



Agenda Item No. (3)

To: Rules, Policy and Industrial Relations Committee/Committee of the Whole  
Meeting of April 28, 2023

From: Mona Babauta, Deputy General Manager, Bus Division  
Denis J. Mulligan, General Manager

Subject: **REPORT ON A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE  
MARIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT FOR THE GOLDEN GATE  
BUS COACH OPERATOR APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM**

### **Recommendation**

This report is to provide information only and does not require any action.

### **Summary**

As downtown San Francisco and local communities continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District) staff from the Human Resources and Bus Division groups is taking steps to position our Golden Gate Transit (GGT) bus system to support expected ridership growth over time. Strengthening efforts to recruit, retain and effectively train new bus operators through the establishment of the Golden Gate Bus Coach Operator Apprenticeship Program (GGAP) with the Marin Community College District (MCCD) and the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1575 is one of the steps that staff is actively pursuing at this time.

### **Background**

In the fall of 2021, GGT staff approached MCCD about a potential expansion to the United States Department of Labor (U.S. DOL)-certified GGAP by establishing a partnership wherein MCCD would serve as the Local Educational Agency (LEA), as required by the State of California's Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) for all state-registered apprenticeships, to allow bus operator apprentices to receive college credit for the completion of the GGAP. Staff believes having a state-sanctioned apprenticeship program that allows bus operator apprentices to earn college credit upon completion of the GGAP could enhance its bus operator recruitment and retention efforts. MCCD has agreed to serve as the LEA and to house the GGAP within their Career Education and Workforce Development Division.

Since spring 2022, GGT staff has worked closely with MCCD to ensure that the GGAP curriculum is supported by MCCD's Academic Senate and approved by its Curriculum Committee. The curriculum is essentially the training program that all new bus operator trainees must successfully complete to become full-time bus operators. MCCD officially approved the curriculum in December 2022.

### **California Apprenticeship Initiative Grant**

In March 2022, MCCD was awarded a California Apprenticeship Initiative (CAI) grant from the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) for \$500,000 to implement the GGAP within the project term of April 1, 2022 through June 30, 2025. The purpose of the grant is to create a new bus coach operator apprenticeship training program in the Bay Area that will register 75 apprentices during the grant period (25 apprentices per year). Other highlights of the grant award include:

- Establishing leadership bodies and an apprenticeship training committee with members from labor (ATU Local 1575), the employer (GGT), MCCD, as well as the Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC), which offers GGT's Bus Operator Pre-apprentice Program (BOPP). The BOPP was established to prepare individuals for the bus operator position and serve as a talent pipeline into the GGAP.
- Supporting student success through wraparound support with specific focus on onboarding and orientations, in-time interventions, and connection to college and community resources. GGT's existing Bus Operator Mentor Program will play a significant role in providing wraparound support to apprentices.
- Supporting regional collaboration, professional development, and expansion of the GGAP model throughout the North Bay region throughout the term of the grant.

The District will receive a total of \$399,392 in CAI grant funds through MCCD to implement the GGAP. The Fiscal Impact section of this report provides additional detail on how these CAI funds will be used by the District.

### **Memorandum of Understanding**

District and MCCD staff have negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish the duties and responsibilities of each party with respect to the GGAP. The proposed term of the MOU is expected to run through June 2025. Attached and incorporated into the MOU are two related agreements that are required by applicable state law:

1. The GGAP Instructional Services Agreement between MCCD and GGBHTD further defines the duties and responsibilities of each party, and the applicable legal requirements, with respect to providing instruction to MCCD students for the GGAP in accordance with the MOU.
2. The GGAP Instructor Agreement will be executed by MCCD and each individual GGT Training Instructor. This agreement outlines the duties and responsibilities of each party with respect to providing instruction to MCCD students for the GGAP in accordance with the MOU and Instructional Services Agreement between the MCCD and GGBHTD.

It is important to note that staff has met and conferred with, as well as obtained concurrence from, ATU Local 1575 regarding the MOU, GGAP Instructional Services Agreement, GGAP Instructor Agreement, and related procedures and requirements that will impact the working conditions of represented GGT Training Instructors, Bus Operator Mentors and GGAP apprentices.

## Next Steps

Next steps required for officially implementing the GGAP by fall 2023 include the following:

- Onboarding GGT's Training Instructors as MCCD faculty, which is necessary for teaching college-credit bearing classes.
- Finalizing the apprenticeship registration process with the State DAS.

Once implemented, all graduating apprentices will receive an official certificate of completion from the CCCCCO and twelve (12) college credits. This would be in addition to receiving a certificate of completion from the U.S. DOL.

## Fiscal Impact

The District will receive a total of \$399,392 in CAI grant funds through MCCD, which will offset operating expenses in the Bus Division's annually approved budget. The majority of the expenses will be tied to: 1) wraparound support services provided by Bus Operator Mentors; and, 2) program coordination activities performed by the Bus Operator Apprenticeship Coordinator, which is currently filled by an ATU-represented Bus Operator Mentor who is filling this Special Project Limited Assignment position. Below is the projected breakdown of the grant funds per fiscal year.

	Budget Description	FY 2022/23	FY 2023/24	July – Dec 2024	Total
1	Instructional and Administrative Supplies	\$0	\$2,085	\$0	\$2,085
2	Conference Attendance and Travel	\$0	\$4,250	\$2,000	\$6,250
3	Bus Operator Mentors	\$0	\$74,244	\$37,131	\$111,375
4	Bus Operator Coverage for Mentor Coordinators	\$0	\$16,920	\$8,465	\$25,385
5	Bus Operator Coverage for the Mentor Lead	\$9,513	\$12,692	\$6,352	\$28,557
6	Bus Operator Apprenticeship Coordinator (Project Coordinator)	\$75,246	\$100,320	\$50,174	\$225,740
7	<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$84,759</b>	<b>\$210,511</b>	<b>\$104,122</b>	<b>\$399,392</b>

Attachment: PowerPoint Presentation on Golden Gate Bus Coach Operator Apprenticeship Program

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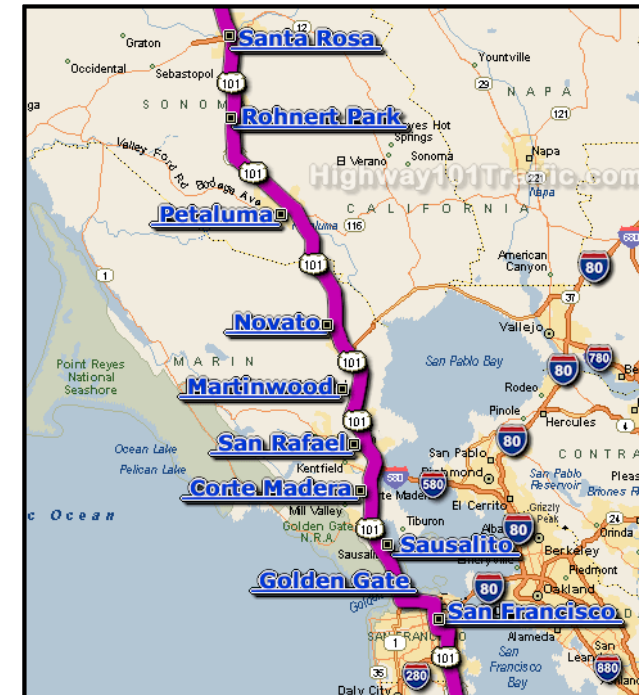
# BUS COACH OPERATOR APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM WITH COLLEGE OF MARIN

Mona Babauta, Deputy General Manager  
Golden Gate Transit, San Rafael, California

Rules, Policy and Industrial Relations Committee  
April 28, 2023

# Background

- Golden Gate Transit (GGT) – Serves 4 counties in San Francisco's North Bay. Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, we moved thousands of commuters to/from San Francisco each day.
- GGT suspended approximately 90% of its commute service during COVID.
- Currently operating roughly 50% of Pre-COVID service levels, but interested in growing service as San Francisco "reopens" and ridership demand returns.
- **Like other agencies, GGT is challenged with hiring and retaining bus operators, which are important for growing service over time.**



# Understanding the Root of our Challenges

Through GGT's "[Workforce Investment Network \(WIN\)](#)" Program, which is a [High Road Training Partnership \(H RTP\)](#), we started to dig into the root of our challenges.

- The **Labor-Management Partnership between GGT & ATU Local 1575** created the foundation for WIN, a High Road Training Partnership that includes contributions from local colleges and [California Transit Works \(CTW\)](#) staff to achieve/maintain the following:
  - Pool of trained **Bus Operator Mentors** who provide 1:1 support to new Bus Operator Apprentices
  - Establishment of a Federal DOL and State-certified **Bus Operator Apprenticeship Program** – Bus Operator Apprentices/Trainees earn college credit + certificate of completion from DOL
  - Establishment of **Pre-apprenticeship Program** to funnel talent to the Apprenticeship Program

**WIN** creates a **forum for collaboration between management, labor leadership, and mentors** to tackle operational challenges, shape policy, and maintain a positive, constructive relationship.

This Forum prompted us to ask critical questions about underlying factors leading to recruitment and retention challenges..

# Data Collection on “Front Door” Challenges

- Approximately 67% of applicants didn't/ couldn't submit a completed application.
  - Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders (AAPI) struggled the most. Hispanic applicants a close second.
- Of the 33% of applicants with complete applications, 40% of them failed the written skills test required for gauging business skills.
  - AAPI and Hispanic applicants appeared to struggle the most.
- At this point, of the total, original applicants (including complete & incomplete applications), only 20% of them proceeded to the interview phase.
- Approximately 16% of the total, original applicants were ultimately offered employment as Bus Operators.
- Majority of applicants live in Priority Populations (PPs) /Disadvantaged Communities, many of which live 1-2.5 hours away from GGT facilities. *Could benefit from more focused recruiting in local PPs closer to work.*



# Reevaluate/adjust the pathway to employment...

**Through the data collection process, we identified the following actions for potentially addressing our recruitment/hiring challenges:**

- Offer 1:1 support during the application process
  - Actual application on paper or online
  - Written skills test
  - Interview Process
- Provide bilingual support
- Reevaluate Minimum Qualifications
- Create opportunities to build workplace skills & gain exposure to the work environment
- Strengthen relationships with community based organizations (CBOs)



# Pre-apprenticeship Program with Santa Rosa Junior College

- **Outreach Specialist** to leverage strong communities ties & actively advocate/recruit for GGT Bus Operator positions, especially in Priority Populations.
  - Also serves as **personal support for students/pre-apprentices**
  - Coordinates closely with GGT staff & ATU on student performance and/or if 1:1 support needed from Mentors, GGT Staff, etc.
- 12-week program offered by SRJC's Adult Education Department (includes Practicum & Shadow Days)
  - Virtual classes: workplace soft skills, customer service, communication, collaboration, self-advocacy, basic computer skills; bilingual offerings support ESL students
  - **Practicum will incorporate application and interview process.**
  - Two onsite Shadow Days at GGT - contextualize classroom learning, provide work environment exposure
  - **Mentors & ATU Leadership help shape & deliver curriculum**
- Seamless connection to full-time employment & the Bus Coach Operator Apprenticeship Program with College of Marin
- **Signing bonus (\$1,000 upon completion or pre-apprenticeship)**



# Mitigating Employment Barriers & Commitment to Equity

## Addressing employment barriers:

- **Completion of application process** as graduation requirement - part of SRJC program (Practicum)
- GGT **written skills test waived** with completion of program – SRJC courses & GGT Shadow Days should ensure candidates are prepared to enter the training/apprenticeship program
- **Interview process folded into 2<sup>nd</sup> Shadow Day**

## GGT Commitment to Racial Equity/Justice & Inclusion:

- Focused recruiting in Priority Populations
- Pathway to union-represented employment, career stability, and family-sustaining benefits through investments & support from local colleges, Union, GGT (employer), local colleges, and Mentors
- Building skills & creating educational opportunities for those from disadvantaged/underserved communities



# Reevaluate & Revise Minimum Qualifications

Reevaluated Bus Operator position minimum qualifications, also influenced by our commitment to racial equity/justice. Changed requirements related to:

- **High school diploma waived** for pre-apprentices upon completion of program: SRJC will offer an alternative test for reading and writing competencies.
- Driving Experience: Must be a **licensed driver for at least three (3) years** upon completion of the pre-apprenticeship program. **Minimum Age (in this case) = 19 years.** (Regular standard is 7 years as licensed driver.)
- Moving violations: **Applicants with more than two (2) moving violations within the last three (3) years will be reviewed on a case by case basis and such violations may be cause for non-selection.** (Prior standard: No more than two (2) moving violations within the last three (3) years. No exceptions.)
- **Other violations, citations, and/or accidents will be reviewed on a case by case basis and may be cause for non-selection.**



# Bus Coach Operator Apprenticeship Program

- Apprenticeship Program developed with College of Marin/Marin Community College District (MCCD)
- 5-course, 6-week curriculum/ training program for new Bus Operators/ Apprentices = **5 college credits**
- 12-week Practicum (6th Course) = **1 credit**
  - Led by Mentors/ ATU Members (certified as college faculty/ instructors)
  - Weekly, 4-hour forum for mentoring, reinforcing job skills/ knowledge, discussing challenges as new Bus Operators
- On the Job Training/OJT (approximately 300 hours) = **6 credits**
- College Certificate of Achievement awarded upon completion (**12 credits: 6 courses + OJT**)



# Wraparound Support Programs

- **Partnership with Canal Alliance of San Rafael, CA**

- 2-years of wraparound services provided to clients upon completion of COM Apprenticeship Program: ESL, career support, transportation, rental assistance, etc.
- Feedback loops/ collaboration channel to support employee success ONLY with employee consent.
- Canal Alliance helps GGT staff better understand and respond to employee needs with empathy
- Will check-in with Bus Operators/ clients on job performance, attendance, etc.



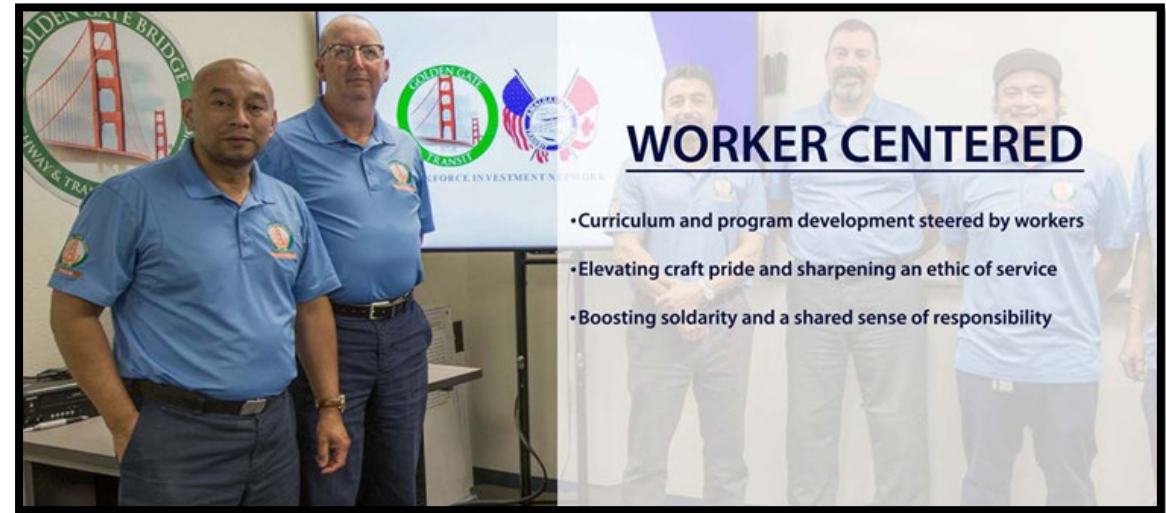
- **Bus Operator Mentor Program**

- Collaboration channel between Canal Alliance Client
- 1:1 meetings and ride-a-longs between Mentor & Mentees to create forums for career feedback and advice
- 6<sup>th</sup> course in Apprenticeship Program provides group forum for Mentors & Apprentices for problem-solving & learning



# Bus Operator Mentor Program – Retention Effort

- [Worker-centered program](#) developed in partnership with ATU Local 1575
- **Structured peer support** for new Bus Operators led by ATU in collaboration with Management
  - Help them adjust to the new work environment and set them up for success
  - Serve as resource for understanding policy, culture, relationships + serve as respected leaders who help shape a professional environment
  - Maintain a productive & effective line of communication between labor and management
- **Leadership & career/personal growth** opportunity for current Bus Operators.
- Connection to a strong apprenticeship and training program, with continuing opportunities for **career development**.



# Contact Information

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