

# Improving examination process for SFMTA Transit Operator candidates

March 2019

A partnership between the City Performance Lean Team and the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency

## PROBLEM

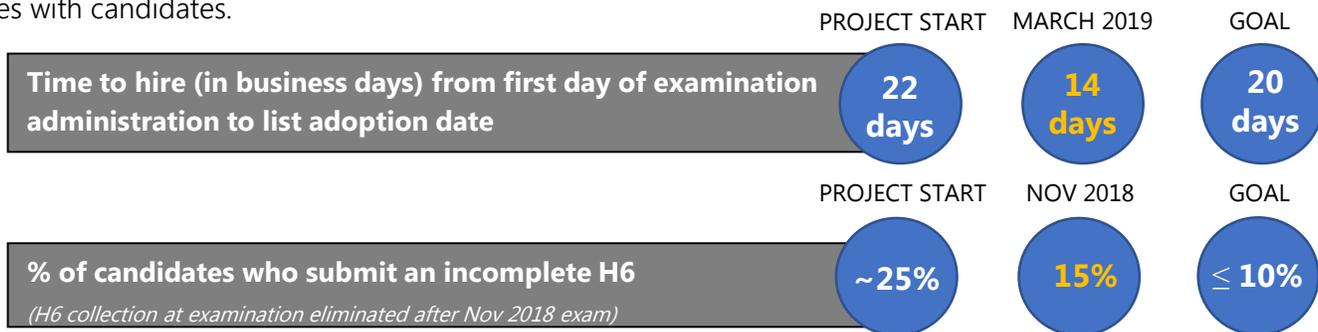
The Exams Unit of the SFMTA Human Resources Division (HR) conducts exams for city positions, including the SFMTA's Transit Operators. The current Transit Operator Exam administration process is labor intensive, time-consuming, and potentially error-prone. The two SFMTA units that oversee Transit Operator hiring – Exams Unit and Employee Services – conduct duplicative work when screening the same candidates at different stages of the hiring process. Furthermore, the Exams Unit must conduct significant extra work following up with candidates who make mistakes in submitting required documents. Delays in exam administration result in longer hiring times, which can contribute to unfilled Transit Operator training classes. When training classes go unfilled, the SFMTA cannot meet their planned service hour targets, resulting in transit delays for residents.



Members of the SFMTA Human Resources – Exams Unit convened to address issues with the examination process for Transit Operators.

## RESULTS

From August 2018 to January 2019, the SFMTA's Exams Unit implemented improvements to the exam administration process to mitigate these issues. The team chose to measure two key performance indicators to determine if their improvement efforts worked: time to hire and the number of complete H6 records (a California DMV document that shows the applicant's driving record) turned in at the exam site. The team measured time to hire from the first day of the exam administration to the date on which the Exams Unit adopted the eligible list, which provides an overall view of the time it takes for the Exams Unit to conduct the exam administration. The second metric, number of complete H6 records submitted at the exam site, speaks to the team's desire to eliminate mistakes in the process: during the March 2018 exam, approximately 125 out of 500 candidates (25%) submitted an H6 driving record that included mistakes or was not complete. The team must conduct significant follow-up work in the weeks post-exam to remedy driving record mistakes with candidates.



## SOLUTION #1: ELIMINATE DUPLICATIVE DRIVING RECORD REVIEW

The Exams Unit identified the review of candidates' driving record as a major source of extra work. Candidates must have a clean driving record with no moving violations for the past three years, as indicated on the candidate's DMV "H6" driving record. Prior to the Exam Unit's Lean work, candidates were required to go to the DMV, get their H6 document, and bring it to their exam. The Exams Unit would review each candidate's H6 at the exam site while candidates were taking their exams, spending significant time following up with candidates who made mistakes on their H6 submissions. Once the eligible list was adopted, the Employee Services Unit conducted a second screening of the H6. If three months had lapsed between when the candidate got their H6 and when they were going to be hired, the SFMTA asked candidates to go to the DMV to get another copy of the H6 for screening.

Both the Exams Unit and Employee Services Unit noticed the duplication in their screening practices. In December 2018, the two divisions agreed to test a process to eliminate the Exam Unit's H6 review. Though this change may cause Employee Services to review H6 driving records for a small number of ineligible candidates (including those with a moving violation within the last 3 years), the teams still predict the elimination of H6 review during the exam will free up at least a week of time from the overall hiring process.

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## SOLUTION #2: REVAMPED CANDIDATE COMMUNICATION MATERIALS

The team also discovered that the exam notice did not clearly inform candidates the steps required in getting a complete H6. As a result, the team created a new exam notice for Transit Operators (pictured right). The Exams Unit used this new notice for the November 2018 exam, and it appeared to reduce the number of mistakes made by candidates: the team saw a 10% decrease in the number of instances a candidate brought an incomplete H6 driving record to the exam in November 2018. Employee Services also experienced errors in H6 submission, and will use these communication improvements as it takes on sole H6 review.

### Old Notice

Dear [REDACTED],

This is your invitation to the 9163 Transit Operator (CBT-9163-M00200) examination selection procedure - video-based standardized multiple-choice examinations and performance examination. Please read this entire email carefully.

Your exam appointment date, time and location are as follows:

**Date/Time: March 5, 2018 at 8:30AM**

**Please bring your current California Department of Motor Vehicles H6 printout with you to the examination site on your scheduled date and time (see below for details).**

Location: Department of Human Resources Testing Center, 1740 Cesar Chavez St, San Francisco, CA 94124

The test site is accessible by Muni on the 19 Polk bus line or the Muni Metro T-Line (walk west about 1/2 mile). There is no parking available to candidates at the testing facility. Parking is restricted to building tenants only. There is limited street parking available on Indiana Street, approximately two blocks from the facility. We strongly encourage you to have someone drop you off at the site or use Muni. The site is located between Highway 101 and 280 on Cesar Chavez Street.

### New Notice

Dear [REDACTED]:

Congratulations, you have been invited to participate in the 9163 Transit Operator (CBT-9163-M00214) examination. The examination will take up to 3.5 hours, and will consist of three parts: two video-based standardized multiple-choice examinations and a written multiple-choice examination.

Your exam appointment date, time and location are as follows:

**Date/Time: November 5, 2018 at 8:30AM**

**Location: Department of Human Resources Testing Center, 1740 Cesar Chavez St, San Francisco, CA 94124 (Map Attached)**

**Please bring the following items:**

- A current DMV ten year H6 driving record printout (PRINTOUT MUST BE FROM September 20, 2018 or later)**
- A Valid Photo ID**
- A printed copy of this email letter**
- TWO sharpened #2 Pencils with erasers**

**PLEASE NOTE:** Acceptable photo ID is limited to the following: Driver License; Identification Card issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles;

Clear next steps

## FUTURE IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to improving the examination notice and eliminating the driving record review from the Exam Unit's task list, the team brainstormed several other large-scale improvement ideas:

- **Eliminate the SFMTA driving exam:** In addition to a video-based driving exam conducted by SFMTA, candidates must also pass an extensive driving exam administered by the DMV called a Class-B permit test. The Exams Unit sees the B-permit test as more exhaustive than the video exam. Eliminating the SFMTA driving exam would create a more efficient process for candidates and could eliminate hours of work to administer and score the internal driving exam.
- **Continuous testing for Transit Operator candidates:** The City is in constant need of new Transit Operators. Implementing continuous testing may help SFMTA maintain a robust eligible list, though impacts on the speed of the hiring process are unknown.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES  
\*\*\*CUSTOMER RECEIPT COPY\*\*\*  
DRIVER LICENSE/IDENTIFICATION CARD  
INFORMATION REQUEST

DAD993368 [REDACTED] **Must say H6**

FTA: NONE\*  
ACCIDENTS: [REDACTED]  
DATE/TIME: [REDACTED] LOCATION: SAN FRANCISCO VEH LIC: [REDACTED] ARC: [REDACTED] REPO: [REDACTED]  
UPDATED: [REDACTED] SAN FRANCISCO  
UPDATED: [REDACTED] SAN FRANCISCO  
UPDATED: [REDACTED] SAN FRANCISCO  
UPDATED: [REDACTED] SAN FRANCISCO  
UPDATED: 07-30-15 13 MENLO PARK TYPE OF ACC CODE: 5 SOBRIETY CODE: 5 REPT CODE: 1  
FATALITY CODE: 0 INJURY CODE: 0  
UPDATED: 11-02-15  
\* \* END \* \* **Must show "END"**

If accident date is earlier than xx/xx/xx, no documentation is required.  
However, if date is between xx/xx/xx - Present, documentation may be required. See ARC #.

If ARC # is 3, 4 or 5, no documentation is required for this accident.  
If ARC # is 1 or 2, then an accident report/police report must be submitted with your H6.

ARC # Definitions  
Blank - Accident fault is undetermined  
2 - Accident fault is undetermined  
3 - At fault for the accident  
4 - Partially at fault for the accident  
5 - Not at fault for the accident

\$ 5.00

The Exams Unit developed a new document to assist candidates with understanding their own driving record.

