

**BRIEFING MEMO**

**AC TRANSIT DISTRICT**  
**Board of Directors**  
Executive Summary

**GM Memo No. 06-127**

Meeting Date: June 7, 2006

**Committees:**

Planning Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Finance Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>
External Affairs Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	Operations Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Board of Directors</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Financing Corporation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**SUBJECT:**

Proposed Work Plan for Updates to Board Policies Relating to Service Design, Service Delivery, Environmental Review and Public Hearing Requirements

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Information Only     Briefing Item     Recommended Motion

**Fiscal Impact:**

None at this time

**Background/Discussion:**

The Board directed staff to prepare a work plan for anticipated changes to Board Policies relating to service design, service changes, and service delivery. This memorandum proposes a scope of work to deliver a series of policy modifications within the next fiscal year.

**BOARD ACTION:**      **Approved as Recommended** [ ]      **Other** [ ]  
                                 **Approved with Modification(s)** [ ]

[To be filled in by District Secretary after Board/Committee Meeting]

The above order was passed on \_\_\_\_\_, 2006.

Rose Martinez, District Secretary  
By \_\_\_\_\_

From the Board's perspective, a review of the Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Manual (TCQSM) has also initiated a desire to more closely align the AC service policies with the national template. From the staff's perspective, after several years of working with the current policies, issues of streamlining and process have developed the suggested changes.

### **Summary of the TCQSM Process**

The Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Manual presents multiple indices of both service design criteria and service delivery standards that focus on the passenger's point of view. In upcoming GM Memos staff will discuss the pros and cons of assigning Level Of Service (LOS) metrics to evaluate service design and delivery. LOS metrics were originally developed in 1965, as part of the Highway Capacity Manual. Briefly, values for specific performance measures are divided into 6 ranges, with each assigned a ranking from A (best) to F (worst). It is important to note that these rankings are from the customer's perspective, and do not necessarily represent the transit provider's point of view. Staff is prepared to develop criteria and standards for the Board's review that are consistent with the Manual, balancing service quality and affordable service.

### **Current AC Transit Board Policies Proposed for Revision**

The relevant Board Policies are: Policy 163 (public hearing requirements); Policy 512 (environmental process); Policy 540 (service changes); Policy 550 (service design); and Policy 551 (Civil Rights analysis).

### **Suggested Comprehensive Changes to Policy and Process**

#### *Policy 163 – Public Hearing Process*

Policy 163, which discusses the public hearing process, was adopted in 1994, and was most recently amended in 1998. In practice, the requirements for public hearings and environmental review have proven onerous, especially as staff proposes changes that are clearly within the service design policy. Staff proposes amendments to Policy 163 with respect to requirements for public hearings.

- Currently, every change in a route that affects more than 25 percent of the route miles or vehicle hours triggers a public hearing, with certain exceptions. Staff would initially suggest that if a corridor is operating within the Board Policies for service levels, only changes that violate the desired service frequency would require a public hearing. Under such a scenario, changes on a major corridor where the target headway is 15 minute frequencies or better would only be subject to a public hearing if service frequencies dropped below that level. If service frequencies were improved, no public hearing would be required.

- The Board may have an interest in maintaining some level of oversight on route design. However, it is the opinion of staff that those types of changes are not policy-related, but rather ministerial in nature, and do not rise to the level of a public hearing. Exceptions to the foregoing, presently noted in Policy 163, would be proposals for new service on streets (excluding major arterials and streets designated as a truck route) not previously used by any route. Other route change proposals would be communicated to the Board via GM Memo, which is the normal process for most items. Policy 540 already provides a mechanism for a more formal public hearing if there is a serious interest in so doing, and staff believes continuing that process would be appropriate for changes in routes.
- In addition, the Board could consider waiving the public hearing requirement for services that are grant funded if the grant funds expire.

#### Policy 512 – Environmental Guidelines

Policy 512, environmental guidelines, was adopted in 1989, and has not been updated since that time. The current process is extremely time-consuming and costly, and the end product (an information document) is not necessarily a better one for the effort.

Staff proposes that as part of this new process, a programmatic environmental document be prepared that analyzes the new service policies and the levels of service within the corridors, and the secondary and feeder network. By doing this, the Board may then be able to take other actions on route changes and service levels within the policies, without a separate environmental document. This new programmatic environmental document would be widely circulated for public review so that the Board could be assured that due diligence in notifying the public had been completed. Service Development and Legal staff will work to develop a proposed amended policy.

#### Policy 540 – Service Adjustments

Policy 540, adopted in 1994, discusses service adjustments. Since it was adopted, a new scheduling system has been implemented, and the District has been involved with or invested in other software and technologies that are impacted by the timing of service adjustments (e.g., Automatic Vehicle Announcement software; Bus Stop Database; 511.org website). Accordingly, staff will propose amendments to this policy.

#### Policy 550 – Service Standards and Design Policy

Policy 550, adopted in 1994 and amended in 2004, discusses service standards and design policy. This policy uses the Guiding Principles from the Service Deployment Plan as the basis for service design. Staff supports continuing this practice. However,

streamlining the implementation documentation would ensure clear identification of the corridors where the Board intends to operate specific service levels, so that what constitutes a major corridor is unquestioned.

Transbay service policies also need to be included in Policy 550. Presently, the policy includes mention of Transbay/Express service in terms of measuring load factors, but does not offer other definitions or measures. Staff will provide recommendations for this area as part of the proposed amendments to the policy. In addition, staff suggests the Board move away from a route-based analysis to corridor or segment analysis and standards. To that end, staff will provide proposals to update the definitions, standards and measures contained in Policy 550.

Finally, Policy 550 outlines a process for the bi-annual review of route performance. Staff suggests that a more useful metric would be an annual analysis of route segments. For those segments with demonstrated performance issues, staff proposes to submit an improvement plan to the Board. Such a plan, which will be part of the proposed amendments to Policy 550, would include a timeframe for improvement, as well as a plan to address continued low performance.

#### Policy 551 – Title VI Service Review and Compliance

Policy 551, Title VI service review and compliance, was adopted by the Board in 2004. Because this policy references the content of other policies, specifically Policy 163 and Policy 550, staff will be recommending amendments to this document as well.

### **Service Delivery Standards**

The TCQSM also includes standards for service delivery (how well service is operated on the street from a rider's perspective). There are currently no Board Policies dealing with quality of service delivery. As part of this new process, staff proposes to develop standards based on the TCQSM recommendations. This will also affect service design, especially schedule writing, to ensure a higher on-time delivery than is current being delivered.

### **Timeline**

Staff proposes the following timeline. These policy issues would be considered one per month by the Planning Committee, as follows:

1. – Service Design Policies – Corridor Centered
2. – Service Delivery Policies
3. – Environmental Process/Civil Rights Process
4. – Public Hearing Process

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Once the Planning Committee has considered these four aspects of service policies, along with the process to measure and change service, staff suggests that the entire Board participate in a workshop to discuss how the analysis and discussion at the Planning Committee would impact Board Policies. After this workshop, which is proposed for January or February 2007 to allow for input from any new Board members, staff would draft the new policies for review at the March or April 2007 Planning Committee along with the preparation of the appropriate environmental document. At the conclusion of the environmental process, the Board could take action on the new service policies. Changes to other Board policies related to these might also be considered at that time.

**Prior Relevant Board Actions/Policies:**

**Board Policy 163**

**Board Policy 512**

**Board Policy 540**

**Board Policy 550**

**Board Policy 551**

**GM Memo 01-170 Service Deployment Policies**

**Attachments:** None

**Approved by:** Rick Fernandez, General Manager  
Nancy Skowbo, Deputy General Manager, Service Development  
Kenneth C. Scheidig, General Counsel

**Prepared by:** Anthony Bruzzone, Manager Service and Operations Planning

**Date Prepared:** June 2, 2006