

# Alexandria Transit Company

Effectively Managing Transit Operations



# ATC History and Organization



- Service began March 11, 1984
  - 3 months following the opening of the King Street and Braddock Road Metrorail stations
- Established as a non-profit public service corporation
  - Similar to successful models used in Richmond, Roanoke and Lynchburg since 1973



# Public Service Corporation Structure

- Alexandria City Council are sole stockholders for the corporation
  - Each council member and the mayor hold one share of stock valued at \$1 per share
- Stockholders elect a Board of Directors for the corporation each year in February





# Role of the Board of Directors



- Develop and submit a transit development plan and budget to City Council each year
- Conduct public hearings and approve service and fare adjustments
- Hire a management company to operate the transit system



# Role of the Management Company

- Provide a General Manager and Assistant General Manager on a fixed-price contract
  - GM and AGM manage employees of Transit Management of Alexandria, which includes all the remaining employees who operate the transit system
- Provide additional support and expertise as needed



# Role of the City



- Provide accounting, financial and legal services
- Provide a yearly operating subsidy
- Provide capital items such as buses, bus stop shelters and pads, etc.
- The City provides a supporting role as opposed to a monitoring role



# Organizational Benefits

- City Council is not burdened with routine oversight of the transit system
- The transit system can leverage the City's assets as needed
- Employees of the transit system are assured long-term stability
- Additional transit-specific expertise is readily available when needed



# Operational Philosophy



- All employees and functions serve as supporting roles for the bus operators
  - Bus Operators are our primary contact with our customers
  - Primary purpose of all other functions is to help the bus operators provide the best service possible





# Operational Best Practices

- Open lines of communication
  - Open door policy with all levels of management
  - Easy access to all levels of management
  - Regularly scheduled employee meetings including Q&A time for any area of concern



# Operational Best Practices

- Awards and recognition program
  - National Safety Council
  - Monthly Honor Roll
    - Meet individual safety, attendance and customer service goals
    - Monthly drawing for additional uniform allowance from all operators on honor roll
  - Distinguished Drivers
    - Awarded yearly to all operators who made honor roll 9 months or more in one year
    - All qualified operators receive additional paid days off



# Operational Best Practices

- Awards and recognition program continued
  - Attendance awards
    - Additional paid days off for 3 or less absences within one year
  - Sole annual recipient awards
    - #1 in Customer Service
    - Joyce Stalling’s “DASH Difference” Commemorative Award



# Operational Best Practices



- Every-other weekend operator rosters
  - 25% reduction in weekend call-offs since implementation
  - Improved retention rate for new operators
- Overtime assignments
  - Opportunity for advance assignment of specific pieces of work





# Operational Best Practices

- Training program
  - Ongoing use of Smith System® defensive driving program
  - Annual operator evaluations
  - Fixed testing and standards for hiring new operators
    - Standards never lowered to fill quotas to reach full staff of bus operators



# Operational Best Practices



- Maintenance Program
  - Limited number of bus types
    - Mechanics know their equipment well
    - Limits parts stocked
    - Interchangeability of buses on service operated

- All buses maintained at 100% until retirement
- Mid-life power train replacement on all buses



# DASH Keys for Success

- Well respected and recognized employees
- Well maintained equipment
- Don't try and be everything to everyone, just do what you do best and do that extraordinarily well

