

**ITEM 9**  
**October 4, 2018**  
**PRTC Regular Meeting**

**PRTC Executive Director's Time**

- A. INFO Employee Recognition**
  - Joy Himes (10 years)
  - Tracy Dean (5 years)
  - Katy Nicholson (10 Years)
- B. OmniRide Career Fair Update**
- C. Follow-Up from Prior Meeting**
  - Public hearing for western service
- D. INFO Executive Director's Report**
  - Industry Article – There's a Bus Driver Shortage. And No Wonder
  - PWC EEO Recommendations Update

## **Summary: “There’s a Bus Driver Shortage. And No Wonder.”**

*Original Report by Laura Bliss for City Lab. Appeared June 2018.*

According to Bliss, once upon a time, being a bus driver was considered an honorable and desirable profession – a stable union job with a good middle-class salary, a public pension, and at least some cultural recognition for the contributions it made to society. Like many public sector jobs, it provided a dependable economic foundation. Even if you didn’t have a college degree, being a bus driver meant you could buy a house, feed your family, take a vacation or save for your child’s college tuition.

Public sector jobs of all kinds have declined in pay as collective bargaining continues to be eroded. The median hourly wage for a municipal bus driver in the U.S. is \$19.61, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. But as with all kinds of low and middle-income jobs, driver wages have barely kept up with the rate of inflation over the past decade. Entry-level paychecks tend to be much smaller, which can pose a barrier to many young workers, especially with the fee required to earn the requisite commercial driver’s license.

Virtually all of the old transportation trades, private and public, are facing hiring struggles, from school bus systems to trucking industries. Now that employees of the baby boomer generation are retiring and will continue to retire over the next few years, public transit is facing an unknown future. Transit organizations have to come up with creative solutions to attract and retain employees or they face the danger of losing qualified workers to other fields. According to a 2015 joint analysis of BLS data by the U.S. Departments of Transportation, Labor and Education – nearly 200,000 transit and intercity coach driving jobs are estimated to open up by 2022. And nearly 72 percent of the current operator workforce is set to exit by that year.

According to First Transit job descriptions, a bus operator needs to be at least 21 years of age, possess a valid driver’s license, must have a CDL Operator’s License with Airbrake and Passenger Endorsements and have three years of driving experience. First Transit bus operators are required to have excellent communication skills and be able to work shift hours and days assigned. All candidates are subject to a pre-employment background check, drug screen and DOT physical.

Unmentioned, though, is the most demanding part of the job, according to drivers, is the human element. A bus is an unruly micro-community, full of passengers who are getting sick, laughing, crying, arguing and dancing. They need directions, they’re carrying babies and strollers, and they’re struggling to scrape together fares. Most riders are respectful and pleasant, but knowing how to handle the full rainbow of behaviors makes bus driver a highly skilled customer-service job that other transportation trades are not. Driving through heavy traffic or bad weather and dealing with unruly passengers can be stressful for bus drivers.

Bus drivers transport people between various places – including work, school and shopping centers. Bus drivers had a higher rate of work-related injuries and illnesses in 2016 than the national average. Most injuries to bus drivers are due to vehicle accidents. The median annual wage for bus drivers - transit and intercity was \$40,780 in May 2017. An entry level bus driver position with First Transit at OMNIRIDE is \$37,440, very comparable to the median annual wage.

## **So What? Why is it so Hard to Recruit Bus Operators to Work at OMNIRIDE?**

The recruitment crisis being faced by the public transit industry is well documented. The baby boomer generation had swelled the ranks of transit professionals and now their eligibility for retirement is leaving agencies with a looming shortage of employees. Those experienced workers take hard-earned knowledge and skills with them. All across the country, transit agencies are diligently working to recruit and retain bus operators – OMNIRIDE is no different.

Perceived downsides of being a bus operator for OMNIRIDE:

- **Work Shift Selection**
  - Shift selection is based on seniority. The seniors get the best slot, like a straight shift, and the rest of the employees get a shift split between mornings and evenings.
  - The pattern of waking in the morning and going to work, having lunch by afternoon and leaving the workplace by evening is not the same for shift workers.
  - Shift workers may feel tired and sluggish as they do not achieve a sufficient amount of sleep during the day.
- **Driving in DC**
  - Pedestrian traffic is abundant with people walking all over the city, many jaywalking through intersections impeding the traffic flow.
  - Bicycles and scooters in DC may appear suddenly without any warning.
  - Rude drivers are rampant in DC, many cutting off buses trying to make wide right turns. DC drivers have been consistently named among the worst drivers in the United States.
  - Road lanes are narrow and it's easy for a passing truck to clip the bus's side mirror, resulting in the bus operator's inability to continue on the route.
  - Road blocks and police motorcades are frequent in DC, resulting in route detours in an already congested city grid.

OMNIRIDE must advertise on the benefits of working at our organization. There is nothing OMNIRIDE can do to change the fact that most of our bus services are commuter based and require split shifts. Typically most employees prefer to work consecutive hours with assigned breaks.

- **Shift Split Advantages**
  - Opportunity to manage a work-life balance more effectively
  - Avoid traveling to/from work during rush hours, which makes traveling flexible
  - Working in shifts can be advantageous for completing other tasks/appointments and not keeping them for the weekends
- **Competitive Benefit Package**
  - Wages starting at \$18 an hour
  - Paid training with sign-on bonus
  - Vacation and personal leave
  - Excellent medical benefits
  - Bonuses paid three times a year

No matter how attractive a career in transit may be, or even how convincingly the case can be made, if millennials don't hear about it, all is for naught. OMNIRIDE and First Transit should engage students at local colleges and team with peer agencies to sponsor recruitment events. Develop millennials, send them out as ambassadors to recruit more and the result is a virtuous circle. The young workforce of today, the millennials, love transit. They are more idealistic, embracing organizational missions, visions and values. The mission of any transit agency should fit neatly into the millennial's world view.



To: PRTC Commissioners

From: Bob Schneider, Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Schneider", is placed over a light gray rectangular background.

Re: Update on June 7, 2018 Board Resolution for EEO Recommendations

Date: October 4, 2018

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Each of the below items is from the PRTC Commission-adopted resolution on June 7, 2018. This update will be provided monthly until all technical items have been addressed.

**1. There should be regular management and staff training on diversity and equal employment issues.**

Update:

- August 1 – 2, 2018: First Transit's Director of Learning and Development conducted harassment awareness/prevention training for all employees working at the OmniRide facility.

Future Items:

- First Transit will schedule diversity training for the balance of employees.
- Staff is developing an annual training calendar. This will be provided to the Commission annually and updated as appropriate.
- PRTC staff is reviewing on-line or DVD-based options for newly-hired employees or refresher training for both diversity and workplace harassment/EEO issues.

Completed Items:

- Harassment Training: June 12 – 13, 2018: National Transit Institute of Rutgers University provided a 3-hour, on-site training class for all PRTC and First Transit supervisory employees. This course focused on supervisory reporting requirements.
- EEO Compliance Training: Staff member attended a week-long dedicated federal EEO compliance course June 11 – 15, 2018.
- Diversity Training: May 15 – 17, 2018: National Transit Institute of Rutgers University provided a 3-hour, on-site training class for all PRTC employees as well as First Transit Administrative staff.

**2. Immediate action should be taken to address any issues that arise, which could create a hostile work environment.**

Update:

- Anti-Harassment Training: September 24, 2018: Provided by Jacqueline Lucas, Assistant County Attorney-Prince William County Attorney's Office for PRTC Senior Staff. Director of HR will conduct training sessions on the existing Anti-Harassment policy for all PRTC personnel during the month of October, 2018.
- EEO Formal Complaint of Discrimination and/or Harassment Form is being developed and will accompany training and be available for all employees.

Completed Items:

- Responsiveness to Incidents: Human Resources will ensure ALL reports of harassment, discrimination, or intimidation shall be reported to the Executive Director and will notify the Executive Director of any and all personnel actions for review. Immediate action will be taken to investigate and address complaints.
- Policy Awareness: April 20, 2018, all employees were reminded of the Anti-Harassment Policy:  
"It is everyone's responsibility to ensure this is a safe and professional workplace and to treat each other with professionalism and respect. The Anti-Harassment Policy is in Chapter XIV of the Personnel Policy Handbook and if you have any questions regarding the policy, please see the Director of Human Resources or your supervisor. If you see something or experience something that crosses the line, notify Human Resources, EEO Officer, a supervisor, or any manager."

**3. Performance Evaluations of all staff should be current.**

Update:

- Evaluations: Supervisors/Managers conducted evaluations with employees and provide fully executed evaluations to the Director of Human Resources by September 27, 2018.

Future Items:

- Revision of the current evaluation instrument.
- Supervisors/Managers will provide employees with mid-year feedback and review steps for continuous performance evaluation.

Completed Items:

- Employee Evaluation Audit: HR Staff conducted an audit of personnel files and determined the last evaluation completed for each employee. Director of Human Resources reviewed the evaluation instrument and trained all managers on use of the instrument to ensure consistent and effective evaluations. All PRTC staff attended a

training session on the current performance evaluation instrument and the importance of consistent and effective evaluations.

- Evaluations: Supervisors/Managers completed individual employee evaluations to include organizational, departmental, and individual goals by September 11, 2018.
- An annual evaluation cycle of July 1 to June 30 has been established to ensure 100% completion of annual evaluations.

**4. The Executive Director should ensure clarity and consistency of management communications with staff.**

Update:

- A memo regarding the OmniRide Diversity and Organizational Development Assessment project went to all PRTC staff explain the goal and process of the project.
- Ms. West, of Exstare Federal Services Group has been meeting and interviewing individuals as well as the advisory committee for the past couple of weeks and will continue for the next month.
- Continue employee engagement AT ALL LEVELS of the organization with regular recognition for going above and beyond.
- PRTC is creating an employee engagement committee to encourage communication and involvement between PRTC and First Transit.

Completed Item:

- August 27, 2018: Nancy West of Exstare Federal Services Group and J.R. Hipple of SIR met with senior management to discuss the OmniRide Diversity and Organizational Development Assessment project. The goal of this project is to work with the Commissioners and senior management staff to address issues related to communication, culture, and organizational values with an outcome of a strategic plan for diversity and inclusion. This process will include recommendations for changes to appropriate policy, process, and managerial plans to help implement the Commission's Strategic Plan and associated programs. All PRTC staff have been advised of this project.
- At the request of Ms. West, an advisory committee has been established to work closely with the consultants.

**5. All job descriptions should be written objectively to ensure the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities are reflected.**

Completed Item:

- All job descriptions have been revised to address the knowledge, skills and abilities language identified by the EEO review document. Substitute language, provided by legal counsel, was inserted. All staff have been advised and are able to view job descriptions via the shared drive.

We will continue the practice of legal review of job descriptions.

**6. All supervisors be provided training regarding supervision of management of employees.**

Update:

- Annual training calendar and position profiles are under development. Individual training needs are being identified to ensure staff has the appropriate training for their current position/responsibilities and developmental training for professional growth.
- The feedback for the baseline supervisory training attended by a PRTC manager in July was favorable. Supervisory training for all supervisors is included on the annual training calendar that is under development. New supervisors will receive training within 90 days of employment.

Future Items:

- Management staff will be trained on coaching employees, communication with peers and employees, critical elements of accountability, and individual leadership.
- Planned individual leadership assessment process (i.e., Emergentics, DiSC, etc.) for the OmniRide leadership team with a focus on teambuilding and working together for goal achievement.