



Founded in  
2019



\$253 capital  
raised



Largest electric  
school bus project  
in North America:  
MCPS, Maryland



First commercial  
electric school  
bus V2G program  
in the U.S.



Leader in public-  
private partnerships:  
400+ buses under  
contract

## About Highland

### 1 What does Highland do?

Highland provides financing and services that make it simple and affordable for schools to upgrade to electric bus fleets.

### 2 What's included in a Highland partnership?

As an electrification-as-a-service company, Highland provides everything a district needs to electrify their fleet. We guarantee that a district's buses will be charged and route-ready every school day – if not, we pay for the downtime.

#### Our solution includes:

- Electric Buses
- Depot electrification - Infrastructure planning & development + chargers
- Fleet & charge management software
- Electricity
- Vehicle maintenance & warranties
- Training

### 3 How long is a Highland partnership?

A Highland partnership is between 10 to 15 years. Why? Electric buses & electric depots require a lot of upfront planning & capital. A long-term Highland contract allows schools to pay for these large capital expenses in small increments over time, typically out of existing transportation budgets, alleviating the need to raise money with bonds.

### 4 How does Highland create value for a school district?

Highland is your partner in fleet electrification. We use private sector financing mechanisms, bus purchasing power, expertise in project design and implementation, and management of electricity costs to make fleet electrification easier & less expensive than a school district managing the project independently. Highland helps schools deploy electric fleets for the same or less than what they pay for diesel.

### 5 How does Highland make money?

Highland makes it less expensive to electrify a fleet using EV expertise & tax equity financing that municipal entities can't leverage. These savings are shared between the district and Highland over time.

### 6 Why can't I just do this myself?

Building an electric fleet's infrastructure and technology is a big project — involving planning, engineering, construction, utility interconnection & permitting, managed charging, demand response, vehicle to grid (V2G) — and more. Working with Highland allows districts to tap into a nationwide network of projects and experts, and leverage our relationships with bus and charger manufacturers — which keep costs down.

In addition, Highland uses private sector financial tools, like asset depreciation and tax credits, to reduce the overall costs to districts — something that districts can't do themselves.



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## Electric bus deployments with Highland

### 1 How many buses should I start with?

Generally, we recommend starting with a smaller deployment to build the skills needed to operate a larger electric fleet in the future. Districts often choose to work up to their normal diesel replacement rate to phase in electric buses. This requires a plan for phased electrification by installing underlying infrastructure to scale for the next 10+ years. By doing it right the first time, districts can save money on construction costs and only break ground once.

### 2 How does Highland engage with the community on deployments?

Highland provides workforce training to drivers and mechanics, ensuring they're up to speed on the latest electric school bus technology. We work with our customers' school bus dealers and bus manufacturers to provide education and training to drivers and first responders (i.e., police and fire departments) on electric school bus safety features and how to use the new technology. We can help produce materials to explain the project to your community and work with community and advocacy groups to promote clean energy workforce development.

### 3 Does Highland manufacture buses or charging stations?

No, we help districts navigate the complexities of planning, engineering, construction, utility interconnection & permitting, EV technology, financing, and charging – all wrapped in a long-term partnership. We are technology agnostic – we work with all major bus manufacturers and a variety of chargers based on a customer's preference and needs. Ultimately, we help districts access the best technology for their unique needs at or below the cost of operating their existing diesel fleet.

### 4 Can I provide my own electricity? Do you work with solar?

Highland offers fixed energy rates for the duration of contracts, meaning we take on the risk of fluctuating energy costs. However, school districts do have the option of providing their own electricity, whether from the grid or from on-site solar. Highland can integrate solar into project development plans to charge electric buses using renewable energy.

### 5 Are electric school buses even on the road yet?

Yes!!! EV school bus fleets are already on the road in 31 states! 240+ school districts have rolled out over 750+ electric school buses (World Resources Institute, August 2022). We've passed the early adopter stage and are starting the mass adoption stage across rural, urban, and suburban districts. Montgomery County Public Schools has deployed close to a hundred electric school buses in Maryland, with 326 buses slated to be on the road by 2024 – Scan QR code on Page 1 for "The MCPS Electric Fleet".

## Paying for an electric fleet

### 1 What about EPA grants?

Grants are only part of the equation and often don't cover all expenses related to fleet electrification. They may cover the cost of the buses, but not the cost of infrastructure, energy, chargers, or smart charging technology, etc. Highland supplements grants with cheaper private capital & tax policy to lower the overall cost of electrification for public sector customers. In addition, Highland applies for state and federal incentives on behalf of our customers. We pass the benefit of additional funding & lower project costs on to customers by reducing the fixed annual fee over the life of the partnership.

### 2 Do I own my buses? Is Highland a lease?

Highland is a performance-based service contract that includes all aspects of an electric fleet – buses, chargers, energy, and charging operations. Highland owns the buses in order to leverage private sector financial tools, such as asset depreciation, that make electrification cheaper for school districts. Your mechanics still service the vehicles and you are reimbursed for parts & labor.

### 3 What happens at the end of a contract?

At the end of a contract, districts can choose to extend their existing contract or create a new contract with Highland that includes new buses & new charger technology. If the district doesn't wish to continue a partnership, the buses can be purchased from Highland at fair market value and charging infrastructure can be decommissioned. The utility infrastructure and conduit in the depot is the district's to own and repurpose.

### 4 What does Highland do with V2G revenue?

Highland works with partners to pass through V2G revenue to districts and reduce the overall cost of fleet electrification. It is not a significant source of revenue for Highland projects.

V2G is currently available in very few locations in North America, with revenue ranging from \$0-\$10,000 per bus per year. This represents a small fraction of funding relative to the costs of full fleet electrification. Over time, Highland expects the V2G landscape to grow and support the stability of more local grids.

### 5 How does Highland insulate districts from private sector risk?

In industries with financed projects, such as wind & solar deployment, mortgage lending, etc., independent investors who finance the projects have "step-in rights." The same is true of fleet electrification. This means that if Highland as an organization were to disappear, each project would still be backed by a series of investors that assume ownership of the contract. We structure contracts so that these investors only get paid if electric buses continue to work as contracted for the duration of the partnership, which motivates us (and the investors) to ensure a successful fleet deployment.

Our contracts are all structured as independent LLCs (Limited Liability Corporations), which further insulates districts from private sector risk.