

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 2/24/2021

Staff Report No. 21-010

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager
SUBJECT: Resolution in Support of Alliance for Girls

ACTION ITEM

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider the adoption of Resolution No. 21-005 in support of Alliance for Girls "Safety on Public Transportation for Girls Campaign".

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Safe and Secure Operations
Initiative - Service Quality

Adoption of this resolution is consistent with the District's goal of Safety which calls for planning and delivering service in ways that promote the health and safety of customers, employees and the general public. Alliance for Girls, a non-profit organization, has presented to the District research findings that indicate some girls and women feel unsafe in public spaces including on public transportation. Many activists are actively reflecting on the detrimental and adverse impacts that feeling unsafe and being harassed have had on the lives of girls and young women. This presents the District with an opportunity to partner with a community-based organization to address concerns raised by girls riding public transit, including AC Transit, in the Bay Area.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no budgetary or fiscal impact associated with the approval of this resolution. Several elements can be absorbed into existing budgets. More training, policy or capital improvements like training specific to gender-based violence, the drafting and adoption of a Gender-based Equity Action Plan, gender-based rider codes of conduct, free emergency phones, safety push buttons, and well-lit bus shelters would require additional funding and in some cases Board approval prior to implementation.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

Alliance for Girls is a non-profit organization focused on mobilizing girls' champions to address barriers facing girls, create conditions for their success, and advance systemic change to achieve equity. In November 2019, representatives from Alliance for Girls (AFG) spoke at an AC Transit Board meeting about safety on AC Transit buses. AFG shared their report, "Together, We Rise," a comprehensive report developed in partnership with 250 high-school aged girls. The report includes community-based research findings that girls in Alameda and

Contra Costa Counties expressed feeling unsafe on public transportation. As part of their research, AFG has hosted three town halls across three Bay Area counties, speaking with over 140 people. Their research, townhalls and focus groups culminated in a set of recommendations for Bay Area transit agencies.

The attached Alliance for Girl's "Together, We Rise" report outlines how girls experience physical and verbal harassment, often of a sexual nature, on transit. At every listening session, nearly all the girls talked about everyday instances of being physically or verbally harassed as they took the bus to and from school and to meet with friends. According to the report "Measuring #METOO in California, A Statewide Assessment of Sexual Harassment and Assault," published in May 2019, among all women surveyed, 77% reported experiencing sexual harassment in public spaces with 29% reporting the harassment took place on mass transit.

The Alliance for Girls also provided a number of recommendations for safety on Public Transportation in its report which is included as **Attachment 2**. In light of the recommendations outlined in the report, District staff is specifically proposing moving forward with the following recommendations based upon District assets, resources and current financial conditions:

1. Launch a public awareness campaign. Elements of the campaign could include production of a webpage, collateral and other gender specific materials to place onboard coaches reminding riders about codes of conduct, proper behavior on buses and at bus stops, and that gender-based assault, intimidation and threats are illegal.
2. Staff responsible for safety can identify opportunities for incorporating gender-based violence and training. Effective January 1, 2021, the District began collaboration with the Alameda County District Attorney's office around Human Trafficking training for bus operators.
3. Update AC Transit's web page regarding Basic Rules for Riding and Etiquette pages to include gender specific safety language.
4. Utilize updates in technology and other features to enhance safety and gender equity.
5. Create and host development and empowerment opportunities for girls.

Adoption of the attached resolution affirms the District's commitment to the overarching goal of ensuring safety for girls on public transportation but does not specifically commit to all the recommendations above. District staff will work with Alliance for Girls to further define the District's commitments.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

Advantages

This is an opportunity for the District to reaffirm its commitment to the safety of all riders and to partner and collaborate with community-based organizations committed to advancing equity for girls in public transportation.

Disadvantages

While some recommendations can likely be implemented without additional funding, others may require additional funds. There is no disadvantage to reaffirm a commitment to safety for girls on public transportation.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

Staff vetted all the recommendations presented by Alliance for Girls in the attached report; staff does not, however, recommend adopting these recommendations for a variety of reasons including District assets, resources and current financial conditions.

The District may, however, consider these additional recommendations in the future. Staff's proposed recommendations nonetheless achieve some of the goals presented by Alliance for Girls.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution No. 21-005
2. Report: Together, We Rise

Prepared by:

Chantal Reynolds, External Affairs Representative

Approved/Reviewed by:

Claudia Burgos, Director of Legislative Affairs & Community Relations

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

Jill A. Sprague, General Counsel

Claudia L. Allen, Chief Financial Officer