

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 5/24/2023

Staff Report No. 23-250a

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager/Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Realign Network Plan Update

BRIEFING ITEM

AGENDA PLANNING REQUEST: ☐

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider receiving an update on progress, next steps, and upcoming engagement opportunities associated with Realign - the District's system-wide service planning effort.

Staff Contact:

Ramakrishna Pochiraju, Executive Director of Planning & Engineering

Beverly Greene, Executive Director of External Affairs, Marketing & Communications

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Convenient and Reliable Service

Initiative - Service Quality

The Realign planning effort combines a comprehensive review of existing service, robust public and stakeholder engagement, and market research and analysis to craft a new service network for the District that responds to the changing travel needs of the communities we serve and maximizes service within forecasted resource constraints. This report provides an update on where the plan is today and critical next steps.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this informational item.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

This report is an update on progress associated with the Realign system-wide planning effort. Through AC Transit Realign, staff, with the help of a consultant team led by Kittelson and Associates, is reviewing where, when, and how buses move throughout our service area with a top-to-bottom analysis of the system. Travel patterns have changed in the wake of the pandemic, and the District faces significant budget challenges. With these themes in mind, the project team will gather data and community input in the coming months to plan a new bus service network to better serve our communities.

This assessment will combine quantitative data with qualitative data from riders and the larger community to develop a new network plan focused on people and equity. This approach will tell us how well our service is

currently operating and meeting travel needs, and ultimately how to right-size our operations and realign our service while balancing financial and operator workforce challenges.

AC Transit Realign will also result in a renewed focus around service quality through a review and revamping of AC Transit's service policies and standards, aligning them with industry best practices and current transit conditions. In doing so, AC Transit will be better positioned to equitably plan and deliver a high-quality customer experience for riders now and in the future.

The project is divided into five key phases:

1. Learn Rider Needs and Develop Project Groundwork (Mar 2023-Jun 2023)
2. Ensure Guiding Principles Reflect Rider/Community Needs (Jul 2023-Aug 2023)
3. Develop Service Plan Scenarios and Get Feedback (Sep 2023-Dec 2023)
4. Feedback on Draft Final Service Plan and Plan Adoption (Jan 2024-Apr 2024)
5. Develop Service Standards and Inform Riders about Service Changes (Apr 2024 - Sep 2024)

Our planning process is currently in Phase 1, which is focused on learning about how our customers use the service and what they'd like to see from a future network. It also includes evaluation of the performance of the existing system, analysis of the travel market, and a review of origins and destinations of people moving about the service area.

Staff is reviewing existing conditions deliverables from the Kittelson team in advance of the Board Workshop to be held at the upcoming June 14th board meeting. This workshop will provide the Board with a comprehensive overview of initial findings from the existing conditions analysis and the survey and will solicit feedback from the board to help inform the creation of a set of draft guiding principles.

The project team launched a survey on April 17, and as of May 5th had received over 9,000 raw responses. The survey is scheduled to close on Wednesday, May 31st.

In late April/early May, the District held Breakfast Briefings in each Ward with the Realign Plan as a main discussion item. To promote the survey and the plan, AC Transit staff and paid ambassadors were deployed at high ridership bus stops. The survey effort also includes an incentive for individuals to complete the survey; those completing the survey can enter to win one of a hundred \$50 gift cards. In addition, to help ensure coverage across all of the different communities throughout our district, the District's pole crew attached tri-lingual signage to all of the district's nearly 5,000 active bus stops, promoting Realign and encouraging individuals to scan a QR code to fill out a survey. The District has also engaged Transit, a third-party app popular among our riders, on a one-time trial basis, to broadcast the survey link to a wider base of users.

The consultant team, in close collaboration with staff, is continuing efforts to forge partnerships with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). Finally, the project team is also putting boots on the ground through a range of in-person engagement efforts including announcements at community meetings, participation in community events and survey promotion through elected officials and community-based organizations. Additional details are included in the attached presentation.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

There is no action associated with this report and as such there are no advantages or disadvantages.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

No alternatives were considered to this progress update.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

SR 22-502 Network Redesign Timeline Update and Procurement Approval

SR 23-250 Realign Network Plan Update

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Presentation

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