

III. DEFINITIONS

“Attributable/Official Statement” means an official statement issued through authorized District communication channels by an authorized spokesperson that reflects AC Transit’s official position.

RATIONALE:

Added to clearly anchor coordination requirements to statements issued through authorized District channels, rather than to individual speech by Board members. This distinction strengthens legal clarity and reduces ambiguity for staff and Directors.

IV. POLICY

A. News Release and Official Statements

1. The General Manager/CEO retains discretion to decide and final approval authority for all news releases, advisories, and **official** public statements and shall direct the Media Affairs Manager or their designee to prepare official statements.
2. Employees designated as topical subject matter experts shall make themselves available to assist Media Affairs in preparing responses to media inquiries, ensuring the accuracy, clarity, and consistency of information.

B. Approvals Process

1. All news releases, advisories, and **official** public statements shall be drafted, reviewed, and distributed solely by the Media Affairs Department. Staff requesting the issuance of a news release, advisory, or public statement must provide the purpose, relevant background information and detailed key facts, and the desired timing for release and identification of the target audience.
2. News releases, advisories, and **official** public statements constitute an official record of AC Transit. In the event of any factual errors, the District shall issue a corrected statement, clearly identified as a correction, and disseminate it broadly to ensure accurate public information.

E. Communication on Official District Matters

All media inquiries directed to any employee, member of the Board of Directors, Board Officer, temporary worker, volunteer, intern (paid or unpaid), consultant, vendor, contractor, or any individual or entity conducting District business that seek an **official** attributable statement on Official District Matters shall be immediately referred to the General Manager/CEO, Board Administrative Officer/District Secretary, and Media Affairs Manager for coordination and response.

This Policy does not limit the rights of employees to speak to the media as private individuals or within the scope of protected union activity. Similarly, this Policy does not limit the rights of Board Directors to speak to the media and may express personal opinions on matters under Board consideration or District operations, provided they expressly state such views are their own and do not claim to represent the official position or endorsement of the District.

RATIONALE:

Revised to apply only to media inquiries seeking an official attributable statement. This ensures staff coordination where appropriate while avoiding overbroad application to personal commentary.

G. Media Contact with Board Members

1. The Board shall be briefed on significant events that involve media attention or require coordinated public communication to ensure consistent messaging and alignment with District priorities.
2. ~~It is recommended that Board Members notify All media inquiries shall be coordinated with~~ Media Affairs and the Board Administrative Officer/District Secretary via email ~~notification of any media inquiry.~~
3. ~~Official s~~ Statements ~~or in~~ responses to media inquiries concerning official District matters shall be coordinated through the Board President, or their designee, and Media Affairs.
4. ~~When the Board Directors may express personal views on matters before the Board, except when the~~ Board has formally adopted an official position, ~~In such cases,~~ Directors shall adhere to the following guidelines:
 - a. In public forums – digital platforms, print, broadcast, or television – Board members shall clarify they speak personally or in their capacity as a Director, not on behalf of the Board or District.
 - b. Titles may be used for identification only, not to imply Board or District endorsement of individual views. ~~c. Official titles shall not suggest Board approval of individual views.~~
 - c. ~~d. Board members shall not use their position to imply District support for unauthorized comment.~~ Board members may express dissenting views following Board action, provided they accurately describe the action taken and do not present personal views as the official position or endorsement of the Board or District. ~~dissent but must respect and uphold final Board decisions.~~
 - d. Board members shall maintain public trust by accurately representing Board actions and avoiding misrepresentation.

This Policy does not restrict Board Members from speaking to the media as private individuals or elected officials, provided they do not represent their views as official District positions or statements.

RATIONALE:

Changed from mandatory to recommended notification for Board Members to reflect the status of elected officials and avoid compelled reporting of individual speech, while still encouraging coordination.