

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 10/27/2021

Staff Report No. 21-029a

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Linda A. Nemeroff, District Secretary
SUBJECT: Redistricting Project

ACTION ITEM

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider approving the Public Outreach Plan for the Redistricting Project.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Strong Public and Policymaker Support

While the redistricting process is mandated by law and has no strategic importance to AC Transit in general, public outreach plays a critical role in construction of ward boundaries that will be in place for the next decade. Public input on where the lines should be is essential to the process.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

Costs for public outreach associated with the Redistricting Project are included in the FY 2021-22 operating budget.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

Redistricting is the process of adjusting ward boundaries in order to equalize populations following the federal census, which is conducted every ten years. The process is governed by federal and state laws, including the Federal Voting Rights Act; Transit District Law; and Elections Code Sections 22000 and 22001.

A key element in determining where lines are drawn is public input which is a necessary ingredient in determining where communities of interest are. A community of interest is a group of people that share common social or economic interests that should be included within a single ward for purposes of their effective and fair representation.

As the Board is aware, the legislature enacted AB 849 in 2019, which established redistricting protocols for cities and counties that do not apply to special districts like AC Transit. However, AC Transit has utilized many of the prescribed outreach mandates in its prior redistricting effort in 2011 and proposes to expand that effort for the current Redistricting Project. The plan that has been developed encompasses the following elements:

- At least four (4) public workshops that will focus on the cities most impacted by redistricting which

are: Berkeley, Oakland, San Leandro and Hayward (may be a combination of in-person and virtual depending on covid conditions).

- Workshops will be focused on receiving public input on proposed changes to District boundaries in the affected cities and to obtain input from the public on communities of interest; and to receive recommendations from the public on redrawing District lines.
- Workshops will be held in the evenings after 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and be ADA accessible.
- Notice of the workshops will be posted and distributed at least three weeks in advance.
- Workshops will be conducted by staff in the District Secretary's Office and appropriate Planning staff.

Public Engagement Requirements:

- Good faith effort to engage residents in underrepresented communities and non-English speaking communities to participate in the redistricting public review process.
- Provide information via social media including newspaper advertisements that serve language minority communities.
- Provide information through government, civil rights, civic engagement, or community groups or organizations that are active in the respective city, including those active in language minority communities, or that have requested to be notified concerning redistricting.
- Live translation in an applicable language if a request for translation is made at least 72 hours before the workshop.

In addition, staff is close to finalizing a visually appealing webpage for the Redistricting Project (actransit.org/redistricting) that will feature an introductory video, information on public workshops and hearings, document repository, draft ward maps (once available), information that allows users to look up what ward they live in, an inter-active mapping tool with instructional video (will launch in November), community of interest survey, eNews subscription sign-up and redistricting Q&A.

Staff in the Marketing, Communications and Customer Services and Legislative Affairs & Community Relations Departments, Media Affairs and the District Secretary's Office have worked diligently to assemble a robust and professional public outreach plan which is provided in Attachment 1.

The Board is requested to approve the plan as presented.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

The advantage of a robust outreach plan is to educate the public and gain as much public interest and input as possible, which will help craft the final ward boundaries. A disadvantage is that despite best efforts, the topic of redistricting can be esoteric to most people and not as salient a topic at the local level as it is at the state or federal level.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

The Public Outreach Plan under consideration is robust and modeled after the requirements provided in AB 849, which are considered to be best practices; therefore, there are no practical alternatives to the course of action recommended in this report.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

SR 21-029: Report on the process and timeline for the 2021 Ward Redistricting Project; and the adoption of Resolution No. 21-033 establishing procedures for adjusting the boundaries of the wards of the Alameda - Contra Costa Transit District.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Public Outreach Plan

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