

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 11/9/2022

Staff Report No. 22-601

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager/Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: AC Transit's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Program

BRIEFING ITEM

AGENDA PLANNING REQUEST: ☐

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider receiving a report on the District's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) efforts.
[Requested by President Ortiz - 4/13/2022]

Staff Contact:
Jill A. Sprague, General Counsel/Chief Legal Officer

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Prioritize Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility

Initiative - Internal and External Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Programs and Priorities

The development and implementation of a formal Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Program will strengthen the District's efforts to support the ability of employees, suppliers, key constituencies and the public to thrive in the AC Transit environment.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no budgetary or fiscal impact associated with this report as all costs were budgeted and approved in the FY 2023 operating budget.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

On June 23, 2021, staff updated the Board on the District's historic and current Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) efforts. This report included a discussion of both internal and external efforts as well as the District's intention to launch a formal DEIA program. This report updates the Board on the District's efforts since June 23, 2021.

The District established a DEIA steering committee comprised of employee volunteers to research and begin a formal DEIA program. The steering committee created a detailed scope of work identifying the goals of the DEIA program. Once the scope of work was completed, the committee sought qualified, reputable consultants to assist in achieving these goals. After reviewing proposals and conducting interviews, the committee

unanimously selected Ivy Consulting Group (Ivy).

Established in 1990, Ivy is a full-service consulting, training, and coaching firm with expertise in the development and implementation of organizational strategies specifically through a DEIA lens.

The District engaged Ivy to conduct an internal climate assessment, make recommendations for improvements based on the assessment and assist the District in implementing the recommended changes. This assessment will include a review of statistical data regarding hiring, promotion, retention, and separation of District employees as well as District policies and procedures that may impact diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. The assessment will also include contributions from District employees, Board Officers, and Board of Directors. All employees, Board Officers and Board of Directors will be invited to participate in a District-wide survey. The District worked closely with both Ivy and our three union partners in the development of the survey. The survey will assess the experiences of the participants specifically as it relates to issues of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. Ivy will also conduct 20 focus groups. These focus groups will allow Ivy to take a deeper dive into the experiences of employees in underrepresented groups whose feedback might not be adequately captured in the survey results. Finally, Ivy will conduct interviews of some executives and senior leadership who have decision making authority. The purpose of these interviews is to gather additional feedback related to District policies and procedures.

Once Ivy has reviewed District policies and procedures and analyzed the data obtained from the surveys, focus groups and interviews, they will prepare and submit an assessment report to the District. The assessment report will contain Ivy's recommendations for improvements. The District will then work with Ivy in prioritizing and developing a plan to implement the recommendations. The implementation phase will include the development of specific DEIA strategic goals and key performance metrics.

The District's promotion of the DEIA program will begin November 7, 2022. The District and its three union partners are working collaboratively to promote and educate District employees on the upcoming District-wide survey and focus groups and to emphasize the importance of their participation. The survey will launch Tuesday January 17, 2023 and will be available through Friday January 27, 2023. The survey will be available via QR code which will assist in reaching employees without District email. Those with District email will receive a link to the survey from Ivy via email. Ivy will conduct focus groups and interviews in February 2023. The survey answers and information provided during focus groups and interviews will be provided directly to Ivy and individual employee responses will be kept confidential from all District employees, Board Officers and Board of Directors. The District anticipates receiving Ivy's assessment report by April 2023.

In addition to the DEIA program, the District is also participating in APTA's 2-year Racial Equity Commitment Pilot Program. The program provides a tangible roadmap for signatory agencies to help advance racial equity. Beginning in May 2022, the 84 signatory organizations committed to putting into action the five core principles of the program: strategic priority; climate assessment; demographic data; policies, procedures, and practices; and dedicated resources and engagement. The District meets monthly with other signatory agencies to discuss best practices, share resources, and participate in learning sessions with experts in the field. The District reaps the benefit of hearing from agencies who are further along in the process and can also share lessons learned for those agencies who are just beginning the process. At the end of the two years, APTA will publish a report that analyzes the initial experience and recommendations for improving the commitment program. APTA will launch the full program open to all APTA members in Spring 2024. Signatory agencies like the District are

considered founding signatories of the commitment program.

As part of our participation in the APTA Racial Equity Commitment Pilot Program, District staff participated in a panel discussion on the District's DEIA efforts during the APTA Transform Conference in October 2022. The panel discussion included conversation on the benefits of participating in the pilot program, best practices, and anticipated challenges. Staff received positive feedback on the District's participation in the panel discussion from peer agencies who attended the conference session.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

A formal DEIA program communicates a clear message to District employees, vendors / third parties who conduct business with the District, and the public that the District is committed to improving upon its existing commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. The DEIA program also allows the District to evaluate and modify as necessary its DEIA goals and assess progress toward achieving these goals.

There are no disadvantages.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

No alternatives were considered.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

None.

ATTACHMENTS:

None.

Prepared by:

Aimee Steele, Assistant General Counsel

Approved/Reviewed by:

Jill A. Sprague, General Counsel/Chief Legal Officer

Beverly Greene, Executive Director of External Affairs, Marketing & Communications

Lynette Little, Director of Civil Rights & Compliance

Sebron Flenaugh III, Executive Director of Human Resources