

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

Subject Category: Board & General
Administrative Matters

BOARD AGENDA ITEM PREPARATION**I. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this Administrative Regulation is to insure that members of the Board of Directors and Executive Staff are provided with necessary information, sufficiently prior to meetings, to permit the adequate study and preparation needed to allow for the making of informed decisions.

This procedure is provided as a supplement to Policy 100 - Rules for Procedure, Article 5 pertaining to meetings and agendas adopted by the Board of Directors.

II. PERSONS AFFECTED

All management, supervisory and administrative employees.

III. DEFINITIONS

"Agenda" refers to the listing of agenda subject items (titles) conferred upon by the Board President, General Manager and District Secretary and approved by the Board President.

"Board" refers to either the Board of Directors or a Standing Committee of the Board of Directors.

"GM Memo" refers to the report that is prepared to address an agenda item.

"Meeting" refers to a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors and Board Committee meetings normally scheduled for the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month.

"Affected Department" refers to departments which have specific areas of expertise which warrant their review and comment.

“Originating Department” refers to the department with the overall responsibility to plan, organize, prepare and present a GM Memo.

“Certified Document” A certified document is a copy of an original document on file with the District Secretary, which has been attested to by the District Secretary as being a true and correct copy of the original document and is embossed with the District seal.

IV. **GM MEMO TEMPLATES AND UNIFORM FORMATS**

The GM Memo template is available on the Share Drive in the GM Memo Folder, on the intranet at <http://intranet.actransit.org>, or by contacting the District Secretary at extension 7284. The following are some guidelines to be used in preparing and processing GM Memos:

A. GM Memo Format Standards: No format changes are to be made to the GM Memo and Routing Form templates. One consistent format should be maintained throughout.

- Only Arial 12 pitch font is to be used.
- Margins on template are: Left = 1” and Right = 0.63.
- Use right and left margin justification.
- Do not use indentations in paragraphs within the body of the Memo.
- Entire Recommendation should be in **bold**.
- You may bold subtitles and other areas of the document for emphasis, but do not bold entire paragraphs or sections of a memo.

The template is set up so that once you type up to the “Board Action” portion of the memo on the first page, the text will automatically move to the second page, leaving the “Board Action” section intact. Instructions on how to check the boxes on the top half of the form are in the Share Drive in the GM Memo Folder/Instructions – GM Memo Form.

B. Headers and Footers: The **HEADER** as presented on the template is necessary to identify the material in the event it gets separated from the first page of the GM Memo. Fill in the information on the template. The page number should automatically change to reflect the appropriate page number in the document.

C. Type of Memorandum: Each item presented by staff on a Board agenda shall be supported by the appropriate Action, Briefing or Informational GM Memo prepared by the originating department, in consultation with all affected departments, and approved by the General Manager.

- (1) **Action Items:** Require needed discussion and/or action. All action items shall be reviewed by the appropriate committee first and then by the Board of Directors for action. The Board President and the General Manager may determine if an agenda item should go directly to the Board or to Committee and to the Board on the same day. Please refer to Section V.C of this policy for additional information and Board Policy 100, Section 5.5.4. for the protocol to place an item on the Board agenda on the same day the item is considered in Committee.
- (2) **Briefing Items:** Updates on specific items requested by the Board. If needed, the Committee may forward to the Board recommending action.
- (3) **Informational Items:** Require no action and are provided for informational purposes only.

D. **Sample Reports/Resolutions:** Available by contacting the District Secretary's Office.

V. **GM MEMO PREPARATION GUIDELINES:**

- A. **Subject:** Be specific but brief. This is the first thing the public looks for in trying to identify items of interest on the agenda. Use key phrases, be consistent and spell out any acronyms. Consistency in referring to a specific program by the same title each time it comes to the Board is very important, i.e. Service Deployment Plan, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). This section should be typed in title-case (non-bold) format.
- B. **Recommendation:** The action(s) requested in this section require careful wording to ensure that the Board takes the action being sought. If you fail to ask the Board to take all necessary actions, your department will have to return another time. Pursuant to the Brown Act, the Board cannot act on items not listed on the agenda. If multiple actions are being requested, it is helpful to list them or bullet them in the recommendation. The sentence typically begins with "Consider approving ...". This section should be typed in title-case (**Bold**) format.
- C. **Justification for Same Day Board Action:** This section should be completed whenever it is necessary for the Board to consider an item on the same day it is considered in committee and should be typed in sentence case (no bold). It is recommended that a brief statement as to the reason for same day action by the Board be introduced in this section and further elaborated on in the Discussion portion of the report. The following sample

text is provided as a guide for presenting a comprehensive justification in the body of the memo for same day action by the Board:

[Insert the reasoning for same day action.]

Pursuant to Board Policy 100, (1) The Board President has been advised of the need for expediting this matter and concurs with its consideration by the Committee and the Board on the same day; (2) the justification for the request is identified in the preceding paragraph; (3) the Board will have to vote on the consideration of the item prior to acting on it; and (4) the District Secretary has made the required notices on the agendas.”

- D. **Background/Discussion**: The first section referred to as **BACKGROUND**, is the reader’s introduction to the entire item. This information generally appears in the first paragraph of this section. Its purpose is to concisely present the reasons the item is being brought to the Board and the action(s) requested of the Board. This section should be **informative yet brief**. Details belong in the **DISCUSSION** portion.

For example, when writing a GM Memo that deals with policy questions, summarize the issue(s) the Board is being asked to consider in the **BACKGROUND** section. If your GM Memo is more operational in nature, show how the recommended action relates to prior Board direction. Because this subsection of the GM Memo is the reader’s introduction, it is generally helpful to begin with a sentence or two explaining the nature of the program, project or activity and the District’s role. Start by referencing Board direction, if any, including the applicable date(s). Make positive statements about the program(s).

The **DISCUSSION** section tells the full story of the GM Memo and is contained in subsequent paragraphs of the memo. It explains what the Board is being asked to do, whom, why, what, when and the anticipated results. Keep these points in mind as you prepare the **DISCUSSION** section:

Be organized. The content of the **DISCUSSION** must be easy to read and understand. Depending on the amount of information that must be provided, this section can be a complete report or an executive summary of more detailed material provided in one or more attachments. If you have several pages of information consider whether it should be summarized in the **DISCUSSION** section and described more fully in attachments.

Provide an appropriate context. Context should provide the facts necessary for an informed decision by the Board and be written in such a way that it

can be easily understood by the public. Establishing the context may involve describing the reasons the District is legally responsible, giving the chronology of the District's involvement, detailing the Board's policy directives, or discussing a gap in services which should be addressed. Emphasize important points. Highlight key issues and explain/justify all recommended actions in the **DISCUSSION**.

Avoid use of jargon or acronyms. If technical terms are necessary, explain them for the layperson. Acronyms commonly used throughout the transit industry and familiar to the Board of Directors may be used as long as the full phrase is written out at least the first time the acronym appears. However, keep in mind that using even common acronyms may tend to distract the reader and make your GM Memo more difficult to follow.

Make your memo visually appealing. Visual aids (bullet points, subheadings, tables, charts etc.) help to break up the text, streamline the presentation, and clarify complex issues. Leaving some "white space" on a page will make your memo easier to read.

Reread your memo carefully. Mistakes in spelling, grammar, punctuation or syntax will require correction.

Supporting Documents. Do not assume that lengthy documents, i.e. contracts, agreements, and environmental documents submitted for Board approval will be read at length. The **DISCUSSION** portion of your memo needs to include the key features and binding provisions of these documents.

VI. GM MEMO DEVELOPMENT

- A. **Timing:** The following timelines shall be followed for development and submission of Draft GM Memos. All memos shall be submitted to the General Manager on the appropriate review form for final approval after to approval by the respective Executive Staff member and affected department(s).

- B. **Interdepartmental Communication:** Communication between memo authors and all departments affected by the subject of the memo is the first step in developing any GM Memo. Early communication will assist the author in gathering a District-wide picture, versus a department picture, of a subject. Ideally, this communication should begin before memos are drafted.

C. Routing and Deadlines: The following is a summary of the GM Memo routing process and deadlines:

- (1) Report authors shall submit first drafts of GM Memos to their respective manager and executive staff member. Executive staff member shall forward draft GM Memos to affected departments for final review and sign-off **prior** to submission to the General Manager. If timing is critical, initiating departments may find it necessary to hand deliver reports to affected departments for their sign-off. Each Executive Staff member shall review and revise reports to ensure that the affected department's input has been incorporated, the contents of the report are accurate and concise, and the report meets the general expectations outlined in the GM Memo Format.

The General Counsel shall review and approve all documents which are legal in nature including, but not limited to: resolutions, public hearing notices, environmental documents, and contracts prior to the submission of said documents to the General Manager for review.

- (2) The deadline to submit memos to the General Manager is Noon on Friday -- 13 days prior to the meeting. The Executive Staff member's office shall forward a hard copy (or email) of the first page of the draft GM Memo to the District Secretary for placement on the draft agenda at the same time it is forwarded to the General Manager.
- (3) Final GM Memos complete with attachments must be submitted to the District Secretary no later than 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday - one week preceding the scheduled meeting.

D. Transmittal of Electronic Files to District Secretary:

- (1) All templates are available on the intranet (<http://intranet.actransit.org>) and on the share drive at s:/GM Memos/GM Memo Templates-Guidelines. Memos shall be prepared using MSWord format *only*. No changes in format are allowed to the GM Memo and cover sheet templates.
- (2) Once completed, print a copy, add related attachments, and route it for approval using the approved routing form.
- (3) Upon approval of the final GM Memo by the General Manager, the General Manager's office will contact the author or executive assistant and request that they save the electronic files to a specific folder on the Share Drive.

When saving your document(s) to the share folder, use the GM Memo number that was assigned to the document, for example: GM 03-001 (with a brief description). Files should be saved no later than 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, one week prior to meeting date.

- (4) Once the agendas for the Board and Committees are finalized, the District Secretary's staff will post the documents to the District's website.

E. Late Memos:

- (1) All memos received by the District Secretary after 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday prior to the meeting date are considered late memos. If the memo is not received from the General Manager's Office by Noon on Thursday, the initiating department is then required to provide the District Secretary with a status update and a copy of the first page of the memo. The initiating department will be directed to supply 28 copies of the late memo (double-sided, 3-hole punched and unstapled) to incorporate into the printed agenda packet no later than 11:00 a.m. on the Friday prior to the meetings.

Memos received before 11:00 a.m. on Friday will be incorporated into the Board/Board Officers packets only. Copies for Executive Staff will be distributed as a loose leaf addendum to the agenda packet for insertion by Executive Assistants.

Any items received after 11:00 a.m. on Friday will automatically be placed in the red folders.

- (2) Once the copies have been submitted to the District Secretary's Office, save the document electronically in the appropriate folder. This applies to all memos, including late memos, submitted up to the actual day of the meetings.
- (3) All handouts, revised memos, and revised resolutions must be saved to the appropriate folder in the share drive and 15 copies (double-sided and stapled) must be provided to the District Secretary (7 copies for Board, 1 for the District Secretary, 3 for Executive Staff and 4 for the public).

- F. A-Memos:** In those situations where the Board has requested that staff provide additional information or conduct further research pertaining to a specific GM Memo the originating department shall prepare and submit the

revised GM Memo to the General Manager for review at the earliest possible time.

G. Attachments:

- (1) All attached documents must be listed on the GM Memo under “Attachments” and must be labeled accordingly with the memo number and the attachment number or letter (i.e. GM Memo 03-001, Attachment A) noted in the upper right hand corner of the document. Do not use a label maker or printed labels; please label documents electronically.
- (2) Attachments on legal sized paper, or larger that fold up or fold out require extra time to print and assemble. Unless the use of larger sized paper is absolutely essential to the presentation, please use standard letter size paper.

H. Special Instructions:

- (1) Color Documents: Unless indicated on the Routing Form documents will be printed in black and white. Provide the District Secretary with specific instructions if graphs, pictures, etc. need to be printed in color.
- (2) Watermarks: Watermarks should be light enough as to not obscure the text of the document after it is photocopied. In lieu of using watermarks, it is recommended that words like “Draft”, “Sample”, “Copy”, “Confidential”, etc. be noted in the upper right hand corner of the document under the GM Memo Number header.

I. Certified Documents:

- (1) Requests for certified documents, including the number of copies requested and the date needed, must be provided in the Instructions to District Secretary portion of the Routing Form in order to expedite processing.

Certified documents, i.e. resolutions, memos, etc., which require immediate filing with a funding entity, for example, must be prepared for signature by the District Secretary’s office and presented to the Board President and General Counsel upon conclusion of the Board of Director’s meeting in which the item was considered and approved. Upon full execution of the document by the District Secretary, the necessary certified copies will then be prepared and forwarded to the requesting department the next day.

VII. Guidelines for the Development of Public Hearing Notices (Departmental Responsibilities)

- A. Scheduling:** As soon as a department realizes the need to schedule a public hearing, it should give notice to the District Secretary to place the matter on the appropriate Committee and Board agendas. Action by the Board to set a public hearing should take place no less than 28 days prior to the proposed date of the hearing unless more notice is required by law. In addition, the General Counsel shall review the memo prior to its submission to the General Manager for approval. Media Affairs, Marketing and Community Relations shall also receive notice from the department that a hearing is being scheduled.
- B. Development of Legal Notice:** Board Policy 163 generally requires that the District publish a legal notice of a public hearing twice; 14 days and 7 days before the hearing unless special provisions apply (see Policy 163). The process for the development of the legal notice is as follows:

Activity	Responsible Department
Routing of draft notice to the General Counsel, District Secretary, initiating department, and marketing	Media Affairs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review meeting date, time, location and interpreter information 	District Secretary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project description, proposal 	Initiating Department
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overall review of content 	General Counsel
Incorporation of all changes into final document	Media Affairs
Review and signoff of the finalized legal notice	Routed by Media Affairs to all Responsible Departments for final approval.
Translation/Publication of Legal Notice	Media Affairs

- C. Publication Information:** Media Affairs is to provide the District Secretary with the publication dates and a list of the publications the notice appeared in as soon as this information is available.
- D. Affidavit of Publication:** The District Secretary is to receive a copy of all affidavits associated with the publication of public hearing notices for incorporation into the record of the meeting.