

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 4/14/2021

Staff Report No. 21-188

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager
SUBJECT: Process to Post Schedules at Bus Stops

BRIEFING ITEM

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider receiving a report on the District's process for ensuring that schedules are up to date at bus stops.
[Requested by Director Walsh - 2/24/21]

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Convenient and Reliable Service

Initiative - Service Quality

AC Transit's bus stops are prominent places where the District has an opportunity to make contact with its riders and potential riders. Providing thorough information about what bus lines serve each stop and how to use those services is an important tool to enable people to use AC Transit. Although schedules are an important convenience for current riders, especially those without access to smartphones, they also have special importance in informing potential riders of services that they may not know about.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no budgetary or fiscal impact associated with this report.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

AC Transit staff maintains printed posters with service information at 2,189 bus stops. Each poster has information tailored for a specific stop that includes time points or schedule, and if space allows, information about fares, the District's holiday schedule and the applicable segment of the AC Transit system map.

Prior to each quarterly service change, Communications Department staff compares each schedule with the previous quarter's schedule to determine which posters need to be updated. Staff prepares and sends the updated poster artwork to the AC Transit Print Shop for production before the implementation of the service change. Once produced, posters are sent to installers.

The posters at 1,833 (83%) of the stops are maintained by AC Transit's Maintenance Department. These are the small (9 by 23 inches) posters in cases attached to the bus stop poles. Bus Stop Maintenance Workers visit each stop and replace each poster as necessary.

AC Transit staff uses an internal online dispatch and logging system titled WorkLog for bus stop maintenance. Communications staff creates a WorkLog order for each poster to be changed. To fulfill the order, a Bus Stop Maintenance Worker from the Maintenance Department will visit the site and replace the poster. The worker will then access WorkLog on a District mobile telephone to photograph the completed work. These photographs are available for viewing by other District staff. When the system reports that the work is complete, an email is sent to the staff member who requested it. That staff member then views a representative subset of the photographs to ensure that the work was performed correctly.

Prior to the institution of this electronic logging, the District had a program to audit the condition of its bus stops. In 2015 and 2016, the District used Transit Performance Initiative funds to hire a contractor to survey and photograph them. After the introduction of electronic logging in 2016, the incidence of errors and omissions in placing schedules became very low, and any errors that did occur were made evident by the electronic logging and could be corrected. Therefore, it was determined at the end of 2016 that the improved procedures had made the additional expenditure of contracted assistance unnecessary to ensure the accuracy of the pole-mounted schedules.

The remaining posters are installed in bus shelters. Most (at 309 stops, or 14%) are installed by Clear Channel Outdoor. (There are 41, or 2%, installed by others.) While Clear Channel Outdoor does send photographs of completed maintenance to AC Transit, photographs are not taken of updated schedules, although Communications staff has requested them in order to determine whether schedules were updated. Communications staff performs field checks of selected shelters after each quarterly service change and reports inadequate conditions to Clear Channel Outdoor for remedying. Shelters are selected for inspection based on how significant the change is at that stop, and also to ensure that samples in all parts of the District are checked.

Following the easing of restrictions and announcements of partial reopening, the Maintenance Department and Communications Department worked together to conduct an audit of the shelter posters. The Maintenance Department had workers visit each of the shelters and report on the condition of each one, and where necessary, the Communications Department prepared updated artwork and arranged for it to be sent to Clear Channel Outdoor. As a result, twenty-nine shelters had updated schedules placed in the month of February. A significant percentage of shelters are yet to be updated by Clear Channel. Communications staff is in regular communication with Clear Channel and have provided the necessary materials to update each shelter.

In March 2021, Communications staff resumed regular field checks and stop surveying. Plans are to dedicate one workday per month to checking stops, with the goal of covering 50 to 100 stops per month. This will include examination of the bus stop flag (the metal sign at the top of the pole), as well as conditions of the shelter and other stop amenities.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

There are no advantages or disadvantages associated with this report. It is intended to provide information on District practices.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

This report does not recommend an action; therefore, no alternatives analysis is presented.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

SR 18-211c - Transit Shelter Contract Update - 2021 Bridge Contract

ATTACHMENTS:

None

Prepared by:

Aaron Priven, Service Information Administrator

Approved/Reviewed by:

Julia Kocs, Communications Manager

Nichele Laynes, Acting Director of Marketing and Communications

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

Cecil Blandon, Director of Maintenance

Michael Eshleman, Service Planning Manager