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SunLine Transit Agency Named 2021 Southern California Association of Governments Sustainability Award Recipient

Two Coachella Valley Public Agencies Recognized for Innovative Sustainability Projects

(Thousand Palms, CA) – SunLine Transit Agency has been announced a winner of the 2021 Sustainability Awards by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). This award is given to exemplary and innovative planning projects within six main categories. SunLine is being recognized within the category of “Clean Cities – Alternative Fuels and Infrastructure” for Driving the Future of Hydrogen, including the state-of-the-art hydrogen fueling station and the West Coast Center of Excellence in Zero Emission Technology and Renewable Energy.

SunLine Transit Agency is among five other municipalities, agencies and nonprofit organizations that are being acknowledged for excellence in coordinating land use and transportation to improve mobility, livability, prosperity and sustainability. SCAG’s Regional Conference and General Assembly, where the recipients were honored, was held virtually on May 6.

By 2035, SunLine plans to have its fixed route fleet converted entirely to zero-emissions buses, which puts SunLine five years ahead of state regulations requirements and makes the agency the first in the nation to use only zero-emissions vehicles. By using hydrogen fuel cell technology, SunLine’s only byproduct is water.

“We strive to pave the way to sustainability and, specifically, zero-emissions transportation, and this award re-affirms that we are on the right track,” said SunLine CEO/General Manager Lauren Skiver. “SunLine’s hydrogen electrolyzer and future liquid hydrogen station are an important step for the Coachella Valley and for fuel cell vehicle adoption across the country. It is an honor to be recognized among these other great projects and especially another organization from our region.”

Achieving zero-emissions transportation is good not only for the environment of today and tomorrow, it is also good for the community. With a significant portion of the East Coachella Valley living below the poverty line in what is considered to be a disadvantaged community it is crucial that dependable transportation services are accessible. SunLine’s Clean Fleet initiative

guarantees that these services are available and that they are healthy for the environment and community.

It is noteworthy that two of the projects awarded come from the Coachella Valley region and the coordination efforts that take place between respective agencies to create an overall sustainable and environmentally-conscious community for residents to live, play and work in.

“We recognize that SunLine alone cannot achieve a sustainable community. That’s why we hope to set an example for other organizations and to partner with and learn from those who are also pioneers of sustainability. Together, we can make a change,” said Skiver.

As a joint powers authority, the City of Palm Desert is one of SunLine’s member agencies, and was also a recipient of this year’s Sustainability Awards, in the area of “Active, Healthy and Safe Communities” for their San Pablo Avenue Streetscape Project. Improvements made through this project include increased safety for pedestrians and non-motorized transportation, expanded sidewalks and seven new pocket parks in two low-to-moderate-income neighborhoods with low Healthy Places Index scores. Not only does this project contribute to a sustainable future by making the community more walkable but it also improves access to SunLine’s bus Route 1, which offers bus service every 20 minutes.

For more information on SCAG’s award, please visit SCAG.CA.gov. To learn more about the City of Palm Desert, visit CityofPalmDesert.org. To learn more about SunLine Transit Agency’s low- and zero-emission projects, please visit SunLine.org.

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About SunLine Transit Agency

SunLine provides public transit services in California’s Coachella Valley spanning 1,120 mile-service area and carrying approximately 4.2 million riders. It has pioneered zero-emission bus deployments, particularly for hydrogen fuel cell electric buses (FCEB). In 1993, SunLine’s Board adopted a voluntary policy of pursuing alternative fuel solutions that provide the lowest possible emissions, which led to SunLine becoming the first transit agency in the state to convert its entire fleet to compressed natural gas (CNG). SunLine is committed to transitioning its entire bus fleet to zero-emission by 2035. SunLine Refueled is a multi-tiered initiative that brings exciting new transportation alternatives to the Coachella Valley. To learn more about SunLine Transit Agency’s services and policies, go to SunLine.org.