

**Board Report**

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**FINANCE, BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE  
MARCH 17, 2021**

**SUBJECT: ACCESS SERVICES - QUARTERLY UPDATE**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

**RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE status report on Access Services - ADA Paratransit.

**ISSUE**

This is a quarterly update on Access Services (Access).

**BACKGROUND**

Access is the Los Angeles County transit agency that provides paratransit services on behalf of Metro and 44 other fixed route operators, as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Eligibility for Access is based on a person's ability to use accessible fixed-route buses and trains in Los Angeles County; Access currently has 132,000 registered riders. Access' paratransit service is a next-day, shared-ride, curb-to-curb service with additional assistance available to qualified individuals. The service operates throughout most of the County of Los Angeles and is operated by six contractors in the following regions: Eastern, Southern, West Central, Northern, Santa Clarita and Antelope Valley. Access provides service to customers who are traveling between locations that are located within 3/4 of a mile of local bus routes and rail lines. Customers call Access' service providers directly to make trip reservations or book trips online.

**DISCUSSION**

**Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Starting in the middle of March 2020 with the implementation of Los Angeles City and County's Safer at Home directives, Access saw its average daily ridership decline 78 percent from 11,600 trips a day to 2,500 trips a day. Ridership climbed up to almost 50 percent of normal through December 2020 and is now at 41 percent of normal in January 2021.

In response to the pandemic, Access proactively redesigned its system to enhance physical

distancing and cleaning protocols to help protect the health of customers and frontline employees, particularly vehicle operators. These initiatives included the elimination of shared rides and funding for enhanced cleaning protocols where vehicles were disinfected twice a day and high contact surfaces were wiped down after each passenger trip and a face covering mandate. Access' eligibility process is now being done remotely over the phone rather than in-person.

**Transportation to vaccine sites:** While Access has been transporting customers to vaccine sites such as medical offices and pharmacies, Agency staff is in discussions with both the City of Los Angeles and the County about transporting customers to drive through vaccination sites, like Dodger Stadium. Access has concerns about the potentially long wait times that our drivers and customers could encounter at some of these vaccination sites and has asked about the possibility of establishing priority lanes to provide some certainty about wait times.

Additional services were also implemented to serve the community:

**Meal and grocery delivery:** Access continues to work with a number of public and private entities to deliver, as of January 31st, over 356,000 meals and grocery boxes since the start of the pandemic to the most vulnerable populations in the County. Access' newest delivery program started in November with the Food to Life program which delivers meals to veterans.

**Same Day Service:** On May 4, Access began offering same day service for trips to non-emergency medical/dental appointments, grocery stores, pharmacies or drug stores, the bank, and other critical locations. As of January 31st, nearly 43,000 same day service trips have been completed.

**Recovery Plans:** Access will continue to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and plans to normalize its operations as the pandemic subsides. The goal of restoring service back to pre-pandemic service levels will be to balance operational circumstances, including contractor capacity and ridership, as well as guidance from our public health partners and local authorities. At this time, Access believes that the continuation of its no-shared ride policy should be continued as long as operationally practicable at least through the end of the fiscal year.

### FY21 Operational Performance

In FY21, through December 31st, Access has provided 811,009 trips, which is about 37 percent above projections. Access staff will continue to monitor this trend as the fiscal year progresses.

In FY18, the Access Board of Directors adopted additional key performance indicators (KPIs) and liquidated damages to ensure that optimal levels of service are provided throughout the region. Overall system statistics are published monthly in a Board Box report. A comparison summary of the main KPIs is provided below through December 31, 2020:

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	FY 2020	FY 2021
On Time Performance - $\geq 91\%$	92.20%	93.5%
Excessively Late Trips - $\leq 0.10\%$	0.10%	0.04%

Excessively Long Trips - ≤ 5%	2.90%	0.00%
Missed Trips - ≤ 0.75%	0.46%	0.30%
Denials - ≤ 0	18	1
Access to Work On Time Performance - ≥ 94%	95.90%	98.0%
Average Hold Time (Reservations) - ≤ 120 seconds	71	48
Calls On Hold > 5 Min (Reservations) - ≤ 5%	3.30%	1.90%
Calls On Hold > 5 Min (ETA) - ≤ 10%	4.10%	1.40%
Complaints Per 1,000 Trips - ≤ 4.0	2.5	2.1
Preventable Incidents - ≤ 0.25	0.19	0.11
Preventable Collisions (Weighted) - ≤ 0.50	0.67	0.48
Miles Between Road Calls - ≥ 25,000	60,999	61,532

### FY21/FY22 Budget Update

**FY21 Reserve Request:** Access' budget is based on paratransit ridership projections provided by an independent third-party consulting firm, HDR Engineering, Inc. (HDR). For FY21, HDR's projection assumed a 61 percent decline in ridership (1,462,982 passengers vs. 3,707,599 FY20 passengers) for the duration of the fiscal year. As noted back in September 2020, given the unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, staff believed these ridership projections to be much more speculative than in a normal year. Because of this, Access requested a 10 percent reserve (\$15 million) in the event ridership surpassed HDR's projections, which was approved. Given that ridership has exceeded these projections, Access will request additional funding from this reserve later this year.

**FY22 Budget Development:** In conjunction with its Board, stakeholders and staff, Access has begun to develop its FY22 budget which is driven largely by paratransit ridership projections and when the Agency will revert back to its pre-COVID 19, shared-ride service model. Given the introduction of effective COVID-19 vaccines, some experts have predicted a return to relative normalcy by the summer while others have cautioned that the emergence of new, more transmissible COVID variants could push a recovery into the fall.

### Serving the Community

**Access Customer Survey:** In January and February 2021, Access conducted a survey of its customers to get a better idea of how they use technology to access ADA paratransit services. The survey asked customers about their familiarity and satisfaction with Access' Where's My Ride application; on-line reservations and Access' revamped website. The survey also asked customers about future technology projects that Access is developing, including hybrid/electric/autonomous vehicles and mobile fare payment. Results are being collected and will be presented to stakeholders and the Access Board.

**Community Presentations:** Access staff continues to engage with agencies that serve people with disabilities, including recent presentations to the Lanterman Regional Center and the Personal Assistance Services Council (PASC).

Access continues to consult with its community and public agency partners, including the Aging and

Disability Transportation Network (ADTN), the Los Angeles City and County Commissions on Disabilities, Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center and various Metro departments, on a variety of issues. Feedback and suggestions from the ADTN, County Commission on Disabilities and Access' own Community Advisory Committee (CAC) continue to inform the Agency's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and other Agency policies.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

There is no financial impact.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

Goal 2: Deliver outstanding trip experiences for all users of the transportation system

Goal 3: Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity

### **NEXT STEPS**

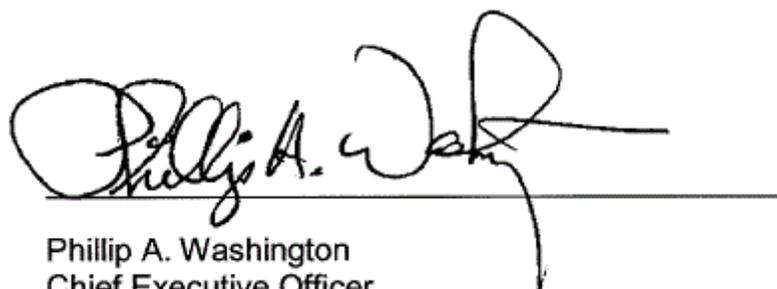
Access is in the process of completing the following:

- Preparation of its FY22 budget proposal
- An analysis of the impact of Metro's NextGen plan on the Access service area
- A modified Parents with Disabilities program throughout Los Angeles County
- Enhancements to the WMR app using Mobility for All grant funds
- Beta testing online reservations in the Northern region (San Fernando Valley)

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