

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 7/26/2023

Staff Report No. 23-375

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager/Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: AC Transit Realign Workshop on Existing Conditions and Draft Guiding Principles

BRIEFING ITEM

AGENDA PLANNING REQUEST: ☐

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider receiving an overview of existing conditions findings and associated draft guiding principles as part of Realign - the District's system-wide service planning effort.

Staff Contact:

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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 since our last update to the Board on June 28, 2023. 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 has gathered data and community input over the last few months as part of an existing conditions analysis that will help ensure that a new bus service network will reflect the needs of our communities.

The project is divided into five key phases:

1. Develop Plans and Learn Rider Needs (Mar 2023-Jun 2023)

2. Align Guiding Principles with Community Assessment (Jul 2023-Aug 2023)
3. Develop Service Plan Scenarios and Gather Feedback (Sep 2023-Dec 2023)
4. 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 now in Phase 2, which focuses on ensuring that the guiding principles respond to the extensive analysis and public engagement work conducted as part of Phase 1.

The team has developed draft project guiding principles and begun outreach and engagement. In Phase 2, the team is showing its work to the community, demonstrating how the analysis and conversations with community members in Phase 1 have been incorporated into the draft guiding principles as we ask for additional feedback to help confirm that the final guiding principles slated for approval by the Board in September reflect community needs we have identified through this work.

As part of Phase 1, the project team has conducted the following analysis and engagement tasks:

Market Analysis

The market analysis uses data from the Census' American Community Survey, along with population and employment projections from Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) modeling data to break down where people live and work around the AC Transit service area. It looks into the recent past to understand how patterns have changed since the District conducted its last comprehensive operational analyses following the Great Recession and at population and employment projections to provide context for where future growth is likely to unfold.

Origin-Destination (OD) Analysis

The origin-destination analysis summarizes Streetlight Data location-based services data. This dataset uses anonymized data about peoples' movement patterns provided by app providers to identify which movements are likely to be autos, rail and/or bus transit, bicycling, or walking. The project team used data from Fall 2019, Fall 2021, and Spring 2022 to help better understand peoples' travel patterns in, around, and beyond the AC Transit service area and the changes since the pandemic.

Service Profile

The service profile summarizes the state of AC Transit service today, identifying key characteristics of how our service works, connections AC Transit makes with other service providers, and high-level overviews of how AC Transit service changed between the Fall 2019 and Fall 2022 sign-ups, which for this planning process are being used as key sampling periods for comparison.

Service Assessment

The service assessment focuses on understanding how AC Transit works through the lens of ridership and operations data from AC Transit's automatic passenger counter (APC) and automatic vehicle location (AVL) systems. The team has broken down data from Fall 2019 and Fall 2022 at the stop and trip level, as well as by route segment to better understand how riders use AC Transit service, how the service performs, and evaluate the customer experience on a line-by-line basis.

Outreach and Engagement Efforts and Community Survey

In Phase 1, Realign public engagement focused on driving survey participation, soliciting general feedback about AC Transit service and community members' mobility needs, and raising awareness about the project's scope and timeline. The community survey itself focused on understanding how community members' travel patterns changed, and their preferences when it comes to key transit design trade-offs.

A wide variety of different strategies were used to promote the survey and engage individuals across the district, augmenting a robust digital presence with a concerted effort to reach deep into communities with harder-to-reach populations by showing up in-person in community spaces and engaging in specific partnership agreements with key community-based organizations across the District.

Guiding Principles

The draft guiding principles focus the project around a set of core values staff and the project team have developed to respond to the needs identified by our communities in Phase 1. The principles, which follow below, have been directly informed by the significant analysis, outreach, and engagement conducted to date.

Equity: Provide bus service that prioritizes mobility for communities who need it the most.

This principle is intended to provide the greatest level of service where concentrations of the greatest mobility need exist, focusing resources on Equity Priority Communities (EPCs) within the AC Transit service area.

Reliability: Provide bus service that is reliable and predictable.

This principle is intended to provide adequate redundancy in operating resources to ensure that trips that are scheduled are operated.

Frequency: Provide frequent service to the most people. The importance of frequency will vary by location and will be balanced against geographic coverage and community needs.

This principle is intended to provide the highest frequency service where the greatest demand exists while maintaining a network of high-frequency corridors (15 minutes or better) that includes all subareas.

In Phase 2, the team will engage with the board and community members to help confirm that the guiding principles for the project that the Board ultimately adopts in September meet the needs of our communities.

The attachments to this report, including an executive summary, detailed analysis memoranda, and a PowerPoint presentation, aim to provide the board with a comprehensive overview of findings from Phase 1 activities, including the market analysis, service assessment, origin-destination analysis, community survey, and all public engagement activities. These findings provide necessary context for the guiding principles.

Next Steps

The project team will continue to share the draft guiding principles and the underpinning analysis with our communities through the middle of August. In advance of the July 26 workshop, staff will have held its first Technical Advisory Committee on Monday, July 24 with staff from partner local jurisdictions, regional

coordinating agencies, and accessibility staff, and will be preparing for a first Lived Experience Advisory Group meeting to take place on August 12th.

After hearing feedback on draft guiding principles from members of the public and from the board, staff will submit a final, updated version of the document for the board's consideration to adopt as the guiding principles to be employed as part of future project phases.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

There is no action associated with this update 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

SR 23-250a Realign Network Plan Update

SR 23-250b Realign Network Plan Update

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Presentation
2. Existing Conditions Executive Summary
3. Service Profile Memo
4. Market Analysis Memo
5. Origin-Destination Analysis Memo
6. Ridership Analysis Memo
7. Individual Route Profiles - Fall 2019
8. Individual Route Profiles - Fall 2022
9. Survey Results Technical Memo
10. Outreach and Engagement Summary
11. Guiding Principles Memo

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