



## Board Report

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### FINANCE, BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE JANUARY 20, 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 135,000 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 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 has now recovered to approximately 50 percent of normal.

Access is continuing its physical distancing and cleaning protocols including the elimination of shared rides, disinfecting vehicles twice a day, wiping down high contact surfaces after each passenger trip

and a face covering mandate. Access' eligibility process continues to be done remotely, over the phone, rather than in-person.

**APTA Commitment:** Furthermore, Access was recently confirmed by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) to be fulfilling the highest industry commitments of keeping transit safe during COVID-19. That commitment has earned Access APTA's Health and Safety Commitment (HSC) seal, which is now displayed on the Access website ([www.accessla.org](http://www.accessla.org)).

This commitment to the safety of our riders, contractors, and employees focuses on five key areas:

- Follow public health guidelines from official sources;
- Protect each other by cleaning and disinfecting transit vehicles and facilities frequently and requiring face coverings and other protection;
- Keep passengers informed and empowered;
- Put health first by requiring riders to avoid riding our services if they have been exposed to COVID-19 or feel ill; and
- Put health first by requiring employees and contractors to not come to work if they have been exposed to COVID-19 or feel ill.

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 October 31, 265,000 meals and grocery boxes since the start of the pandemic to the most vulnerable populations in the County.

**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 October 31, nearly 25,000 same day trips have been completed.

**Recovery Plans:** Access will continue to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and 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.

### FY21 Operational Performance

In FY21, through October 31, Access has provided 541,392 trips, which is about 30 percent above projections. Access staff will continue to monitor this trend as the fiscal year moves forward.

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:

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	FY 2020	FY 2021
On Time Performance - $\geq 91\%$	92.20%	92.7%
Excessively Late Trips - $\leq 0.10\%$	0.10%	0.05%
Excessively Long Trips - $\leq 5\%$	2.90%	0.00%
Missed Trips - $\leq 0.75\%$	0.46%	0.34%
Access to Work On Time Performance - $\geq 94\%$	95.90%	97.40%
Average Hold Time (Reservations) - $\leq 120$ seconds	71	52
Calls On Hold > 5 Min (Reservations) - $\leq 5\%$	3.30%	2.20%
Calls On Hold > 5 Min (ETA) - $\leq 10\%$	4.10%	1.50%
Complaints Per 1,000 Trips - $\leq 4.0$	2.5	2.2
Preventable Incidents - $\leq 0.25$	0.19	0.08
Preventable Collisions (Weighted) - $\leq 0.50$	0.67	0.43
Miles Between Road Calls - $\geq 25,000$	60,999	78,661

Overall, all KPIs are being met through October 31.

### Serving the Community

Free Fare Election Day Service: Access provided 330 free trips to vote (or turn in a ballot at an official Los Angeles County ballot drop box) on Election Day.

Zoom Community Meeting: Access hosted its first virtual Community Meeting on Saturday, September 12th, paving the way for a new format to engage a wider audience and increase awareness and public involvement. The event was well attended with over 60 guests calling in or participating via Zoom. Staff from across departments presented on a variety of topics to ensure customers were well informed on the many changes Access has implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Access continues to engage and consult with its community and public agency partners throughout the county to gain feedback and help assess future policies.

### Working with Member Agencies

NextGen: In accordance with ADA regulations, Access' service area is determined by a  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile distance from local fixed-route bus and rail lines. Access Services will be analyzing Metro's NextGen maps to determine the impact on the service area. After this analysis is done, if it is determined that there are impacts to customers, Access will develop a proposal to take to its Board of Directors. Access Services past practice has been to grandfather existing clients that may fall outside the fixed route coverage. Metro is also requesting that Access Services recognize the Metro microtransit

zones as part of the Metro service area for Access coverage, which would address the vast majority of coverage issues for ADA paratransit in the future. Until this process is complete, Access' service area will remain the same.

**Metro Fareless Initiative:** Access' Executive Director is serving as a member of the Fareless System Initiative Ad Hoc Committee and has provided information to Metro and other committee members about the financial and operational impacts of a free fare transit system on the regional paratransit system. Federal regulations would require that Access also go fareless which would lead to a projected substantial increase in demand and projected additional paratransit costs of \$180 million to \$302 million. Any move to a fareless system would require Access a significant amount of time (2 years minimum) to increase operational capacity to ensure that quality paratransit service be continued and provided to Access customers.

### **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:

- 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
- Expanding online reservations to the Northern region (San Fernando Valley)
- The procurement process for the Southern operational region

Prepared by: Andre Colaiace, Executive Director, Access Services, (213) 270-6007

Fayma Ishaq, Accessibility Program Manager, (213) 922-4925

Reviewed by: Jonaura Wisdom, Chief Civil Rights Programs Officer, (213) 418-3168



Phillip A. Washington  
Chief Executive Officer