

Summary of Board and Public Feedback on Draft Standards at September 24, 2024 Board Meeting and Staff Responses

Staff heard initial feedback from commenters and board members at the September 24, 2024, Board Meeting. A specific summary of Board comments and corresponding staff responses is included as Attachment 6. General themes and staff responses are grouped as follows:

Inclusion of Reliability Metrics

Some board members and members of the public favored inclusion of reliability standards in an updated policy. One commenter also suggested that for metrics like on-time performance where the District is already regularly meeting a standard, it should consider increasing that standard.

New reliability metrics have been incorporated into the proposed standards, with some metrics and targets based on the District's existing Key Performance Indicators program, and others rooted in the best practices review and feedback received to date. Staff is proposing to increase the standard for on-time performance from 72% to 75% in line with the performance improvements we have observed. Going forward, the intent is to continuously reevaluate the District's standards and scale them upwards as performance improves.

Staff has also included an additional on-time performance standard for the first timepoints on trips.

Frequency, Span, and Coverage Standards

Some board members and members of the public suggested increasing minimums and/or aspirational goals for frequency, span, and coverage, citing peer agencies that offer greater overall amounts of service to their communities. One board member and one commenter urged consideration of moving towards equalizing service across all seven days of the week.

A comprehensive set of aspirational goals for frequency, span, and coverage are included in this proposed set of standards. After additional consideration and data analysis, however, some minimum targets for service have been scaled down to make minimums realistically align with the District's fiscal capacity and ensure that the standards can be useful for on-going performance management as well as aspirational goal setting.

The performance-based approach outlined in the proposed standards will help make the District more data-driven in how it plans service across all day types, including building on the investments made in off-peak periods and on weekends with the August 2025 service change.

Board Policy 545 and Microtransit

A board member and some members of the public urged additional consideration of how microtransit is to be included within the standards, with concerns relating to laxer standards for passengers per revenue hour and cost per boarding as compared with local service. In line with the September draft, a situation could conceivably arise where a new microtransit service might

meet standards while being more expensive per passenger and carrying fewer people per hour than even a poor-performing local line.

Placeholders in the document are included in the proposed standards for future potential microtransit service. Staff will bring proposals for policy amendments for Board approval at a future date as circumstances permit. Staff will also incorporate the feedback received to date in developing future standards and metrics that take the unique needs of the District's different communities into account.

Application of Proposed Standards to Existing and Proposed Service

A board member and a member of the public urged staff to demonstrate how service would align with the proposed standards, as incorporated in Attachment 5.

Additional External Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement Conducted

After updating the draft policy in response to the feedback received at the September 24, 2024 board meeting, on April 10, 2025, staff distributed a working draft of this staff report with all attachments to individuals affiliated with Public Advocates, Transform, Seamless Bay Area, the East Bay Transit Riders Union, Traffic Violence Rapid Response, and the Peoples' Transit Alliance. With meeting coordination assistance from Laurel Paget-Seekins of Public Advocates, staff held two virtual discussion sessions on April 22, 2025 at 12:00pm and 5:30pm. AC Transit staff from Planning and Legislative Affairs and Community Relations attended.

A summary of key themes and staff responses are grouped, in no particular order, as follows:

Aspirational Goals for Service

- Encouraged staff to raise the bar more significantly with respect to aspirational minimums, especially in the context of future regional funding measures and for visioning purposes.

New Service Pilots/Service Reductions

- Exhorted staff to consider additional criteria for pilots and/or larger-scale service reductions due to budget issues. Staff responded that the standards would provide a consistent framework as a starting point for major changes and that additional criteria could be incorporated on an ad-hoc basis. The policy also complements Board Policy 518, which is slated for updates.
- Concern about potential cuts to BRT services that don't meet that category's high performance bar in favor of adding local service that meets that category's lower productivity standards. Staff responded that the standards include not only productivity, but also that exceeding crowding and and/or failing to meet on-time performance standards could trigger additional investment.
- Concern that the standards could prioritize low frequency coverage service over trunk service in a constrained service environment; recommended setting a near-term service floor for the primary route network.

Crowding

- Underscored the importance of ensuring enough capacity and mitigating crowding, especially for routes serving the UC Berkeley campus.
- Suggestion to consider other more complicated standards that could be more passenger-oriented. A metric could better speak to individuals left behind by crowding, like quantifying the degree of crowding and the duration as part of a standard.
- Staff actively considered and vetted the use of a more granular framework like that of SFMTA (defining a trip as crowded should the crowds on a percentage of that trip's stops fall above the standard, rather than simply defining a trip if any

stop on a trip is above our load standard), but after modeling revealed few practical differences, staff opted for the simpler methodology originally proposed.

Integration with Title VI Policy

- Suggestion to make clearer which metrics are to be covered under the service monitoring piece of the District's Title VI obligations.
- Encouraged additional up-front consideration of Title VI monitoring elements.
- Staff responded that these elements are to be considered closely as part of the forthcoming review of Board Policy; with changes to that policy, reconciliation edits could be enshrined in this policy as well.

First Timepoint Standard

- Expressed concern that the first timepoint departure standard could hurt operators and be punitive. Staff explained that the standard isn't meant to be punitive but instead serve as a tool to help the District and labor better understand root causes of service reliability issues. Academic literature emphasizes that happens at the start of a scheduled trip has an outsized effect on downstream service reliability, and pinpointing where issues are most acute at the beginning of a trip would help identify root causes, which could restroom access issues, vehicle location system configuration issues, scheduled runtime and layover issues, and/or operator behavior issues. The first timepoint standard would give the District and its labor partners one more tool to identify issues and collaborate on solutions to help improve both the customer and operator experience.

Feedback from ATU Leadership

On October 7, 2025, members of the AC Transit executive team and supporting staff from Planning, Transportation, Labor Relations, and Human Resources provided an overview of the proposed changes and additions to the key performance indicators for on-time performance and maintenance with the ATU leadership team.

A summary of key themes and staff responses are grouped, in no particular order, as follows:

- Request to exclude microtransit from the standards based on past feedback relayed to District staff and the Board, citing frequent low productivity and usefulness throughout the nation. This includes the District's past experience with AC Transit Flex, which carried significantly fewer riders per hour than the low frequency fixed-route service it replaced. Staff agreed to exclude microtransit at this time, which may be revisited at a future date.
- Desired to see updates that reflect the new Fall 2025 service network. Staff pledged to provide the leadership and the Board with updates with the latest data as best as possible.
- Provided feedback that for the first timepoint standard to work, operators need tools and resources to make sure they can leave that first timepoint on time.
- Discussed the possibility of performance incentives to meet these targets, similar to on-going trunk line pay incentives.
- Cited issues with in-service, deadhead, and pull runtimes making for challenges in leaving first timepoints on time.