

**MINUTES
VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE AC TRANSIT
ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AAC)
NOVEMBER 8, 2022**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL and Introduction of Members and Guests

AAC members present:

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| Janet Abelson | Erika Bruhns, Vice Chair |
| Chonita Chew | Pamela Fadem |
| Shawn Fong | David Fritz |
| Melissa Getz | Sandra Johnson |
| Daveed Mandell | Jim Robson |
| Tanya Washington | Barbara Williams |
| Hale Zukas | |

AAC members absent:

Kiran Agarwal (excused)

Staff:

Tammy Kylo, Administrative Coordinator
Kim Ridgeway, Senior Program Specialist
Mallory Nestor-Brush, Accessible Services Manager
Michael Eshleman, Planning Manager
Derik Calhoun, Director of Transportation
Michael Flocchini, Transportation and Education Manager
Nathan Landau, Senior Transportation Planner
Beverly Greene, Executive Director of External Affairs, Marketing & Communications
Claudia Burgos, Director of Legislative Affairs and Community Relations

Guests:

Director Peeples, Board of Directors
Director Shaw, Board of Directors
Director McCalley, Board of Directors
Krystle Pasco, Alameda CTC

3. ORDER OF AGENDA

The order of agenda was approved.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

4.A. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Bruhns/Abelson and Robson approved the October 11, 2022, AAC meeting minutes. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES – 12: Abelson, Bruhns, Chew, Fong, Fritz, Getz, Johnson, Mandell, Robson, Washington, Williams, Zukas

ABSTENTIONS – 1: Fadem

ABSENT – 1: Agarwal

5. REGULAR UPDATES

5.A. Service Planning and COVID-19 Safety Update

Michael Eshleman, Service Planning Manager, reported that, based on the direction from the Board of Directors, the main focus for the next few months is on service reliability. At this time AC Transit will not be considering adding or restoring more service until there are enough operators to fill all the existing service schedules.

The Service Planning Department is also working on a New Network Plan, which will consist of developing a whole new service network that responds to the community, riders as well as Bus Operators. The project will be a multi-year effort with the kickoff in January 2023. The AAC is one of the key stakeholders of the project and Planning will be asking for input from the group throughout the process. The implementation of the New Network is August 2024.

Derik Calhoun, Director of Transportation, reported that divisional sign-ups are in progress, where in Bus Operators bid for routes at their current division. The Maintenance department is installing security barriers on all current and new buses. The project will be complete within two years.

Derik also reported that a new Line Management Team at each division, that includes Road Supervisors, Planning Department Schedulers, and Superintendents are meeting regularly to identify the top five to ten routes that are having on-time issues and discuss how to add improvements and make adjustments.

Pam Fadem voiced concern that security barriers are needed and asked if there has been a rise in assaults against bus operators. Derik responded that the added security was something the District planned a while ago as another level to protect our operators.

David Fritz asked if the security barrier is the same as the COVID shield and if it would take up any additional room in the aisle. Derik responded that the COVID shields will eventually go away. The security barrier, made out of a stronger material than the COVID shield, is installed flush up against the side and will not take up any additional space in the aisle nor impede communication between the driver and the passenger. .

Derik recommended that Cecil O. Bandon, Director of Maintenance, return to the committee with pictures or a video to show the Committee how the security barriers function.

5.B. Review December Service Changes

Michael Eshelman, Service Planning Manager, reported that the next service changes go into effect Sunday, December 4, 2022. The only significant change to a single line is improving 1T (Tempo) All-Nighter frequency from hourly to every 30 minutes to match the frequency of Lines 800 and 801 to which it connects. These three lines form the spine of All-Nighter service from Richmond to

Fremont This is a key life-line service that should have a connection given the time of day and the low frequency of service.

All other changes are minor adjustments to runtimes and schedules to improve reliability and improve connections with school bell times.

Committee members voiced concern about lack of Flex service and line 80 still not in service for at least 18 months. Michael responded that the key issue with any service restoration is there aren't enough operators to operate the service that's on the street right now, which causes service unreliability. Per direction from the Board of Directors, the Planning Department will be focusing more on service reliability, rather than restoration, until the District has enough operators run service.

5.C. Underserved Communities Definition

Nathan Landau, Senior Transportation Planner, reported on the underserved community's definition. When the Board was looking at priorities for service restoration, it included a definition of disadvantage communities. The definition has two parts. Part One is the percentage of lower income people living near the line; lower income is defined as 200% of the Federal poverty level, or approximately \$36,000 annually for household of 2. Part Two is the percentage of people of color living near the line.

Jim Robson asked if there are maps/websites that will show him the underserved communities. Nathan replied that the Service Restoration Policy Staff Report that went to the Board on January 26, 2022 is on AC Transit website.

Director Shaw asked if there are other items to measure for all communities such as access or proximity to bus stops. Michael Eshelman replied that this is one of the key parts to the New Network and one key deliverable is an update on Policy 545, the Service Standard Policy, which includes feedback from stakeholders including the community and bus operators.

Committee members also voiced concern that some bus stops are too far apart, especially for people with mobility issues.

5.D. Inclusive Engagement Discussion with Alameda CTC

Krystle Pasco, Paratransit Coordinator, Alameda CTC, gave an overview an overview of engagement for Alameda CTC's equity initiative, which will include an Inclusive Engagement Guide and asked for input from the AAC.. The goal of this initiative is to ensure that equity communities, with specific emphasis on low-income and people of color throughout the county, are proactively engaged and that their voices shape the outcomes of transportation projects, programs, and plans throughout Alameda County.

There are three main engagement activities.

1. Review of best practices, research lessons learned from national peers, and conduct discussions with industry leaders.
2. Release of a survey to be used in listening sessions, and distributed to Community-Based Organizations, (CBOs) throughout the county, both for the CBOs to fill out and to send to their

members to get community input. The survey is available on Alameda CTC's website: www.alamedactc.org/equity through November 15th. The survey is available in English, Chinese, and Spanish.

3. Discussions through virtual Town Hall Listening Sessions, including presenting at existing committees, such as Alameda CTC's Paratransit Advisory and Planning Committee (PAPCO), AC Transit's AAC, etc.

The survey and discussions with CBOs and community members will include open questions to solicit input on how Alameda CTC can best engage with their communities. The goal of this engagement is to understand how to better reach a broad audience of people in Alameda County and specifically how to better engage equity communities. Example questions include:

- What does ideal community engagement look like to you?
- How do you like to be contacted?
- How do you like to receive information?
- Any other input on how can we better engage with you and your community to get your input into transportation system changes that affect you?

Feedback from the committee members included:

- The survey should include an option that says "all of the above"
- Make sure seniors, who may not fall into certain groups, be included. Lots of seniors are unable to drive and need to take public transportation.
- The form should allow you to select as many options as applicable, not just one.
- There should be a voice survey for people who need help filling it out, or don't have computers.
- The Survey needs to be accessible to the blind.

5.E. Training Update

Michael Flocchini, Training and Education Manager, gave an update on the following:

New Bus Operator Training

- Ten (10) week program: Includes Federal, State and AC Transit requirements and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and Title 13 California Code of Regulations.
- Driving: Including defensive driving, DMV certified skills tests, and entry level driver training for the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.
- Equipment Testing: Includes radio systems, lift/ramps and amenities of each coach in the fleet.
- Customer Service: Includes greeting, boarding, seating, alighting, fair collecting, assisting all passengers.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Training: Includes an overview of regulations and hands on training, including manual ramp deployment, mobility device securement, and priority seating protocols.
- Review of the Operations User Guide (OUG).

- Bus Operator Apprenticeship Program, recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor: Includes a Mentorship Program in which each New Bus Operator is paired with a Veteran Bus Operator immediately after graduation who helps and supports them in service. This also helps with retention and should help to maintain and/or improve the current 75% graduation rate.

Verification of Transit Training / California Driver's License (VTT/CDL), also referred to as Veteran Bus Operator Annual Refresher Training

This training is an annual requirement and includes some of the following State and Federal training requirements:

- Safety, Security and De-escalation
- Human Trafficking
- Sexual Harassment
- Anti-Breaking
- Customer Service
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) / Veteran Bus Operator Meet Ups

In January 2023, the AAC / Veteran Bus Operator Meet Ups will resume. This is an opportunity for 2-3 AAC members to volunteer to visit the Training and Education Department, on the 3rd Thursday of each month, during an already scheduled VTT/CDL class from 10 am – 12 pm.

Kim Ridgeway, Senior Program Specialist, coordinates the AAC members, provides travel information to the training center, and information on how the sessions are run. Michael concluded by stating that these Meet Ups are not meant to be a training session, but a wonderful way to connect with Bus Operators, and provide personal experiences to one another.

Janet Abelson stated that she has volunteered to sit in on these sessions and found it helpful to talk to bus operators about her experiences and answer any questions they may have.

David Fritz asked who picks the drivers who are part of these trainings the AAC would be a part of. He also reiterated his suggestion that every single manager at AC Transit learn to drive a bus in order to put more service on the road.

Michael Flocchini responded that operators are scheduled annually for their VTT/CDL training. The operators are assigned according to when their annual training date nears. So there is no selection specifically for AAC Meet Ups.

Michael thanked the AAC for their time and looks forward to seeing them, in person, in January.

5.F. Review of Lift/Ramp Road Call Report

The Committee reviewed the Quarterly ADA Complaints which compared ADA Complaints in 1st Quarter 21/22 (July 1 – September 30) to 1st Quarter 22/23. Tammy reminded the committee that all complaints are answered within 5 business days. If there is a driver related ADA complaint, the Superintendent pulls the video and a conference with the operator is requested.

5.G. Review of Lift/Ramp Road Call Report

The Committee reviewed the Road Call report for October 2 – October 29, 2022. There was a total of three (3) road calls, all of which were chargeable, and all passed the pre-trip inspection and thus any road call listed occurred in service.

6. STANDING REPORTS**6.A. Chair's Report**

None.

6.B. Board Liaison Report

Diane Shaw, Board of Directors, reported on the following:

- At the next Board meeting, the Board of Directors will:
 - Receive a presentation and update on Driver recruitment, which included working with different organization to get more people involved in wanting to be a bus driver.
 - Approve the 2023 Federal and State advocacy program plan, which was presented to the AAC at the October meeting.
 - Receive a presentation on Service Changes, which include focusing on current service reliability.
- She attended the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) conference, which has a lot of information about accessibility, as well as battery operated and electric buses.
- The new bus fleet will have the priority seating in blue, to differentiate the seating from the rest of the seats on the bus.

6.C. Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) PAPCO Report

None.

6.D. Service Review Advisory Committee (SRAC) Report

None.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

8. MEMBER/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Erika Bruhns said good luck to the Board of the Directors who are facing elections today.
- Melissa Getz thanked everyone for speaking up and expressing their ideas at the meeting.

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & NEXT MEETING DATE

The next AAC Meeting will be held Tuesday, December 13, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. This will be a virtual meeting.

Future Agenda Items:

- Accessibility and Safety Issues of BRT Lanes [Requested by Daveed Mandell on March 8, 2022]

- Inaccessible Transfer Points in the Service Area [Requested by Daveed Mandell on March 8, 2022]
- AC Transit Mobile App Inaccessibility [Requested by Daveed Mandell on March 8, 2022]
- Lyft – Wheelchair accessible Vehicle presentation [Requested by David Fritz on July 12, 2022]

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Tammy Kylo

Secretary to the Committee