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\*\*\* For Immediate Release \*\*\*

## **Paratransit vans will soon join SARTA's impressive fleet of fuel cell-powered vehicles**

People who use the Stark Area Regional Transit Authority's (SARTA) paratransit service will soon be riding on ultra-modern hydrogen fuel cell-powered vans, SARTA CEO Kirt Conrad announced today. The Authority, which now operates one of the world's largest fleets of full-size hydrogen fuel cell buses, used funds from the Ohio Department of Transportation, the Federal Transit Administration, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to purchase and equip the seven-passenger vehicles.

"Acquiring and deploying these state-of-the-art vans underscores our unwavering commitment to providing zero-emission transportation in Stark County and to promoting the use of renewable energy in the U.S. and abroad," Mr. Conrad said.

"Along with providing safe, clean, reliable transit service to area residents, putting the vans on the road will give us another opportunity to demonstrate how well HFCs perform in daily use under tough conditions," he continued. "We're confident we'll be able to show, as we have with our large buses, that fuel cells will help drive America's shift away from fossil fuels toward electric vehicles."

Mr. Conrad said economics as well as sustainability are driving the Authority's fuel cell program. "Ohio, and Stark County in particular, are leading centers for fuel cell R&D and manufacturing," he noted. "As the technology gains a foothold our region will attract millions of dollars in investment that will spur business development and create as many as 65,000 new, good-paying jobs over the next 15 years."

Mr. Conrad said he believes passengers will appreciate having the opportunity to advance technological change simply by taking a ride. "The public, policymakers, and community leaders have enthusiastically embraced our fuel cell program since Day One," he said. "They recognize that each time one of our HFC buses travels down the street we're moving closer to changing transportation as the world knows it."

"In addition, riding the buses and the vans is a pretty cool experience," Conrad said. "They're an extremely quiet, very comfortable, affordable and reliable way to get wherever you want to go."

The vans, built on Ford's U4X platform by Tesco, will have seating for six passengers and accommodate one wheelchair. U.S. Hybrid is supplying the 250 mile-range fuel cell drive system. The vans, which feature wheelchair lifts, the latest transit technology, and a variation of SARTA's distinctive HFC color scheme, are fully compliant with Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) standards for paratransit vehicles. The vehicles will join SARTA's fleet in October of 2019.

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The Stark Area Regional Transit Authority (SARTA) was established in 1997 to meet the public transportation needs of Stark County, Ohio residents. SARTA provides more than 2.5 million rides annually to commuters, seniors, individuals with disabilities, students, and veterans through the system's fixed routes, Proline, MedLine, veterans, and campus bus services.

Along with providing safe, reliable, affordable transportation to destinations in Stark and beyond, SARTA is a nationally-recognized leader in the use of transit technology. Receiving numerous awards for its clean energy initiatives which include the acquisition and deployment of one of the world's largest fleets of hydrogen fuel powered-buses. To learn more please visit [sartaonline.com](http://sartaonline.com) or contact Kristie Petty-Cox by phone at 330-477-2782 or via email at [kcox@sartaonline.com](mailto:kcox@sartaonline.com).