
AC TRANSIT DISTRICT
Board of Directors
Executive Summary

GM Memo No. 09-191

Meeting Date: 09/30/2009

Committees:

Planning Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Finance and Audit Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>
External Affairs Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	Operations Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rider Complaint Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paratransit Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>
Board of Directors	<input type="checkbox"/>	Financing Corporation	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUBJECT: AC Transit's Possible Participation in Environmental Management Systems (EMS) Training and Assistance Program Class and ISO 14401 Certification

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Information Only Briefing Item Recommended Motion

Fiscal Impact:

Out-of-state travel expenses estimated to be at least \$20,400

Background/Discussion:

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) sponsors training and assistance in Environmental Management Systems (EMS) for public transit agencies. In January 2006, the FTA concluded its first EMS training and technical assistance program (EMS Program) based on ISO 14001 for ten public agencies. A notice in the August 13, 2007, Federal Register announced the availability of a second training and assistance program.

As part of the EMS Program, FTA provides assistance in the form of training workshops, onsite technical support visits and electronic materials and consultation. The EMS training Program includes:

- EMS training and assistance for up to ten transit agency teams, consisting of three to four members each, over a two-year period;
- A curriculum designed specifically for transit agency implementation of an EMS with a possible emphasis on the implementation of an EMS for a transit capital program;
- A pre-workshop site evaluation visit to each agency by the contractor team;
- A training "tool-kit," including guidebooks and software, as necessary;
- Four, three-day workshops at the site of the contractor's choosing which would include all transit teams; participants are responsible for travel and accommodation costs for these workshops;
- Monthly conference calls with the contractor, FTA, and all program participants.

Environmental management systems are designed to develop a systematic management approach to the environmental concerns of an organization. The adoption of environmental management systems can result in advantages in financing (funding), insurance, marketing, regulatory compliance and other areas of operations. At the conclusion of training, and following a period of implementation, FTA will assemble a final report that includes the participating transit agencies' case studies and an assessment of training results. FTA leaves ISO 14001 certification by an outside third part auditor to the discretion of the individual participating agencies.

The main consideration as to whether or not AC Transit applies for participation in the EMS training program may be the cost of staff time and travel. A team of District staff (recommended number four) is required to attend four, three day, training classes in two years. The first EMS training program was conducted in Virginia. The FTA describes an "ideal" four person team as follows: (1) Top Management Representative – someone with the authority and responsibility of ensuring the EMS is fully implemented through the FTA program; (2) Environmental professional; (3) Operations Manager with the management authority to implement changes, and (3) Administrative person with the computer skills able to institute the EMS software program.

ISO 14001 certification is not a required outcome from this program. This is an option the District can pursue on its own. The EMS training program will place the District in a better position to be ISO certified by using the EMS program provided through this training. The FTA EMS training requires that AC Transit commit to implementing an ISO 14001 based EMS program at one facility. The degree of implementation will be audited at the end of the two year period and the results will be published in a FTA report.

The District currently does not use an EMS program for its environmental programs. The District's Environmental Engineer oversees and directs environmental compliance programs and activities throughout the District and must rely on the commitment of managers and staff to conform to requirements. All of the environmental recordkeeping and reporting is managed by the Environmental Engineer. Communicating environmental requirements with other District departments and working together to achieve results is how staff currently manages the District's environmental programs.

The benefit of participating in the EMS training program is a reduction in operating costs. In theory, participating agencies learn how to conduct business in a smarter way. Cost savings from truly embracing and implementing this type of program can exceed the cost of District participation in less than five years. Participating teams are asked to track benefits which could include savings from improved environmental performance, enhanced environmental compliance, cost reductions, pollution prevention and resource conservation. Additional indirect benefits can include increased efficiencies, enhanced employee morale, an improved public image and greater employee awareness of environmental issues and responsibilities.

Although participating in the EMS training program would be a good thing for the District, there currently is no budget, or staff resources to fully commit to this endeavor at this time. Once the economy improves and resources become more available, the District could consider participating in the EMS training program. The cost of staff time and travel for the four, 3-day workshops is the biggest cost to the District and there are unknowns regarding potential costs associated with implementing program recommendations.

Despite budget cutbacks, District staff continues to work on voluntary environmental programs such as the annual greenhouse gas emission inventory and the annual Environmental Sustainability Report, and will soon begin work on the District Climate Action Plan.

Prior Relevant Board Actions/Policies:

None

Attachments:

None

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Date Prepared: September 14, 2009