

To: O&S Committee

Date: February 23, 2012

From: Bill Churchill, Director of Transportation

Reviewed by:

SUBJECT: Video Surveillance Systems

Summary of Issues:

In an effort to protect Agency assets, limit liability and reduce the expense of insurance claims CCCTA began installing camera systems on buses in 1996. Installation of the surveillance systems had an immediate impact on reducing the Agencies liability and the cost of claims as well as protecting assets. Furthermore, the surveillance has been an invaluable tool for local law enforcement in helping to protect our communities.

Recommendation: None

Financial Implications: N/A

Options:

Provide direction to staff for modification of this analysis

Action Requested:

For Information Only

Attachments: None

Changes Committee: N/A

Background:

By the mid 1990's the number of small claims resulting from instances occurring on buses became financially onerous for the agency. In an effort to protect Agency assets, limit liability and reduce the expense of insurance claims CCCTA began installing camera systems on buses in 1996. By 2002 all buses in the fixed route fleet were equipped with video surveillance systems. Just having cameras visible on the buses had an immediate and profound impact resulting in the reduction of claims against the Agency. Additionally, according the Agencies insurance claims adjuster, as camera system quality has improved the ability to deny claims and reduce payouts has increased dramatically. Over the past two years twenty five claims have been generated against the Agency, fifteen of which were immediately denied based on video evidence.

Union Communication:

Prior to installing cameras in 1996, management convened a series of Meet and confers with the ATU informing the ATU of the primary purpose of the camera systems as well as how management intended to use the systems. Additionally, over the last decade management has initiated a number of meet and confers each time buses were replaced and new camera systems were installed. Management has informed the ATU that a number of specific triggers can initiate the need to pull and view video; an insurance claim, an accident, unreported vehicle damage, a customer service complaint, a law enforcement request and a Supervisor/Management observation of an incident. Management does not and has never randomly pulled video for purposes of evaluating operators. CCCTA does not have enough staff to pull and view more video than is absolutely necessary under the previously mentioned conditions. Currently the fixed route system generates over 4,745 hours of recorded video per week. On average about 10 hours of video is pulled and viewed per week representing 0.21% of the total hours generated.

When video is pulled and viewed under the prior mentioned conditions and an operator is observed violating policy or the law, disciplinary measures are taken. This practice has been in place since the 1996 installation of the camera systems. It is important to note however that video surveillance exonerates operator behavior as often, if not more so than it convicts.

Recently the ATU requested to meet with management regarding the Unions desire to put limitations on management's ability to view video and dispense discipline to operators as a result of video. The ATU has also requested that a more formalized written policy be developed. Management and the ATU have since met several times to discuss these issues and are currently in the process of developing a more formal video policy.

Law Enforcement:

CCCTA staff cooperates with twelve or more different law enforcement agencies on a regular basis. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for crimes to occur within the sight of CCCTA surveillance systems. When an incident occurs the Agency cooperates with law enforcement and provides video if necessary. It is not always a crime that generates the need for video, there have been missing persons (i.e. missing Alzheimer's patients) that have boarded buses or passed by buses that need to be identified. Finally, law enforcement has used CCCTA generated video to complete accident investigations.

Conclusion:

Clearly the use of surveillance systems on buses has had the intended impact of reducing the cost of unwarranted claims and enhanced the ability to protect Agency assets. Video has also improved the Agencies ability to more effectively deal with customer complaints as well as filter out complaints that clearly have no merit. Bus surveillance systems has also proven to be an invaluable asset for multiple law enforcements agencies throughout Contra Costa County.