



## **ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT**

### **MINUTES**

#### **Board of Directors/Board Officers Retreat**

Zoom link <https://actransit.zoom.us/j/98487175063>

**Wednesday, September 29, 2021 at 9:00 AM**

#### **MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**ELSA ORTIZ, PRESIDENT (WARD 3)**

**JOEL YOUNG, VICE PRESIDENT (AT-LARGE)**

**JOVANKA BECKLES (WARD 1)**

**JEAN WALSH (WARD 2)**

**MARK WILLIAMS (WARD 4)**

**DIANE SHAW (WARD 5)**

**H. E. CHRISTIAN PEEPLES (AT-LARGE)**

#### **BOARD OFFICERS**

**MICHAEL A. HURSH, GENERAL MANAGER**

**JILL A. SPRAGUE, GENERAL COUNSEL**

**LINDA A. NEMEROFF, DISTRICT SECRETARY**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District Board of Directors held a Board of Directors/Board Officers Retreat on Wednesday, September 29, 2021. The meeting was called to order by President Ortiz at 9:03 a.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Ortiz, Young, Beckles, Walsh, Williams, Shaw, Peeples

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no comments offered.

**4. DISCUSSION ITEM(S)****4.A. Strategic Plan Update Process.**[21-372](#)

Executive Director of Planning & Engineering Ramakrishna Pochiraju opened the discussion of the Strategic Plan update and introduced Director of Service Development and Planning Robert del Rosario who gave the presentation.

**Public Comment:**

No comments were offered.

**Board Discussion:****General:**

President Ortiz believed Paratransit service and the necessary funding needed to be acknowledged in the Strategic Plan. Director Williams concurred.

Vice President Young questioned the timing of changes to the Strategic Plan given the rapidly changing environment. Mr. del Rosario advised that climate change would continue to evolve as would the issue of diversity and inclusion. He added that the changes allow the District to be nimble and flexible in light of the pandemic.

With regard to Innovation and Transportation, Vice President Young believed the Strategic Plan should include non-transportation innovations.

Director Beckles suggested that the District address the negative stigma in terms of who rides the bus through marketing the District's role in the greater community to fight climate change (to get people out of cars) and provide bus service for everyone. Mr. del Rosario commented on the customer experience, not only for people who use transit as a safety net or to commute, but every rider and how to get more people out of their cars.

Director Williams asked about outreach to the unions about the Strategic Plan. Mr. del Rosario advised that the addendum to the plan would also be provided to them for

review.

**Proposed Goal/Initiatives: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility:**

Director Peeples commented that AC Transit seemed to be farther ahead than most agencies in the area of equity and inclusion due to the diverse composition of the workforce and the diverse nature of the communities served by AC Transit.

Director Walsh commented that diversity and inclusion seemed to be workforce-focused and suggested that it potentially be merged with the workforce goal. Mr. del Rosario advised that diversity and inclusion could be part of the workforce goal; however, staff believed that calling it out separately would highlight its importance to the District.

Director Peeples believed that the plan should address income inequality, saying that part of AC Transit's problem is that operators and mechanics in the 1960s made about the same as blue collar workers; but now make far more than the average rider and this difference should be acknowledged in the plan. Director Peeples further believed that a regional solution to have a mobility manager would mean that AC Transit was buying into the slave labor system of the Transportation Network Companies (TNC) indicating that he would never support the concept of working with them or using public monies to support them. He firmly believed that the Strategic Plan should address this.

Vice President Young shared Director Peeples' comments concerning race, equity and inclusion and wondered how impactful the District could be in this area. General Manager Michael Hursh advised that while he agreed with the comments, he felt that disadvantaged communities needed more of a voice and supported the addition of this goal.

With regard to comments about TNCs, Director Shaw offered that the District needs to focus on the service it can provide respective of the cost and collaborate with cities in areas where it is not cost-effective to provide bus service. She also supported the idea of collaborating with community-based organizations.

Director Shaw expressed the importance of representing those who could not speak for themselves, but also noted that there were people who did not fall within the definition of "low income" who don't have a car because they want to use public transit. She wanted to know how they fit in to make sure they get the service they need so they don't have to drive a car. Director Shaw also acknowledged the student population that rides public transit and would likely use it as adults and how upper class white students do not have access to public transit because it is assumed that someone can drive them to school. She felt these circumstances would hurt the District in the future if unaddressed. She also noted that a lot of people use bus service for their daily activities, not just commuting, and needed to be considered. She added that the District needed to figure out how to address its labor shortage by collaborating with other services, saying that she did not agree with Director Peeples' comments about

TNCs. She further commented on city shuttle services, saying that perhaps we could design service around city shuttle routes. Mr. del Rosario advised that the addendum to the Strategic Plan was limited to specific issues, and that some of the other feedback provided by the Board warranted a deeper discussion.

President Ortiz was glad staff included equity in the plan as funding agencies are focused on equity in transportation. She added that it was important to have input from all riders about service changes.

Director Walsh asked why staff was specifically calling out diversity, equity and inclusion, but not doing the same with regard to environmental improvement, saying that the District's environmental stance needed strengthening in the Plan. Mr. del Rosario advised that while the plan's goals and initiatives do address the District's environmental improvement, staff would update the environmental narrative in the goals and initiatives to be more aggressive. He added staff would bring the changes back to the Board in January.

Director Walsh agreed that while low income riders needed to be heard, they should not be pitted against other riders who may be able to drive, may be wealthier or have more resources. She added that the bus isn't just for poor people, the disabled or people who can't drive, but for anyone who wants to ride regardless of their economic status, adding that we should not denigrate those who come to Board meetings and ask for bus service. She urged the Board to provide a service that welcomes people of all income levels as well as those that want to get out of their cars and help solve the climate crisis. Mr. del Rosario responded that this is done by tying service to land use and that the issue was not about not wanting to serve wealthy people, but about providing service to low density areas that are difficult to serve where there is not a lot of ridership. He added that if the District focuses on trunk lines and expands Bus Rapid Transit to every corridor, more people are going to ride the bus.

**Update Goal: Environmental Improvement:**

Director Walsh expressed a need to strengthen the Strategic Plan in regard to environmental improvement, saying there needed to be greater focus on non-revenue vehicle use and internal activities to advance environmental stewardship (waste, recycling, paper use). Mr. del Rosario commented that staff is working on an environmental sustainability plan that would report on all of the District's efforts. Director Peoples commented on the environmental sustainability reports produced several years ago, saying they were quite extensive and included all of the internal efforts the District was undertaking.

**Other Issues (Finances/Service)**

President Ortiz asked about a bill that was recently signed into law that requires a nexus between housing and public transit and asked staff to review it and advise how the District might be impacted in addition to what local cities might expect from the District. She also commented that the financial obligations to the Transbay Joint

Powers Authority were a concern as was Transbay ridership, which currently stands at 9%, because of how employers feel about the transmission of Covid on public transit. Director Williams offered that perhaps a tour and demonstration of safety protocols be considered. Director Shaw concurred that negative perceptions about contracting Covid while riding public transit needed to be addressed.

President Ortiz also shared her belief that as vehicle automation advances, many cities would automated vehicles to transport residents because it would likely be cheaper than the service provided by the District.

Director Walsh asked staff to explain what is meant by the Focused Improvement to provide a collaborative model, what it means and who the District is collaborating with. Mr. del Rosario advised that collaborative efforts are focused on local jurisdictions and ensuring that the trunk service operates like a commuter service (transit priority).

Director Williams requested more conversations about Flex service, how to fund it and expand it.

Vice President Young asked about the need to redesign the service network and plans for service in South County. Mr. del Rosario explained that there are components of the existing network that do not work because of the pandemic, such as Transbay, and that South County is not as commute-based as other areas. He added that staff's pre-pandemic recommendations are still relevant and would improve service in south county. Staff is still reviewing the timeline.

The report was presented for information only.

- 4.B.** Facilities Utilization Plan update. [Requested by Director Shaw - [21-437](#)  
5/26/2021]

Senior Transportation Planner Mika Miyasato made a presentation.

**Public comment:**

There were no comments offered.

**Board Discussion:**

President Ortiz asked if Regional Measure 3 (RM3) funds were allocated for the purchase of a new operating division or remodel an existing one. Chief Financial Officer Chris Andrichak noted that the goal is to expand the capacity for busses at the divisions, so the facility plan doesn't specify whether it is a purchase or an upgrade at this point. Director Shaw commented that the Board looked into buying a property. President Ortiz concurred that property was not identified at the time but recalled asking for a purchase of a new division.

Director Peebles recalled discussions to prioritize Division 3 over Division 2 because it is undersized and in worse condition than Division 2. Ms. Miyasato explained that staff

pushed Division 3 down the priority list because it had undergone significant rehabilitation and is in better condition than Division 2. She added that new RM3 funded buses would likely be assigned to Divisions 2 and 4 and prioritized them over Division 3. Director Peoples was under the impression that Division 3 was in a better position for replacement than other divisions.

Director Shaw inquired about the Implementation Plan, to which Ms. Miyasato clarified that the plan had not been updated since the last discussion of it.

Director Shaw asked about plans for the lease agreement for the property on 66th Avenue in Oakland that expires in 2021. Ms. Miyasato responded that the staff would follow up with the information. Mr. Andrighak commented that the property had been leased historically, adding that the District owns the property and could look into using it for expansion. General Manager Hursh commented that the District's facilities date from the 1970s and '80s and that over the next 15 to 20 years, the Facilities Modernization Plan has to be delivered. He added that he anticipated the Federal Infrastructure Bill would pass, which would help fund the \$2.3 billion investment needed for the facilities plan.

President Ortiz commented that the modernization has been delayed for many years and was concerned that further hesitancy would increase the costs above \$2.3 billion. She urged prompt action in locating the funds to buy a property for a new division.

The report was presented for information only.

**4.C. Capital Projects Update with focus on Zero Emission Bus Program. [21-377](#)**

Director of Capital Projects Joe Callaway introduced the item and presented an overview of the Capital Improvement Plan. He also presented information on existing zero emission bus infrastructure and current infrastructure projects in the works at the various bus divisions.

Director of Maintenance Cecil Blandon presented an overview of the guiding principles for transitioning the existing bus fleet to Zero Emission.

Capital Planning and Grants Manager Evelyn Ng presented information on funding for the zero emission program.

Director of Legislative Affairs and Community Relations Claudia Burgos reported on legislative advocacy activities for the Zero Emission Program.

**Public Comment:**

There was no comments offered.

**Board Discussion:**

Director Peoples asked technical questions about battery-electric charging

infrastructure discussed in a previous report that indicated the District would use a rail system involving a pentagram. He asked staff to explain why it had changed to a system involving a cord that drops down from the ceiling. Mr. Callaway advised that charging via the pentagraph system became infeasible due to the buses being ordered without the necessary charging rails. He added that there was an additional challenge in California because the charging rails add to the axel weight of the bus.

Director Peeples commented on problems with service employees remembering to charge the bus and to disconnect it from the charger. Mr. Callaway advised that the bus won't start until the bus has been unplugged.

Director Peeples commented on the federal infrastructure bill and what our advocate is telling us about the possibility of workforce development. Ms. Burgos advised that there is a lot of talk about the bill, but staff does not have specific to report just yet.

Director Shaw asked if the battery-electric storage units could be used a generator for the facility to which Mr. Callaway advised that it was not possible, but added that each division has backup generators to provide power to facilities.

Director Shaw questioned support from PG&E. Mr. Callaway commented on PG&Es Fleet Ready Program which would provide a rebate on each charging unit. She further commented on the exorbitant cost of power experienced in California versus other states.

Director Williams commented on the need for a Project Labor Agreement for large capital improvement projects. He also wanted to make sure there was outreach to minority firms and that staff give plenty of notice to existing building tenants.

The report was presented for information only.

**5. BOARD/STAFF COMMENTS**

(Government Code Section 54954.2)

No comments were offered.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board of Directors, the meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m. The next regular meeting of the Board of Directors is scheduled for October 13, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

/s/

Linda A. Nemeroff

District Secretary