

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 10/14/2020

Staff Report No. 20-386

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager
SUBJECT: Operator Resource Availability

BRIEFING ITEM

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider receiving a report on the August 2020 signup service levels and operator resources available.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Safe and Secure Operations
Initiative - Service Quality

The operator resource availability report supports and aligns with the following Strategic Plan Goals and Initiatives: Safe & Secure Operations, Convenient & Reliable Service, High Performing Workforce, Service Quality, Employee Recruitment, Training & Retention.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

There are no current direct fiscal impacts related to this report.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

AC Transit's Emergency Operations Control Center (EOCC) remains active in response to mandates from federal, state and local governments regarding increased efforts to contain the spread and exposure of the COVID-19 virus. Conditions in the region continue to impact the District, and as a result, service is currently operating at 75% of pre-pandemic levels with social distancing constraints. Unfortunately, many people are passed up at the bus stop because of vehicle capacity limits due to physical distancing requirements and the limited number of operators available to drive more buses to meet demand. After the August Sign-up, ridership levels increased from a weekday average of 65,000 (during emergency service) to over 70,000. This was a result of adding more service schedules as new County Health Orders allowed certain additional business, recreational, social, and cultural activities to resume resulting in the need for more service.

The State of California established a Blueprint for a Safer Economy with revised criteria for loosening and tightening restrictions on activities. It includes a County risk level identified by four categories: Purple Tier 1 (Widespread), Red Tier 2 (Substantial), Orange Tier 3 (Moderate), and Yellow Tier 4 (Minimal); Contra-Costa County is classified as Purple Tier 1 (Widespread), while the State recently reclassified Alameda County as Red Tier 2 (Substantial). If current trending continues, it is anticipated that Contra-Costa County may be reduced

to Red Tier 2 in a couple of weeks and both counties risk levels may continue to shift week-to-week.

The District will need to be responsive and flexible as pandemic conditions rapidly change in the region. Additional service in the form of standby buses is expected as a response to increased ridership demand as restrictions are lifted and more business, recreational, social, and cultural activities resume. This change can occur with only a week's notice and will most likely happen between sign-ups. When that happens, the District will need every available operator to quickly deploy more buses in support of the increased service demand.

Operator Availability

To understand the current workforce available for service, the table below calculates the net available operators by deducting the quantity of operators that are not available to drive due to various contractual, regulatory, and unplanned reasons. There are 1,280 operator positions budgeted in FY 2020-21, with 44 un-hired vacancies. This leaves 1,236 operators hired to fulfill the District's planned activities that require 1,039 active operators. This includes 67 positions needed for COVID-19 line management shadow buses. As counties move into less restrictive Tier categories, the District can pull resources from its line management deployments.

An extra-board is intended to fill vacant assignments resulting from unplanned and unscheduled operator vacancies, some of which occur with minimal notice. Currently there are 197 positions available as extra-board operators, which equals to a 19% extra-board. On average, there are 195 operators off from work on various unscheduled time off categories which leaves the District with only two surplus operator positions. As noted below, these numbers are changing especially operator vacancies since attrition has not stopped.

*Note: Data presented on the table below is a snapshot at the time this report was developed.

Operator Budget (Position)			1280
	Operator Vacancy (Un-hired position)	-44	
Current Active Available Operators			1236
August Sign-up	Full Time Runs	-641	-859
	Group Reliefs	-193	
	Assigned Fragments	-25	
Planned Activities	COVID Line Management (Shadow/Capacity)	-67	-180
	Planned Time Off (Contractual Planned Vacation)	-88	
	Operator Regulatory Compliance Training (Daily)	-15	
	Operator Working Out of Position (Per CBA)	-10	
Total Daily Operator Need			-1039
Baseline Extraboard Total (Active - Need)			197
Extra-board Ratio			19%
Unscheduled Time Off	Sick Absence, Industrial Injury, Workers Comp, Other Protective Leave, etc.		-195
Net Surplus (To cover additional line management)			2

The District is in the process of implementing absenteeism mitigation and leave management changes approved in the ATU Collective Bargaining agreement that were adopted by the Board earlier this year. One example is the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process for workers compensation and new leave reporting requirements that will assist in reducing absenteeism. This process began 30 days after the contract was approved. Current absenteeism is related to the COVID-19 Pandemic associated with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA).

Listed on the table below is the monthly operator attrition rate and onboarding lead time to hire and certify new bus operators. The attrition rate is calculated by using an annual average to support forecasting models. Onboarding lead time includes 2 months of recruitment time and 3 months to train and certify a new bus operator.

Attrition Rate (Monthly)	8
Onboarding Lead Time (Recruit & Certify)	5 Months

As un-hired vacancies grow and attrition rates continue, the District will reach a point where not enough operators will be available to deliver the scheduled service levels. To ensure there are enough extra-board operators to cover unplanned vacant assignments, the District will need to retain current operator positions while balancing service levels with attrition rates. This will position the District to be ready, flexible, and responsive as the pandemic conditions rapidly change in the Region.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

The continued analysis of operator resource availability has several advantages in that it allows District staff to be proactive with the hiring timeline for operators. This will save unnecessary service implementation delays due to workforce issues. The other advantage is the report will allow the District to forecast the allotted number of budgeted position requirements.

There are no disadvantages in efforts to improve operator resource availability.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

There are no alternative actions.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

There are no prior relevant Board actions/policies.

ATTACHMENTS:

None.

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