

report

GENERAL MANAGER'S



'The Luxury Bus Ride That's One of the Bay Area's Best-Kept Secrets'

A travel enthusiast is often pictured with a passport, roller bag, and pocket-sized translator in hand, exploring far-flung destinations and immersing themselves in new cultures. This week, that classic image took a local turn. Freelance journalist Tamara Palmer of SF Gate became a travel enthusiast of the East Bay, aboard AC Transit's Line F Transbay bus.

Palmer writes, "AC Transit's Line F: Adeline-Market Transbay has been around for 65 years, so I'm definitely on the late bus to have learned over the past few months just how pleasant a ride it is to take. The picturesque, comfortable, and clean trip from San Francisco's Salesforce Transit Center to Bancroft Way and Dana Street on the UC Berkeley campus is enhanced with personal air vents, crackable windows, and a pop-up sunroof that allows more air and light into the bus."

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A recent SF Gate feature, with its eye-catching headline, highlights how AC Transit's bus lines combine charm, convenience, and a fresh take on what it means to be a travel enthusiast

Beyond the headlines of the Governor's signature on Senate Bill 63, a new chapter begins, bringing not just funding, but important accountability and performance standards for the District and other transit agencies.

How SB 63 Signals a New Era of Efficiency and Oversight

You may have already seen the headlines or read about it in District publications: the great news that Governor Gavin Newsom signed Senate Bill 63, known as the Connect Bay Area Act, into law this past October. This landmark legislation sets the stage for a regional ballot measure in November 2026 that could reshape the future of public transit across the Bay Area.



If approved by voters, the measure would add a half-cent sales tax in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties, and a one-cent sales tax in San Francisco County. While that may sound modest, the impact would be anything but. The funding would be dedicated exclusively to supporting and stabilizing public transit systems throughout the region, ensuring that transit agencies, including the District, can sustain the bus service the East Bay has come to rely on for 65 years.

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what's inside

- Double the Ride-A-longs, Fewer Collisions: Early Immersion Pays Off
- Community in Bloom for Día de Los Muertos
- Maintenance. Upgraded and Unstoppable.
- Equipped for Anything: New Shop Trucks Power Peak Performance

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As AC Transit celebrates its 65th anniversary, Palmer takes readers on a roll down memory lane, tracing the District's early days as the Key System while spotlighting the many neighborhoods, eateries, and cultural stops along the route. True to the spirit of an "enthusiast," she dives into each stop, highlighting what makes the East Bay an accessible and vibrant playground for novice explorers, all from the comfort of Line F.

The piece captures not only the charm and convenience of public transit but also how AC Transit's bus lines connect people to local history, culture, and community in ways a jetliner never could. It's a fresh perspective that shows travel isn't just about faraway destinations and worth the read: [The luxury bus ride that's one of the Bay Area's best-kept secrets](#)

A New Era... continued from page 1

For AC Transit, this could mean an average of \$51 million in new revenue annually over a 14-year period. Those dollars would go directly toward maintaining current service levels, keeping routes running, and protecting essential operations from future budget shortfalls. In short, it's a potential bus line lifeline, helping to safeguard the District.

But beyond the headlines, there's another side to the story, one that's just as important. With this new funding opportunity come significant accountability and performance requirements.

AC Transit, along with other major Bay Area transit agencies, must meet a detailed set of standards to ensure funds are responsibly and transparently spent. These measures are designed to reassure voters that every dollar will be used wisely and to maintain confidence in the long-term sustainability of Bay Area transit.

What do these standards look like in practice? In both Alameda and Contra Costa counties, independent oversight committees will be established, comprised of appointees from each county's transportation authority and Board of Supervisors, to ensure accountability and proper use of funds.

These committees will carry real financial weight. Within their respective counties, they can recommend holding back up to 3.5% of measure funds if a transit operator fails to comply with requirements for 90 days, and double that to 7% if issues are not resolved within 180 days.

To ensure transparency, AC Transit, along with BART, Muni, and Caltrain, will undergo independent third-party reviews. The first phase of those reviews is expected to begin in April 2026, with the second phase following within 480 days after voter approval.

Ultimately, the measure is more than a funding milestone, it signals the start of a new chapter in regional transit oversight and collaboration. For AC Transit and other Bay Area agencies, this moment marks a shift toward a future grounded not only in financial stability, but on a shared commitment to accountability.



Independent oversight committees in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, made up of appointees from each county's transportation authority and Board of Supervisors, will help ensure accountability and proper use of measure funds.



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Real Stories Behind AC Transit's Mentorship Success

Governor Newsom's October approval of Senate Bill (SB) 63 marks a pivotal move toward establishing a long-awaited, sustainable source of transit funding, if the measure reaches the November 2026 ballot and wins voter support. Yet even as that funding framework takes shape, AC Transit's work continues at full pace.

At the heart of our mission is an ambitious goal: meeting the California Air Resources Board's Innovative Clean Transit mandate to convert our entire bus fleet to 100% zero emission buses (ZEBs) by 2040. But this effort is about far more than simply procuring new vehicles; it's about workforce training that prepares the next generation of transit professionals.

Illiyas and Jacob were hired as Mechanic Helpers through the District's first-ever joint labor-management career pathway program. This groundbreaking initiative offers employees with limited or no technical experience the chance to advance through rigorous training led by ATU Local 192 Maintenance Trainers. Through hands-on experience in our maintenance shops, these apprentices worked side-by-side with certified Journey-Level Mechanics, learning from their "Guides" and mastering the craft that keeps our cutting-edge zero-emission fleet road-ready.

Excellence in workforce development extends far beyond the maintenance bays. At the start of November, the Training and Education Department (TED) showcased its innovative spirit at California Transit Works, hosted this year by the College of Marin. A dynamic mix of TED staff, ATU Local 192 officials, Journey-Level Mechanic Guides, and Bus Operator Mentors (veteran Operators who play a key role in onboarding new colleagues) took the stage to share their success stories with transit agencies from across the state.



A proud moment of achievement. Certification to Journey Level Mechanic celebrated with (left to right) Cecil Blandon, Director of Maintenance; Anthony Clewis; Jacob Takahashi; Daniel Flores; Giovanni Radavero; Illiyas Kohgadai; and Ron Lee, TED Assistant Manager.

That's why, just days after Governor Newsom signed SB 63 into law, the District celebrated another achievement: five Heavy-Duty Coach Mechanic Apprentices earned their California Division of Apprenticeship Journey-Level Mechanic certification. Among them are Illiyas Kohgadai and Jacob Takahashi, both of whom began their career-defining journeys in the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the event's standout moments came from Mentor Coordinator Kay Avognon and Training and Education Manager Michael Flocchini, who broke new ground with a first-of-its-kind presentation: data metrics to measure the impact of mentoring. Their findings turned heads, revealing that ride-a-longs may actually help reduce new Bus Operator collisions. District data showed that Operators who completed at least two ride-a-longs within their first 60 days of service experienced fewer collisions than those who did not, suggesting a direct link between mentoring and safety outcomes.

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As Flocchini explained, “a ride-along pairs a mentor with a newly certified Bus Operator on a revenue route, offering reassurance, coaching, and practical guidance once formal training concludes.”

“This real-world support smooths the transition from the classroom to the driver’s seat,” Avognon told the packed room. “Lowering anxiety, reinforcing safe driving habits, and building confidence behind the wheel.”

Additional data analysis is underway, but these early results are inspiring. They highlight how workforce development at AC Transit is truly progress in action. With each trainee, the District is empowering our frontline employees on innovative ways to keep the East Bay moving today and who will lead the District into a sustainably funded tomorrow.



Mentor Coordinator Kay Avognon and Training and Education Manager Michael Flocchini made waves with a first-of-its-kind presentation, revealing that ride-a-longs may play a key role in reducing new Bus Operator collisions.



Celebrating success! Mechanic Helpers officially certified as Apprentice Mechanics, joined by Ron Lee, TED Assistant Manager, Jose Jimenez, Jorge Barboza, Joal Aromin, and Director of Maintenance Cecil Blandon.

Color, Calacas, and Collaboration for Día de Los Muertos

This October, AC Transit joined forces with the Unity Council to honor Oakland's 30th Annual Día de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) Festival in the heart of the Fruitvale District. It's a vibrant celebration that brings color, music, and meaning to the city each year.

Unlike Halloween, Día de Los Muertos is a joyful tribute to loved ones who have passed, rooted in Mexican and Latin American traditions and blending indigenous beliefs with Catholic customs. Families craft intricate altars (ofrendas), decorate graves with marigolds and candles, and bring the past to life through food, art, music, and storytelling.

In the weeks leading up to this year's 30th annual tradition, AC Transit partnered with the Unity Council to take the Day of the Dead celebration to the next level. This dynamic collaboration was a perfect fit; both organizations bring loyal audiences and strong community connections. By combining our brands, the District's rider initiatives reached far beyond what either could achieve alone, amplifying the celebration and connecting with more people across our service areas than ever before.

By collaborating on messaging, visuals, and timing, the unified advertising campaign on Spanish-language TV stations Univision 14 (Área de la Bahía) and Telemundo 48 (KSTS), as well as on radio stations KRZZ (93.3 La Raza) and KRBQ (102.1 FM), generated 500 mentions, encouraging festivalgoers to ride AC Transit to the festivities.



Coach 1682's classic green-and-white look got a bold blackout makeover—transforming it into a vibrant canvas bursting with dancing skeletons (calacas), fields of marigolds, monarch butterflies, and colorful papel picado, celebrating the spirit of Día de Los Muertos.



Among the estimated 100,000 Día de Los Muertos attendees, a group of kids couldn't resist striking a fun pose with the anniversary bus template, surrounded by the lively dancing calacas of the Día de Los Muertos bus.

The District also brought the celebration to the streets with a striking, specially wrapped bus and interior ad cards along the Tempo Line 1T corridor. The bold black backdrop featured cheerful skeletons (calacas), fluttering monarch butterflies, colorful cut-paper banners (papel picado), and bright marigolds, each an iconic symbol of Día de Los Muertos. Festival attendees, estimated at 100,000, flocked to the Fruitvale District, snapping selfies with the bus, enjoyed giveaways, and connected with AC Transit staff for bus line and rider information.

AC Transit has long partnered with the Unity Council, an organization bridging language, culture, housing, education, workforce, and community development.

This year's bus wrap added a fresh layer of visibility to our service, celebrating not only three decades of Oakland's Día de Los Muertos Festival but also 65 years of serving the East Bay communities we proudly call home.



All aboard for fun. AC Transit's crew drew crowds with colorful giveaways and transit know-how beside the wrapped bus.

Upgraded. Equipped. Unstoppable. Maintenance.

There's a new kind of horsepower revving up at the Central Maintenance Facility, and this time, it's not on the passenger side of the fleet. The Maintenance Department is rolling out seven all-new "shop trucks", marking a major upgrade from the hard-working originals that have served faithfully since 2001.

Built for speed, reliability, and unstoppable performance, these aren't just trucks – each one is a mobile command center, ready to hit the streets and keep the District's fleet of over 600 coaches rolling.



When the unexpected happen – a wheelchair ramp issue, loose mirror, door malfunction, fluid leak, or electrical fault – our new shop trucks are the first on the scene, keeping our fleet running smoothly and safely.

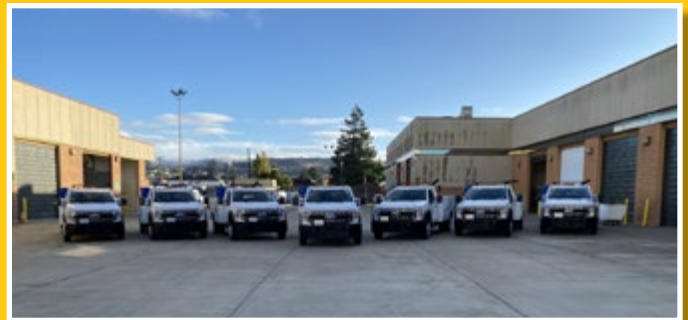
Every day begins with "pull-out," when buses roll from the Divisions to start their routes across the East Bay. And when the unexpected happens – a wheelchair ramp issue, loose mirrors, door issues, fluid leak, or electrical fault – these shop trucks are the first to respond.

Equipped with integrated toolboxes, lockable compartments, and a full suite of replacement parts and fluids, they bring the service bay to the street, delivering rapid repairs that prevent delays and keep the bus network running on time.

The shop truck upgrade from the old diesel-powered models is a leap forward in every way. The 24-year-old retired fleet had become increasingly difficult to maintain, with parts harder to find and manufacturer support fading fast. The new generation of shop trucks delivers improved performance, fuel efficiency, and safety, ensuring that Maintenance crews can reach any location quickly and work confidently in the field.

This all-new rollout is not a swap of keys: it's a collaboration. ATU Local 192 partnered with Maintenance leadership to help select a cache of specialty tools and onboard equipment, ensuring each truck is standardized for every Division and ready for any roadside challenge. The result? A fleet built by and for the professionals who keep AC Transit moving.

These new shop trucks embody more than just an equipment refresh; they represent the evolution of maintenance readiness. This mighty fleet of seven, will prevent costly downtime, protect pull-out schedules, and ultimately, ensure reliability for riders who count on our bus lines every day.



The Maintenance Department is shifting into high gear with seven brand-new shop trucks; an exciting upgrade from the old diesel-powered models that have kept us rolling since 2001.

In short, the new shop truck fleet is the first responder of service – redefining what it means to keep AC Transit running with precision and power.



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Zero Emission Showcase at the Coliseum

Despite blustery winds and sporadic downpours on November 5, preserving the air we breathe remained front and center for the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and CALSTART.

California's top authority on air pollution and clean transportation policy, alongside the national leader in clean transportation innovation and funding, tapped the state's largest bus-only transit agency for our expertise at this year's Zero-Emissions Showcase + Ride & Drive.

This annual gathering brings together industry leaders, fleet owners, OEMs, and dealers under one roof to explore the latest zero emission vehicles directly from manufacturers and to learn about technical support and funding programs that make adopting clean technologies easier than ever.

At the event, the District took center stage during a presentation on "Government Fleets on the Road to Zero-Emissions," moderated by Adil Mahmood, CARB Air Resources Specialist. The panel spotlighted both the challenges and successes of adopting zero-emission vehicles, including critical planning considerations, infrastructure development, vehicle specifications, and workforce training.



At this year's Zero-Emissions Showcase + Ride & Drive, AC Transit took center stage during the "Government Fleets on the Road to Zero-Emissions" presentation, moderated by CARB Air Resources Specialist Adil Mahmood.



Michael Flocchini, of the TEC, shared insights on AC Transit's Zero Emission Bus program and introduced the forward-looking Zero Emission Bus University.

Representing the District, Michael Flocchini, Training and Education Manager, shared insights on the District's Zero Emission Bus (ZEB) program history and its forward-looking workforce initiative, Zero Emission Bus University. With a packed audience on the main stage, the panel closed out the event, highlighting not only the importance of collaboration with CARB but also the significance of maintaining funding opportunities to keep the District, and the state, on track for ICT 2040.

Working closely with the California Air Resources Board (CARB), AC Transit is making significant strides in advancing public health and environmental sustainability by actively reducing air pollutants from its fleet. These initiatives go beyond meeting regulatory requirements, they are part of a broader commitment to cleaner air, healthier communities, and a more sustainable future for the Bay Area.

In addition, the District is actively pursuing funding opportunities to support this transformation, recognizing that financial resources are critical to meeting the challenges of adopting zero-emission vehicles, building charging infrastructure, and maintaining reliable service during the transition. Through a combination of regulatory compliance, technological innovation, and proactive financial planning, AC Transit is positioning itself as a leader in sustainable transit, demonstrating how public agencies can balance environmental responsibility with operational excellence.

Human Resources Personnel Report

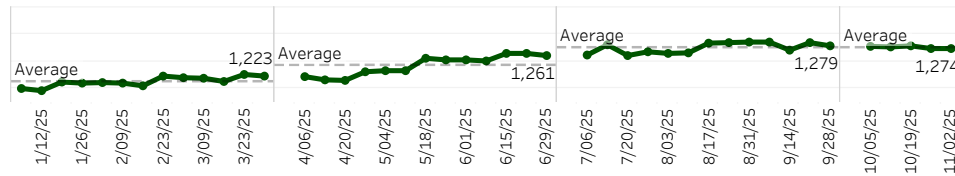
OPEN POSITIONS | Bus Operator: [Approved positions - Division workforce] as of November 2, 2025

Approved Positions	Division Workforce	Open Positions	Open Positions (%)
1,250	1,274	-24	-1.9%

Division Workforce

1,274

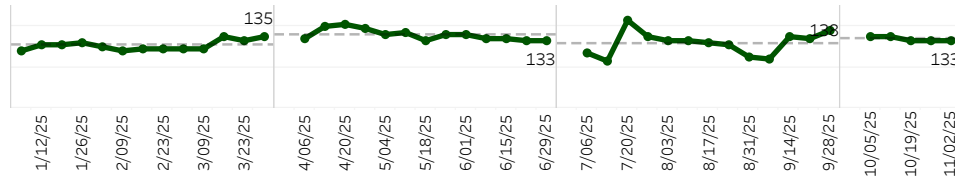
[as of: November 2, 2025]



Long-term Leave

133

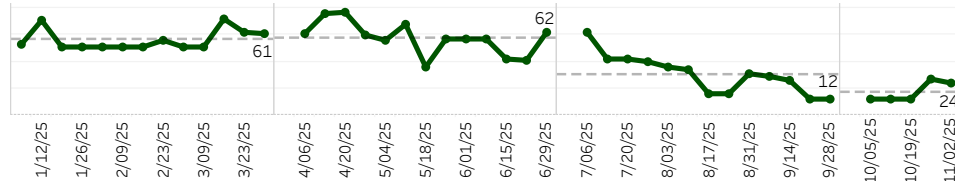
[as of: November 2, 2025]
133



Training

24

[as of: November 2, 2025]



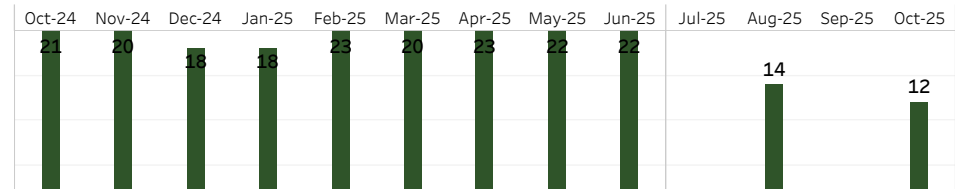
MONTHLY | Bus Operator: Hiring & Workforce Trends

WORKFORCE CHANGE

Hiring

12

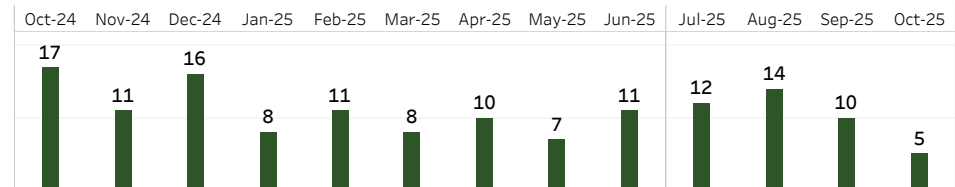
[YTD FY 2026 | October]



Separations

-5

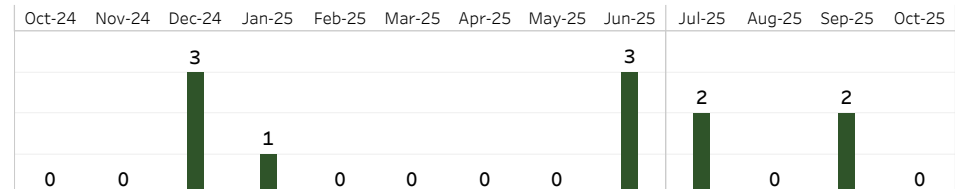
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Promotions

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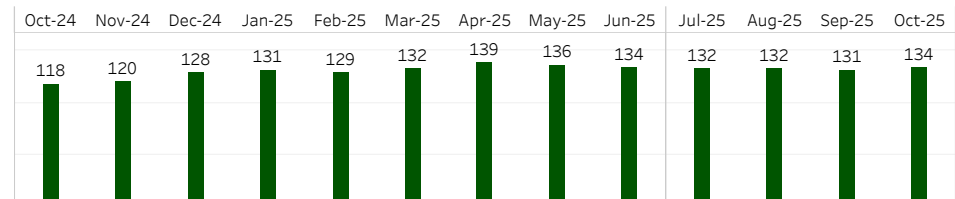
[YTD FY 2026 | October]



Long-Term Leave

+3

[YTD FY 2026 October]



OCT 2025 NET GAIN: +10

