

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 9/25/2024

Staff Report No. 24-411

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors

FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager/Chief Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Road Supervision Active Line Management/Service Quality Improvement

BRIEFING ITEM

AGENDA PLANNING REQUEST:

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider receiving a report on how active line management supports service quality improvements related to the hiring of three new Road Supervisor positions. [Requested by Director Walsh - 3/13/24]

Staff Contact:
Salvador Llamas, Chief Operating Officer

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Safe and Secure Operations
Initiative - Service Quality

This report is 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:

These positions were approved as part of the FY24 mid-year budget and are included in the FY25 budget.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

On February 14, 2024, the Board of Directors approved three new Supervisor positions to complement the existing 58 budgeted positions. This action increased the Supervision headcount to 61 full-time positions. At the March 13, 2024, Board of Directors meeting, Director Walsh submitted an agenda planning request to receive a briefing on active line management and how it can help improve service quality. The Board also requested an understanding of what resources and training may be needed to advance active line management.

Transportation Road Supervisors respond to all operational exceptions, such as equipment-related service interruptions, accidents, passenger disturbances, public actions, demonstrations and protests, and service detours. Road Supervisors are often the first responders in the field to incidents involving District vehicles and employees and have to quickly make on-scene decisions to help ensure operators, passengers, and at times

the public are safe, and bus schedules are minimally impacted. Road Supervisors are assigned to geographical service areas and monitor District service around the clock. The Supervision department is managed by the Operations Control Center Manager, who is supported by four Transportation Senior Supervisors, and one Assistant Superintendent of Transbay. The 61 Road Supervisors equates to approximately one Supervisor covering 5.96 miles of service area, or one Supervisor for every 22 Operators. Per the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the District and American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 3916 supervisors select shifts based on a seniority bid, which takes place every three months. The shift options include the Operations Control Center (OCC), Salesforce Transit Center (STC), and Road Supervision assignments. During the next scheduled supervisor bid an On-Time Performance (OTP) shift will be added, which will be effective on September 27, 2024.

Operations Control Center (OCC):

Supervisors with at least one year in the department are eligible for specialized controller training and become qualified to select shifts in the OCC to manage Division routes through the District's Computer Aided Dispatching (CAD) software. OCC Controllers use the CAD station to monitor service and help direct Road Supervisor activities in the field. Controllers also monitor all trips departing the yard including those that are late or on-time, status of operator's log-in to the bus systems, and update trip assignments with service cancellations or reinstatements. Controllers also manage incidents such as road calls related to equipment failure or damage, accidents, detours, and emergency calls, and coordinate sending support services such as Road Supervision, Medical, and the Alameda or Contra Costa Sheriff.

Salesforce Transit Center (STC):

Supervisors assigned to the Salesforce Transit Center bus deck track the arrival and departure times of bus schedules. The bus deck Supervisors also monitor customers' boardings and alighting, provide direction to the Operators on their assignments, respond to incidents or accidents inside the STC bus terminal, and help provide wayfinding and customer service assistance to passengers or other people passing through the bus terminal. The District operates an OCC station at the terminal that is staffed with Controllers who manage all Transbay schedules and operations.

Road Supervision:

Transportation Road Supervisors are assigned to specific geographical areas within the District's service area. They utilize CAD system mobile tablets to monitor service performance, operator log-ons, off-route coaches, communicate with OCC, and monitor radio traffic. In the field, they perform gate checks, time checks, post detour signage, and respond to all incidents and accidents within their service area. Road Supervisors also coordinate with OCC to make active service adjustments to routes in real-time. Road Supervisors also interact directly with customers who ride our service and the public while carrying out their duties. Additionally, they provide valuable support during planned District events by assessing and selecting travel routes for our buses, and helping to manage traffic and pedestrian flow in coordination with city and other jurisdictions to ensure safe travel of buses.

Line Management Program:

The Line Management Program is structured in a "District Teams" concept. Each Division has a District Team comprising of representatives from Transportation, Maintenance, Scheduling, Planning Business Sciences, and Innovation & Technology. Business Sciences provides performance statistics data that is reviewed by the groups from each Division, and monthly, the District Teams meet to review each Division's performance data.

The group looks at trends and low-performing routes and targets those for service improvements. District Teams then develop strategies and campaigns focusing on improving performance of those routes.

Adding three supervisor positions allows the District to create an additional On-Time Performance (OTP) Team to compliment the District Teams' efforts to improve service delivery. The OTP team is strategically deployed to problematic areas and routes for direct observation, active line management, and service improvements. One member of the OTP team will be assigned to each end of the route, and the remaining OTP member will be positioned in the middle of the route. The OTP team will work in unison to track the arrival times and ensure the routes depart on time at the end of line. Together, the team addresses any bus bunching and documents any buses that may be running early or late. For bus bunching, some of the duties of the OTP team will be to hold one schedule for a time while releasing the other schedule to ensure adequate spacing and timing is maintained. The three OTP team members will be in direct contact with the Operations Control Center, which monitors the lines for compliance and support. OTP team members will provide documentation of schedule performance observations and share this information and recommendations with the Planning and Scheduling departments so they can work with the Drivers Committee for route adjustments in subsequent signups. Once the targeted route improves to acceptable levels, the OTP team will be deployed to another low-performing route.

Supervision Staffing:

There are 67 Transportation Supervisor positions budgeted to support the various service operations activities which include: road supervision, operations control center, transbay supervision, and senior supervisors. AC Transit participated in a peer survey from the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) asking transit agencies for a comparison of supervisor to operator ratio and supervisor to square mile coverage ratio.

The budgeted positions for operators is 1,380, and if fully staffed, AC Transit's supervisor to operator ratio would be 1:20. Currently there are 1,207 active operators for a ratio of 1:18; however, this broad number does not fully represent how supervisor assignments are structured. Below is a breakdown of the percentages for each supervisor assignment:

- 5% in OCC management.
- 11% at the Salesforce Transit Center.
- 29% OCC controllers.
- 55% of the remaining Road Supervisors work in the field.

With 36 supervisors working in the field to support service operations the actual ratios are 1 supervisor for every 33 operators (1:33) and 1 supervisor for 10 square miles of service (1:10). In comparison, the majority of survey respondents indicated the ideal supervisor to operator ratio is 1 supervisor for every 15 operators (1:15) and 1 supervisor for every 5 square miles of service (1:5).

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

Increasing the number of supervisors improves supervisory presence in the field, allows for more resources in

the field for line management of problematic routes, and improves response time to assist operators or to help manage incidents in the field involving District employees or assets.

Disadvantages for not having the additional headcount is reduced response time and less presence in the field.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

An alternative would be to manage lines strictly from the Operations Control Center, but this option does not provide the physical presence or attention to detail in the field that is needed for this important initiative.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

22-588F FY 2023-24 Mid-Year Operating and Capital Budget Review

ATTACHMENTS:

None

Prepared by:

Dwain Crawley, Director of Transportation

In Collaboration with:

Arlee Young, Assistant Director of Transportation

Approved/Reviewed by:

Dwain Crawley, Director of Transportation

Cecil Blandon, Director of Maintenance

Salvador Llamas, Chief Operating Officer