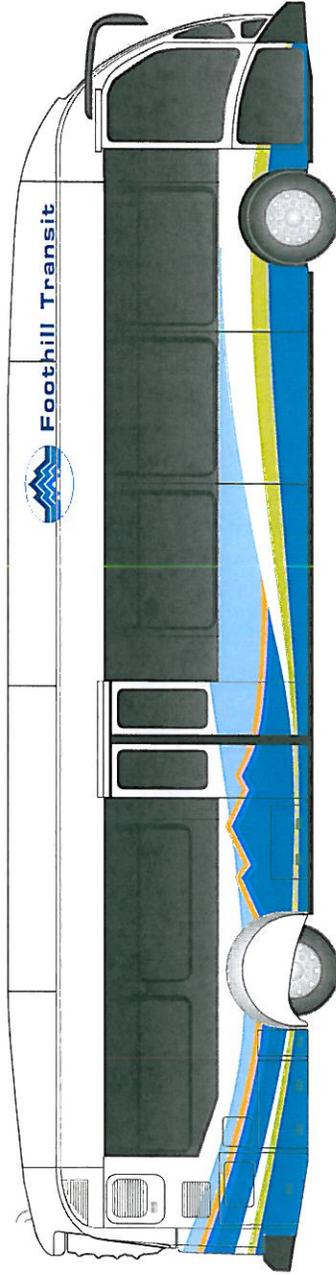
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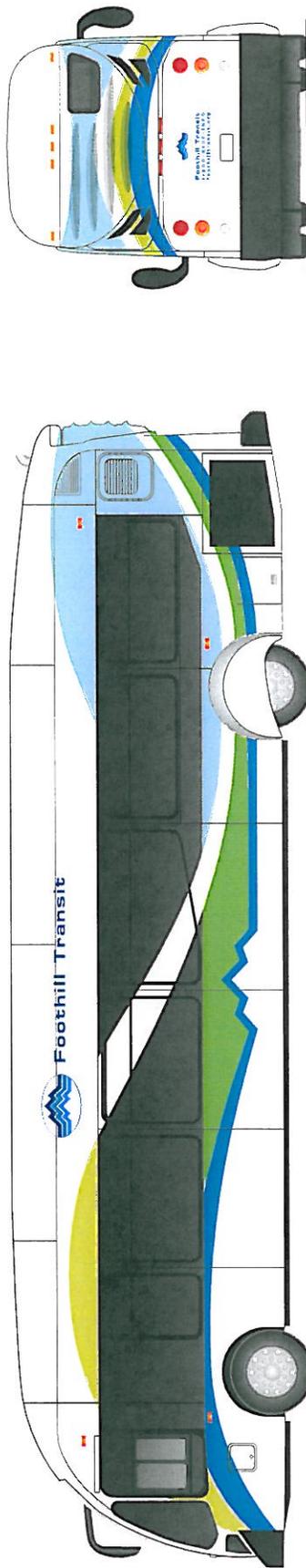
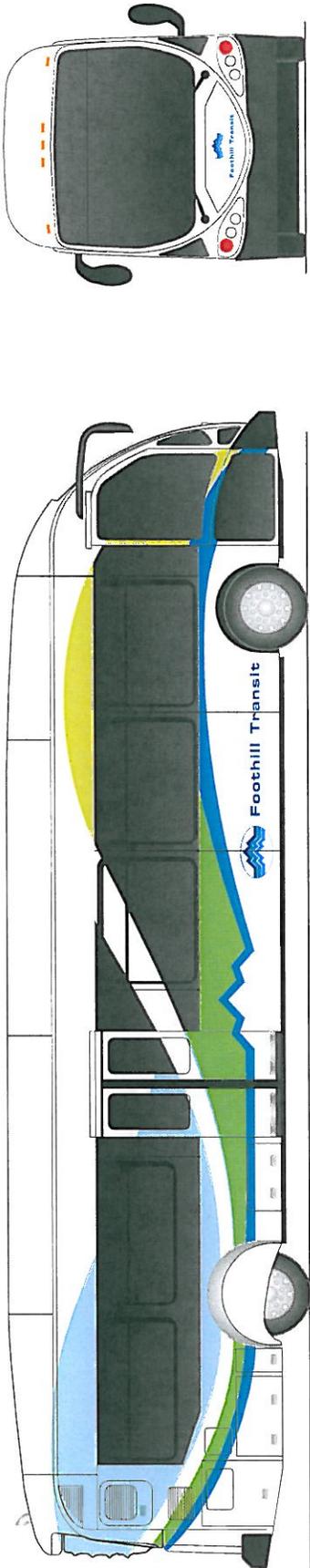
WAVE DESIGN 3



MURAL DESIGN 1



MURAL DESIGN 2



MURAL DESIGN 3

