

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 12/14/2022

Staff Report No. 22-572

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager/Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Employee Engagement

BRIEFING ITEM

AGENDA PLANNING REQUEST:

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider receiving a report on how District Employees are engaged to provide feedback and suggestions, and how responses are facilitated [Requested by Director Walsh 1/12/2022].

Staff Contact:
Sebron Flenaugh III, Executive Director of Human Resources

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - High-Performing Workforce

Creating a culture of continuous improvement in an organization is a pillar of effective employee engagement enhanced by strong internal communications and feedback.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

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

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

At the January 12, 2022, Board of Directors meeting, Director Walsh requested a report on how staff across the District are engaged to provide feedback and suggestions, and how responses to the feedback and suggestions are facilitated.

The District currently employs various methods to actively engage employees and encourage them to provide information that may bring improvements, facilitate repairs, provide cost saving suggestions, or to report unsafe conditions in the work environment.

This report provides some examples of various processes currently utilized at the District to encourage staff to participate in reporting, providing feedback or making suggestions to improve District service, performance, and processes.

Rider Insider:

The Rider Insider pilot was launched in 2019. The program was launched to utilize the power of employees to help improve service quality which is a critical part of the District's strategic plan. "Rider Insider" participants board bus lines targeted for in-depth service analysis to provide real-time feedback about the line via a customized Line Ride website. It has provided a great opportunity for employees to familiarize themselves with the District's service whether or not they currently ride the bus while helping improve service quality. Utilizing the enhanced route performance data collection capability, Division Teams can identify lines underperforming and align resources in the field, Divisions, Operations Control Center, and Service Planning to deploy performance measures and schedule reliability initiatives. The program slowed during the pandemic but is in the process of being re-launched again soon. District staff are evaluating attributes of, and planning for, a potential public facing feedback application.

Operations Recognition Programs:

Recognition programs are another way of acknowledging staff and encourage them to provide feedback and suggestions. There are several recognition programs in place at the District with plans to roll out an expanded program to include all District employees, as well as additional programs in the first quarter of 2023. One example of the current program is the Operations Certificate of Appreciation (OCA) program which honors the outstanding performance and dedication of employees who go above and beyond. By providing recognition, the Operations Certificate of Appreciation program seeks to further motivate employees, improve employee engagement, team collaboration, peer to peer support and raise morale in the Operations Team and to create a culture of continuous improvement. The following are a few examples of why employees, or a team might receive recognition through this program.

Operations employees or a team of employees may be recognized for:

- Solving a challenge by implementing an innovative and creative solution
- Being a positive motivator who's work and behavior results in accomplishing objectives and strategic goals of an individual Department or Division
- Any acts of heroism or acts of outstanding customer service actions.

Operations:

Staff in the field generally report incidents such as routing issues, security concerns, unusual problems, and scheduling or other problems by completing memos that they submit to dispatch or to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will follow up with the department that is responsible for addressing the issue. The Superintendent should then circle back with the resolution for each issue that was provided in the memo. However, there is no formal feedback mechanism.

An Operator may also communicate directly by calling Operations Control Center (OCC) to report issues. OCC operators will then relay the issue to the specific department or City for resolution. This can involve items such as potholes, downed bus stop poles, vandalized shelters, and similar issues.

AC Transit employees, including bus operators, can also submit a report of unsafe or unhealthy working

conditions. The report is submitted to the division clerk and reviewed in all division safety meetings. This form is posted on the safety board with results of the findings and resolution to the issue. If the item is serious in nature, the safety administrator will invite the operator or employee to the safety meeting held at the division.

Start of shift “tailgate meetings”, workgroup meetings, and other as needed meetings are held in the Maintenance, Technical Services, and Training and Education departments. These meetings are intended to facilitate communication between employees and workplace leadership. Information is conveyed that was discussed during executive staff and department leadership meetings, and other committee or taskforce meetings. Staff also uses this opportunity to present Operations Certificate of Appreciation, Employee of the Month, Safety, or other employee recognition awards. Employees can communicate issues or concerns during these meetings which are channeled by workplace leadership to the appropriate District department for resolution.

Human Resources:

Human Resources Employee Relations conduct exit interviews with employees who are leaving the District. This currently does not include employees who are retiring and does not capture all those who are terminating. There are plans to expand the program within the current onboarding and offboarding projects that will include surveying all employees who terminate or retire from the District. There are also plans to conduct an engagement survey of all active employees in 2023.

Human Resources Learning and Development under new leadership, has begun interviewing new Bus Operator trainees once they have completed training to obtain feedback on the hiring and training process. The responses to date have been positive.

Human Resources is also working with other departments such as Operations, Innovation and Technology, and Marketing to provide more comprehensive communication channels beyond the current. The information will include alerts to promotional opportunities, trainings provided through Learning and Development, Wellness newsletters, etc. These notices are currently posted to bulletin boards. Human Resources plans to survey employees to obtain information on preferences for delivery of this type of information.

Staff continues to build on ways to engage employees by encouraging their suggestions and feedback, with a goal of creating a culture of continuous improvement and employee engagement.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

There are no advantages or disadvantages to receiving this report.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

There is no alternative analysis as this report is informational only.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

None

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In Collaboration with:

Approved/Reviewed by:

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