

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 11/12/2020

Staff Report No. 20-422

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager
SUBJECT: Operations Quarterly Performance Report

BRIEFING ITEM

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider receiving the Quarterly Operations Performance Report for AC Transit Fixed Route Services during the First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2021.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Safe and Secure Operations
Initiative - Service Quality

The Quarterly Operations Performance Report provides Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and other District activities that support and are aligned with the following Strategic Plan Goals and Initiatives: Safe & Secure Operations, Convenient & Reliable Service, High Performing Workforce, Service Quality, Employee Recruitment, Training & Retention.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

There are no budgetary or fiscal impacts related to this report.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

During the First Quarter (Q1) reporting period, the District continued operating in emergency response mode but was able to transition from a significantly reduced bus service to operating at 75% of pre-pandemic, regularly scheduled services. Known as the Service Recovery Plan, increasing bus services accommodated higher weekday and Transbay ridership numbers and helped reduce bus overcrowding. This was key to maintaining compliance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for social and physical distancing. Moreover, the District established the *reNew Plan*, a health and safety action plan, adding more safeguards to improve best practices for protecting employees and riders during the pandemic. The protective mitigation improvements include requiring use of a face cover while riding the service, adding bus operator protective shields, enhancing bus filtration and air flow, providing customers face coverings and hand sanitizing dispensers. Finally, the District successfully launched TEMPO, the East Bay's first bus rapid transit system connecting Uptown Oakland to the San Leandro Transit Center. The aforementioned activities coincided with the Bus Operators' August 9, 2020, System Sign-Up ensuring successful implementation.

Data Reporting Disclaimers

Several factors caused by the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the operations performance matrix. Staff will continue to monitor and analyze changes. Data used for this report was collected as of October 8, 2020 and may differ from “live” reporting.

The Quarterly Operations Performance Report provides information on programs within the District designed to improve the performance, reliability, cleanliness, and safety of the District’s bus service. The FY21 Q1 attachment provides a graphical representation of the performance of the programs.

Employee Recognition

To continually recognize outstanding employees who are an essential part of achieving Division goals and objectives, the following employees were recognized as Employees of the Month during the quarter:

Transportation	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20
Road Supervision/OCC	Yvonne Oliver	Erica Seals	Felicia Jamerson
Division 2: Emeryville	Gerald Trumm	Orlandria McQuarters	Kelvin Payne
Division 3: Richmond	Ta-Tanisha Wade	Dennis Nunez	Robert Coleman
Division 4: East Oakland	Edward Davis	Harjit Singh	Johnathan Santiago
Division 6: Hayward	Kenisha Sparrow	Chy Vaing	Phan Nguyen

Maintenance	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20
Division 2: Emeryville	Stacey Hayes	William Brambila	Jorge Pachas
Division 3: Richmond	Michael Johnson	Edison Gomez	Alejandro Lopez
Division 4: East Oakland	Edward Garcia	Warren Johnson	Kenneth Webb
Division 6: Hayward	Michael Leite	Ingrid Cardona	Charvis Mays
Central Maintenance	Juan Franco	Rafael Otero	Junior Garcia

Service Enhancements

First Quarter, Fiscal Year 2021, AC Transit operated at two different service levels. From July 1, 2020 to August 8, 2020, the Emergency Service Plan continued with bus services operating at less than 65% of regular capacity due to the pandemic conditions. Beginning Sunday, August 9, 2020, the Service Recovery Plan was implemented, restoring 75% of pre-pandemic, regularly scheduled bus services.

The recovery plan included limited restoration of service on some local, Transbay lines, and planned supplementary school services when classroom instruction resumes. Moreover, as some restrictions were lifted and more business, recreational, social, and cultural activities resumed, standby buses were deployed. Standby buses used every available operator to quickly deploy and respond to increased ridership or to reduce overcrowding.

These service enhancements coincided with the August System Sign-Up. Planned training activities prepared Bus Operators for new routes, new equipment and most significantly, new service. The most notable new service, Line 1T, launched August 9th. Better known as TEMPO, Line 1T is the first-ever East Bay bus rapid transit system connecting Uptown Oakland to the San Leandro Transit Center.

Significant to ensuring AC Transit bus services continue during this pandemic, a Standard Operating Procedure

(SOP) entitled *Emergency Division Closure* was implemented. This SOP outlines procedures for maintaining bus services when one or more operating divisions must close as the result of an emergency. This SOP is not limited to the current pandemic, but rather, accounts for any emergency that impacts the closure of an operating division.

Bus Enhancements

AC Transit's *reNew Plan*, the District's health and safety action plan, included the addition of critical safeguards onboard the bus fleet ensuring employees and rider safety remain priority during the pandemic. Safeguards implemented include the following:

- Onboard social and physical distancing: Rear-door boarding, caution tape restricting passengers from moving to the front (except for ADA riders, boarding through the front door) and limited passenger capacity counts per bus length continued throughout Q1.
- Mandatory use of face covering: Passengers are required to wear a face covering when boarding a bus and while riding the service.
- Face coverings and foam sanitizing hand dispensers: The installation of onboard face masks and foam sanitizing dispensers on all buses provide personal protective wear for all.
- Operator compartment protective shield: Also known as the virus barrier, the shield is made of polycarbonate material, virtually unbreakable and half the weight of glass. It serves as an added layer of protection, shielding Operators from airborne droplets while operating. AC Transit's own Maintenance employees, members of ATU Local 192, designed and installed the shields that were reviewed and approved by the District's Safety Committee.
- On-board air filtration: Upgraded high-efficiency particulate air filters rated at MERV 7 were installed enabling the heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) units to remove particulate matter as small as 3.0 micrometers.
- On-board air quality: Operations and Safety staff conducted a "smoke test" which helped visualize how air flows throughout a bus. The result was an operational recommendation that improved air quality. Operating the HVAC system, with windows closed and the rear roof hatch opened, created positive pressure forcing old air out (through the open hatch).

On-Time Performance

(Reference Attachment 1, Chart 1 - On-Time Performance)

On-Time Performance (OTP) is a District Key Performance Indicator (KPI) with the goal to achieve 72% or higher. System-wide OTP average in Q1 was 76.01% versus 75.64% in the prior quarter. The District met or exceeded the goal in each of the months: July (74.52%), August (76.44%) and September (77.08%). The average OTP for Transbay routes was 75.47% during the quarter versus 78.58% in the prior quarter.

The Operations Control Center continues to utilize "line management" to monitor and track on-time performance. Each controller uses advanced features displayed on their console to monitor performance of their specified Division lines, and coordinate efforts with field staff to mitigate impacts.

Ridership

(Reference Attachment 1, Chart 2 - Ridership)

System-wide weekday ridership in Q1 averaged 66,743 versus 53,721 in the prior quarter. Ridership is still

recovering from the substantial decline due to the pandemic. Weekday ridership in this quarter gradually increased from one month to the next: July (60,753), August (68,675) and September (70,801). Average weekday ridership for Transbay lines increased as well from 2,453 in the prior quarter to 3,561 in Q1. Transbay ridership accounted for 5.34% of system-wide weekday ridership.

Service Operated Percentage

(Reference Attachment 1, Chart 3 - Service Operated)

System-wide percent of Service Operated in Q1 was 96.62% versus 90.89% in the prior quarter. The Service Operated KPI goal is 99.5%. The District did not meet this goal during any one month in the quarter: July (95.99%), August (95.90%) and September (97.97%).

Two primary reasons define not meeting this KPI target. First, the Service Recovery Plan wasn't implemented until mid-quarter August 9. This meant that significantly reduced bus services continued to operate in Q1 as in the previous quarter. Second, positive COVID-19 tests affected the closure of Emeryville, Division 2, on August 26, 2020 and subsequently impacted bus services. Staff worked with other Divisions to cover as much service as possible; unfortunately, not every line and block was able to be covered. Most importantly, staff learned invaluable business practices to respond effectively to a division closure which yielded an emergency playbook, or the *Emergency Division Closure SOP* as highlighted in the *Service Enhancements* section of this report.

Operator Log-On Rate

(Reference Attachment 1, Chart 4 - Log-On Rate)

Operator Log-On Rate is a District KPI with the goal of achieving 95.0% or higher. The system-wide average rate in Q1 was 95.25% versus 95.60% in the prior quarter. The District exceeded the KPI target in July (95.50%) and August (95.30%) but fell below this target in September (94.95%).

Some route changes were not uploaded in the CAD/AVL system with activation of the Emergency Service Plan which continued into the first month of the quarter. Once schedules were implemented in August, staff discovered some anomalies with log-on issues between relief transitions and Operators logging-on early. Staff is working to address these anomalies within the system and with support from the Line Management Teams. Field staff monitor log-on status during gate checks at the Divisions while buses rollout, and at relief and layover points. Operations Control Center staff also monitor log-on status and can assist Operators and field staff when issues arise.

Operator Unavailability

(Reference Attachment 1, Chart 5 & 6 - Scheduled/Unscheduled Unavailability)

Operator Unavailability is a District KPI with the goal of remaining below a combined total of 22.50%: (1) Scheduled (8.50%) and (2) Unscheduled (14.00%). The system-wide average for Total Operator Unavailability in Q1 was 31.34% versus 33.04% in the prior quarter. The system-wide average of Scheduled Operator Unavailability in Q1 was 9.78% versus 8.00% in the prior quarter. Scheduled Operator Unavailability met the District goal of being below or at 8.50% in August (7.92%) but was above this threshold in July (11.00%) and September (10.42%).

The system-wide average of Unscheduled Operator Unavailability in Q1 was 21.57% versus 25.04% in the prior quarter. Unscheduled Operator Unavailability did not meet the goal of less than 14.00% during any month in the quarter: July (23.97%), August (21.33%) or September (19.40%).

Heavier absences occurred in this quarter due to the Shelter-In-Place (SIP) orders issued by Alameda and Contra-Costa Counties in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Initially, many employees remained off work due to childcare needs, school closures, health concerns with the employee or dependents, or were identified as being in the “at risk” category. The District made a concerted effort to ensure all employees were able to care for themselves and their families as more information and clarity was provided from federal, state and local governments regarding available programs. Absenteeism may continue to be unstable and reflect the ever-changing conditions impacted by the pandemic. Staff remain engaged for up-to-date information and communicate frequently with all employees.

Accident Rates

(Reference Attachment 1, Chart 7 & 8 - Passenger/Vehicle Accidents)

The system-wide average rate of Passenger Falls per 100,000 miles in Q1 was 1.32 versus 1.23 in the prior quarter. The goal for Passenger Falls met the District’s KPI target of less than 3.25 in each month of the quarter: July (1.39), August (1.34) and September (1.24).

The system-wide average rate of Vehicle Collisions per 100,000 Miles in Q1 was 3.46 versus 2.97 in the prior quarter. While September (4.18) was above the KPI, the District exceeded the KPI target of less than 4.00 in the other two months of the quarter: July (2.65) and August (3.54).

The Accident Reduction Taskforce meets monthly to analyze the root causes of and develop initiatives targeted at minimizing passenger falls and vehicle collisions. Accidents that occurred during the period were evaluated by this taskforce, which initiated new campaigns as well as updated others to focus on the highest accident types. One initiative is to engage with operators on all accident types, whether preventable or not, to get their feedback and raise awareness. Another critical initiative is activating daily safety messages sent from Operations Control Center (OCC) broadcast to all buses. Messages are concise and diverse, each with the purpose to emphasize pertinent personal and defensive driving safety reminders. Finally, less traffic and lighter congestion on roadways also contributed to the improved performance with this KPI.

Miles Between Road Calls

(Reference Attachment 1, Chart 9 - Miles Between Road Calls)

Miles Between Chargeable Road Calls (MBCRC) is a Maintenance KPI with the goal to meet or exceed 5,400 miles between road calls. System-wide MBCRC in Q1 was 6,332 versus 6,876 in the prior quarter. MBCRC exceeded the District’s goal in each month of the quarter: July (6,838), August (6,031) and September (6,125).

The Road Call Reduction Taskforce (RCRT) analyzes road calls to prevent repeat failures and develop initiatives to increase fleet reliability. An updated OCC Road Call Guideline Manual was implemented. This is a bus fleet troubleshooting guide enabling OCC Dispatchers to assist Bus Operators in resolving many common bus issues in service. Maintenance was also able to dedicate extra time on fleet repairs during the Emergency Service

Plan which contributed to improvement of the KPI score.

Bus Cleanliness Inspection Rate

(Reference Attachment 1, Chart 10 - Overall Bus Cleanliness)

The system-wide average for Bus Cleanliness Inspection Rate in Q1 was 8.07 versus 8.27 in the prior quarter. The District met or exceeded the KPI target of 8.10 in July (8.18) but was below this threshold in August (7.96) and September (8.08).

The Bus Cleanliness Taskforce meets monthly to analyze, investigate, and solve issues regarding bus cleanliness. Continual focus resides in those areas receiving the lowest rating in the monthly quality assurance inspections. Implementation of standardization and best practices across Divisions has provided improvements in the cleaning process with results evident in the past quarter. Service employees also continue to provide enhanced cleaning and disinfecting on the fleet using foggers in response to COVID-19 pandemic.

Journey Level Mechanic Staffing

In August, the District achieved a milestone celebrating the first-ever graduates of the Maintenance Career Ladder Training Program. Two (2) former Bus Operators and two (2) former Service Employees began a new career as Mechanic Helpers in July 2019 and were promoted to Apprentice Mechanics this quarter. Led by a District and ATU Local 192 labor management leadership team known as "Progress In Action" (PIA), the Maintenance Career Ladder Training Program was established to create direct career ladders for front-line employees. Moreover, four (4) new Mechanic Helpers: one (1) Janitor and three (3) Service Employees, started in Q1 aspiring to follow in the footsteps toward becoming Apprentice Mechanics as well next year. Finally, as we continue to understand COVID-19, Human Resources will continue to evaluate staffing needs for critical Maintenance positions for the District. In Q2, Human Resources will evaluate and develop new recruitment strategies to ensure the health and safety of our employees and the communities we serve.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

This report does not recommend a course of action with notable advantages or disadvantages.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

This report does not recommend an alternative analysis.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

There are no prior relevant Board actions/policies.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Q1 FY 2020 - Operations Quarterly Performance Report: Tables & Charts

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