

Tacoma authorizes \$4M in federal grants to purchase two electric locomotives

By Spencer Pauley | The Center Square
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(The Center Square) – The Tacoma City Council has authorized \$4 million in grant funding from the Federal Railroad Administration to assist with the acquisition of two zero-emission locomotives and installation of the charging infrastructure.

The two battery-electric switcher locomotives that Tacoma Rail intends to purchase will replace two diesel-electric switcher locomotives that were built in 1965.

The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements **grant program** funds projects that improve the safety, efficiency and reliability of intercity passenger and freight rail. It awarded Tacoma the \$4 million in 2022.

Nearly two years later and the city council has now **approved** moving the federal grant dollars to the Tacoma Rail Fund.

The Tacoma Rail Battery-Electric Switcher Locomotive is a key component of the U.S. Department of Transportation’s critical infrastructure program to improve performance and resilience due to it advancing the region as part of a plan to reduce toxic

In addition to the \$4 million grant, Tacoma is also receiving funding from the Washington state Department of Transportation’s grant program from the Volkswagen Enforcement Action (VW EAC) Mitigation and Air Quality grant, according to

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A **presentation** on the Tacoma Rail Battery-Electric Switcher Locomotive Replacement Project from 2022 revealed the project is expected to total \$11.7 million.

Upon completion, the project is expected to improve air quality by eliminating emissions associated with the annual consumption of approximately 65,000 gallons of diesel fuel from Tacoma Rail's operational activities.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency's **Diesel Emissions Quantifier**, the Tacoma Rail Battery-Electric Switcher Locomotive Replacement Project will result in approximately \$380,000 per year in health benefits due to reduced exposure to diesel pollution.
