

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 9/10/2025

Staff Report No. 25-394

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Salvador Llamas, General Manager/Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Sustainability Program Update

BRIEFING ITEM

AGENDA PLANNING REQUEST: ☐

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider receiving the Annual Sustainability Report (CY 2024) and update on AC Transit's Sustainability Program.

Staff Contact:
Ramakrishna Pochiraju, Executive Director of Planning & Engineering

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Environmental Improvement
Click to choose from the drop-down.

The Sustainability Program primarily supports the District's Strategic Plan core value: *Environmental Sustainability* and Strategic Plan goal: *Environmental Improvement*. While centered on these goals and values, sustainability efforts are mostly collaborative across departments and influence many of the District's Strategic Plan initiatives such as: Service Quality, Infrastructure Modernization, Zero Emissions Program, and Financial Efficiency & Revenue maximization.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

There are not budgetary impacts with this information report.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

The Sustainability Program was revived in 2022 and has been successfully integrated with transit and facility operations, and plays a vital role in identifying, pursuing, and securing sustainability-related cost-saving strategies throughout the District. The Sustainability Program leverages and capitalizes on free audit programs that identify no/low-cost sustainability measures, which generate financial savings by reducing energy, water, and waste consumption. Some sustainability-driven projects may require capital investment, which is only considered after completing a cost-benefit evaluation to demonstrate long-term financial savings. The Sustainability Program is purpose-driven to identify and secure grants, incentives, and rebates to support the implementation of sustainability-related projects.

Sustainability Annual Report (2024)

The purpose of this report (attachment 1) is to provide a yearly update summarizing the progress towards achieving the goals and targets outlined in the Climate Action and Sustainability Plan which includes:

- Environmental Highlights - an overview of the five sustainability metrics reviewed annually against baseline and previous year.
- Community Highlights - a summary of the main goals and a selection of actions that contributed to reaching each goal.
- Leadership Highlights - a summary of the main objectives and selected actions that contributed to achieving each goal.
- Environmental Performance - a detailed breakdown of the five sustainability metrics: Climate Action (GHG emissions), Fleet Conversion, Facility Energy, Waste, and Water.

Sustainability implementation continues to be a collaborative effort that includes the participation of all departments throughout the District.

Sustainability Program Update

The following three primary responsibilities demonstrate the critical value of the Sustainability Program throughout District operations.

1. Collect data and track sustainability metrics.

It is often said that ‘you can’t manage what you can’t measure’. The Sustainability Program leads the effort to collect, organize and analyze utility data for energy, water, and waste. This is an extensive effort considering AC Transit has over 100 PG&E energy accounts, service from 4 water utilities, and trash disposal contracts with several waste haulers. Annually, all this consumption data is compiled and compared against a baseline year, as well as the previous year, to determine if AC Transit is trending in the right direction.

The data is summarized and published in the Sustainability Annual Report (Attachment 1). Additionally, this data is used for other reports led by the Sustainability Program, such as completing the annual greenhouse gas inventory, participating in the APTA Sustainability Commitment, and the Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) program, which generates revenue by earning credits from the zero-emission fleet (~\$80,000 received last year, which will increase with the new bus EV chargers at D2).

The Sustainability Program is currently collaborating with the Business Science Department and IT to improve the prototype Sustainability KPI dashboard to better streamline and centralize data for sustainability analysis and reporting. The next step will be to add a function that allows for a more detailed evaluation of the data so that facility staff can identify anomalies (spikes, drops) more easily and quickly.

2. Initiate audits, create roadmaps, and support implementation.

The Climate Action and Sustainability Plan (CASP) was developed to guide AC Transit’s effort to achieve sustainability goals, targets, and implement actions. CASP includes a running list of 105 actions in total, of which 16 have been completed and 59 are currently in progress. Implementing these actions takes time and involves many stakeholders. CASP provides the roadmap and demonstrates how the program acts as an integrator and a catalyst for change by providing support to other Departments and helping to achieve their

initiatives and identify resources (cost incentives, rebates). Key efforts include:

- **Waste Audit:** Led the effort to complete FREE waste audits in CY2023 with Alameda County's StopWaste at all facilities to 'right size' and optimize the number of dumpsters; and identify best management practices for municipal waste. Based on the audits, the following recommendations have been implemented, which have successfully increased municipal waste diversion by 2% each year since 2022:
 - ✓ Started composting program at GO, TEC, and D3
 - ✓ Implemented uniform waste sorting stations and signage throughout the District
 - ✓ Coordinated annual janitor training at each Facility with waste hauler
 - ✓ Developed annual staff training program with online video requirement and intro for new hires
 - ✓ Hosted education/awareness booth for staff celebrating National Recycling Day at D3 and GO
 - ✓ Implemented waste reduction strategies for internal AC Transit social and cultural events

The Sustainability Program continues to implement waste reduction strategies, including evaluating options to reduce paper use, considering furniture reuse, providing reusable eating utensils for staff, and optimizing dumpster container sizes.

- **Energy Audit:** Led the effort to complete free energy audits in CY2024 through various utility programs at all facilities, which identified low- or no-cost energy efficiency measures. We are also participating in a special two-year program for GO, D2, and CMF, offering free ongoing technical support and incentive funding. Based on the audits (over 75 measures were identified), the following measures have been implemented, resulting in approximately 8% energy savings, or about \$250,000 in cost savings, in just the last year alone! Additionally, AC Transit received \$15,000 for participating in the audit programs and obtained free energy-efficient HVAC equipment valued at approximately \$220,000.
 - ✓ All facilities began upgrading all LED lighting and installing motion sensors.
 - ✓ All facilities started optimizing heating and cooling setpoints for building systems.
 - ✓ Most facilities have completed air leak detection tests using a special tool from PG&E loan library to clearly identify and fix leaks.
 - ✓ General Office adjusted settings to disable chillers that cool the building on weekends and after hours
 - ✓ CMF, D2, D3, and D6 - installed free new energy-efficient water heaters.

The Sustainability Program continues to work on implementing energy reduction strategies identified in the audit. Additionally, the focus on energy audits has led to other related efforts, such as finding dormant PG&E accounts that can be closed and switching to a 100% renewable energy plan for the entire District.

- **Water Audit (upcoming CY 2025):** The Sustainability Program is currently leading efforts to complete free water audits through various utility programs at all facilities. These audits aim to compile an inventory of water fixtures and identify best management practices to reduce water use and costs. After the audit is finished and recommendations have been reviewed, the Sustainability Program, along with the Facilities Department, will explore developing standards for low-flow fixtures and

identifying rebate programs for upgrades and monitoring equipment.

- **Climate Resilience Plan (coming in 2026):** The Sustainability Program is currently leading the effort to develop a District-wide Climate Resilience Plan, funded through a Caltrans grant. This plan will assess climate-related impacts (sea level rise, precipitation, extreme heat, etc.) on our bus network, fleet, facilities, riders, and staff, and begin to identify potential climate adaptation strategies.

3. Promote Sustainability - Internal and External

The Sustainability Program aims to motivate staff and the public to live, work, and recreate more sustainably. Internally, it encourages staff to improve sustainability both in the office and at home. The monthly GoGreen! flyer offers an opportunity to reach all staff and focus on specific sustainability principles. The Green Team, made up of representatives from all departments, meets quarterly to advance actions and initiatives in the Climate Action and Sustainability Plan. New operators and staff are introduced to the Sustainability Program through the NBO training and an information memo included in the new employee welcome packet.

Externally, the Sustainability Program collaborates with the Communications team to promote observed sustainability days and special activities, such as creating Earth Day bingo and encouraging the Clean Air Day pledge. Additionally, AC Transit participates in a regional working group called BATSWG (Bay Area Transit Sustainability Working Group), which meets bimonthly to share information, resources, and best practices.

The Sustainability Program continues to offer education and outreach opportunities to develop a well-informed, educated, and sustainability-aware workforce and community that are more likely to support environmental stewardship. We believe that this support could potentially reduce the cost of doing business.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

Advantage - The Sustainability Program provides guidance and support to implement sustainability strategies throughout the District. The Program is responsible for tracking sustainability data and reporting. Providing the Annual Sustainability Report makes the District sustainability efforts more transparent and demonstrates how we are working towards reducing our environmental impact.

Disadvantage - Without championing the implementation of no/low-cost sustainability strategies or working with other Departments to highlight the strategic importance, it is feasible that there could be missed opportunities to reducing operational costs and environmental impact.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

There is no alternative analysis as this information update to the Board on District's Sustainability Program.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

SR 24-479 Sustainability Program Update
SR 22-523 AC Transit Sustainability Program Update
SR 22-207 Sustainability Program Update and Climate Action Plan

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Annual Sustainability Report CY2024

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