



Agenda Item No. (3)

To: Rules, Policy and Industrial Relations Committee/Committee of the Whole Meeting of April 24, 2025

From: Kellee J. Hopper, Deputy General Manager, Administration and Development
Denis J. Mulligan, General Manager

Subject: **AUTHORIZE THE SETTING OF A PUBLIC HEARING TO RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENT RELATIVE TO ASSEMBLY BILL 2561 – STATUS OF JOB VACANCIES**

Recommendation

The Rules and Industrial Relations Committee of the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District) recommends that the Board of Directors (Board) authorize the setting of a Public Hearing on Friday, May 23, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. or immediately after the regularly scheduled May Board meeting in the Board Room, Administration Building, Golden Gate Bridge Toll Plaza, San Francisco, California, relative to a new law - Assembly Bill 2561 (AB 2561). The subject of the Public Hearing is the status of job vacancies at the Bridge District, and at the hearing the Board will receive a staff presentation about Bridge District vacancies, as well as presentations by bargaining units and public comment. The Public Hearing must occur before the Board adopts the annual budget in late June 2025.

This matter will be presented to the Board of Directors at its April 25, 2025, meeting for appropriate action.

Summary

The newly enacted AB 2561 requires that the Bridge District to hold a public hearing at which Staff will present information about job vacancies across the Bridge District. The purpose of the Public Hearing is for the Board to hear the Staff presentation and to receive presentations by individual bargaining units relative to those job vacancies, as well as public comment. The Public Hearing will occur on Friday, May 23, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. or immediately after the May 23, 2025, Board Meeting. That public input will be heard by and provided to the Board before, on and after May 23, 2025, before and in preparation for the adoption of the Bridge District's budget in late June 2025.

Background

Effective January 1, 2025, Assembly Bill 2561 (AB 2561) was enacted requiring special districts to take several actions relative to job vacancies. The new legislation requires the District to:

- present the status of vacancies in the Bridge District's many bargaining units, as well as recruitment and retention efforts during a public hearing before the governing board at least once per fiscal year;
- make that presentation to the Board of Directors prior to the adoption of the final annual budget;
- identify during the hearing any necessary changes to policies, procedures, and recruitment activities that may lead to obstacles in the hiring process; and,
- allow the individual bargaining units to make presentations on these topics at the public hearing.

If the number of job vacancies within a single bargaining unit meets or exceeds 20 percent of the total number of authorized full-time positions in the unit, the bargaining unit may request that the Bridge District also provide additional information at the Public Hearing about vacancies in that bargaining unit including:

- the total number of job vacancies within the bargaining unit;
- the total number of applicants for vacant positions within the bargaining unit;
- the average number of days to complete the hiring process from when a position is posted; and,
- opportunities to improve compensation and other working conditions.

In advance of the May 23, 2025, Public Hearing, District Staff will reach out to the Bridge District's bargaining units to coordinate the provision of information and data, as well as presentation plans.

The May 23, 2025, Public Hearing will commence with the requisite presentation by Staff on those topics mandated by the statute or further requested by bargaining units over the 20% vacancy threshold. Next, the Board will hear presentations by any of the individual bargaining units, and public comment also will be taken. The timing of the setting of this public hearing by the General Manager in accordance with the Rules of the Board is necessitated by law's implementation date and by the District's annual budget cycle. This public hearing will occur on May 23, 2025, at approximately 11:00 a.m. – immediately after the May 2025 Board of Director's Meeting, in the Board Room, Administration Building, Golden Gate Bridge Toll Plaza, San Francisco, CA, before the Board's adoption of the annual budget in late June 2025.

Why the District has Vacant Positions

The District is primarily self-funded. Golden Gate Bridge tolls are the District's largest source of revenue, fully funding Bridge operations while serving as the principal funding source for our bus and ferry service. Transit fares have historically been our second largest source of operating revenue.

Post-pandemic, the world has changed in ways that affect travel in the Golden Gate Corridor. While recreational and tourist travel have mostly returned, commute travel has not.

Today, there are approximately 150,000 fewer people in downtown San Francisco each weekday as compared to pre-pandemic. In downtown San Francisco, the office vacancy rate is over 37 percent, and the amount of vacant office space is greater than 20 Salesforce Towers.

Today, during the morning commute, Bridge traffic is down by about 25 to 30 percent below pre-pandemic levels, which affects the District's revenues, and its ability to fund bus and ferry service.

In response, the District has been aggressively reducing expenses, including by offering less commute transit service. We are currently operating about 20 percent of our pre-pandemic express commute bus service while maintaining our regional bus service, which has returned to near pre-pandemic ridership. We are also operating our service more efficiently.

Our 2024/25 Adopted Budget contains the positions associated with pre-pandemic Bus and Ferry service levels. However, current customer demand does not warrant providing that much transit service, and the District continues to spend one-time state COVID relief funding (Senate Bill 125) to fund its existing Bus and Ferry Service levels.

While we are operating less transit service today as compared to before the pandemic, at this juncture, the District has chosen not to delete these vacant positions from the budget. Instead of eliminating those positions, we intentionally keep vacant positions in our Bus and Ferry Divisions in hopes that demand will increase to warrant filling the vacancies.

Public Comment Process

Public comments on this topic can be submitted in several different ways:

1. Attend the public hearing;
2. E-mail publichearing@goldengate.org; and/or,
3. Send written comments to the District Secretary.

All comments are considered equally without regard to the way the comments are submitted. Therefore, individuals do not have to attend the public hearing and provide testimony in person if they have commented through e-mail or written forms. All comments received through the above methods will be considered in the final recommendation. Comments must be received by 4:30 p.m. on May 23, 2025.

Public Notification

If the proposal to hold this public hearing is approved by the Board, outreach would begin immediately and continue into late May.

Public notification activities will include:

- A Notice of Public Hearing will be posted to the District's website;
- Public hearing notices will be published in local publications (*Marin Independent Journal, Santa Rosa Press Democrat, San Francisco Chronicle and La Voz*);
- Posters advertising the public hearing will be placed onboard buses and ferries;
- Social media posts on Facebook and Twitter will promote the public hearing; and,
- Email blasts will be sent to customers and community-based organizations.

Printed materials will be available in Spanish, per the District's Language Implementation Plan (LIP).

Next Steps

Following the public hearing, staff will evaluate all comments received. A report of the public hearing will be presented in June and, if necessary, any recommendations will also be presented to the appropriate Committee at that time.

Fiscal Impact

The fiscal impact of providing a public hearing and associated outreach is estimated at less than \$10,000 and will be covered by the existing Marketing and Communications Department and District Secretary's Office operating budgets.