



Board Report

File #: 2021-0784, **File Type:** Informational Report

Agenda Number: 14.

**FINANCE, BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
JANUARY 19, 2022**

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 45 other fixed route operators, as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Eligibility for Access is based on a person’s ability to utilize accessible fixed-route buses and trains in Los Angeles County; Access currently has 117,000 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 can book trips online.

DISCUSSION

Recovering from the COVID-19 Pandemic

As of July 1, 2021, Access has been operating its pre-pandemic, next-day, shared-ride service model. Other developments of note include:

- On December 1, 2021, Access restarted its in-person eligibility process for new applicants only at its Eligibility Centers throughout Los Angeles County. Renewals will continue to be performed via a paper application and, if necessary, a phone interview.

- Global supply chain issues, particularly for vehicle computer chips, have led to substantial delays in vehicle deliveries to Access. In response, on December 13, 2021, the Access Board approved a Vehicle Major Component Reimbursement Policy and Budget Allocation using existing FY22 capital funds that will help Access’ contractors maintain an aging fleet. This new policy will reimburse contractors for major component repairs on vehicles that have more than 250,000 miles.
- Qualified vehicle operators and other personnel continue to be in short supply in Los Angeles County and across the United States. The taxi industry, which provided 50 percent of Access’ trips pre-pandemic, has now been slow to recover. Furthermore, many taxi operators who have returned have been more focused on serving Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and other tourism hubs rather than providing paratransit trips.

Overall, Access’ contractors have been working diligently to recruit and retain qualified employees and currently exploring partnerships with various Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) as well as other innovative partnerships as a way to build future capacity.

FY22 Operational Performance

In FY22, year to date, Access has provided 764,976 trips, which is approximately 1.2 percent more trips than projected. This is about 65.2 percent of the number of trips provided during the same pre-pandemic period.

The following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are to ensure that optimal and equitable levels of service are provided throughout the region. A year-to-date comparison of the main KPIs is provided below:

Key Performance Indicators	Standard	FY21	FY22 YTD*
On Time Performance	≥ 91%	92.6%	90.6%
Excessively Late Trips	≤ 0.10%	0.07%	0.06%
Excessively Long Trips	≤ 5.0%	0.5%	3.1%
Missed Trips	≤ 0.75%	0.36%	0.43%
Denials	0	4	2
Access to Work On Time Performance	≥ 94%	97.8%	96.8%
Average Hold Time (Reservations)	≤ 120	52	54
Calls On Hold > 5 Min (Reservations)	≤ 5%	2.2%	2.1%
Calls On Hold > 5 Min (ETA)	≤ 10%	1.5%	1.6%
Complaints Per 1,000 Trips	≤ 4.0	2.5	3.3
Preventable Incidents per 100,000 miles	≤ 0.25	0.15	0.20
Preventable Collisions per 100,000 miles	≤ 0.50	0.50	0.68

Miles Between Road Calls	≥ 25,000	64,040	65,019
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*Statistical data through October 2021

While overall service remains strong and most KPIs are being met, the recent decline in On-Time Performance is a result of traffic returning to pre-pandemic levels and retaining qualified operators. The increase in Excessively Long Trips while well below standard, reflects the reintroduction of shared rides and increased traffic congestion. The increase in Preventable Incidents and Collisions reflects an increase in ridership and traffic. Contractors who do not meet KPIs must provide a service improvement plan and may also be assessed with liquidated damages.

Other Operational Developments/Initiatives

New Contract Award and Contract Implementation: Access recently awarded a new operations contract in the Antelope Valley region to First Transit, Inc. Revenue service under this new contract will begin on May 1, 2022. The enhanced contract requirements should deliver improved services to people in the Antelope Valley region, including technology enhancements to the *Where’s My Ride* (WMR) app (real-time trip information/trip rating/customer comments via smartphone) and online reservations. Also, provide the ability for people to make reservations online, as well as improvements to the WMR app. In addition to this contract award, Access successfully oversaw the start of a new contract with incumbent provider Global Paratransit in the Southern Region on September 1, 2021.

Accessible Electric Vehicle Development: While zero-emission, electric vehicles are becoming more common in fixed-route bus fleets, they are not readily available in paratransit services. Access staff has been working with Sunset Vans of Corona, CA to develop a prototype accessible electric vehicles based on the Dodge ProMaster chassis. The resulting prototypes have been exhibited at various conferences including the recent American Public Transportation Conference (APTA) in Orlando, FL. In addition, Access is seeking federal funding to initiate an electric vehicle pilot project.

Working with Community Partners

Access Annual Meeting: On Thursday, November 18, Access hosted its Annual Meeting to update its 46 Member Agencies and other stakeholders about its financial and operational results for FY21. The meeting was hosted virtually and there were over 80 attendees.

Metro Task Force/Working Group: Access was recently invited to serve on three Metro task forces to ensure the Agency and its customers’ interests are represented. Senior Access staff are serving on the I-405 Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan Advisory Council and the I-710 Task Force. Access staff is also working with Metro’s Access for All Program working group to discuss how to distribute funds received by Los Angeles County, which imposes a 10-cent user fee on each TNC ride to expand and improve on-demand wheelchair-accessible vehicle service throughout California.

Access continues to consult on a variety of issues 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. Feedback and suggestions from these groups and Access' own Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and Transportation Professionals Advisory Committee continue to inform the Agency's policies, initiatives, and programs.

EQUITY PLATFORM

Created to comply with the federal civil rights mandate in the ADA, Access exclusively serves people with disabilities. Decisions made about ADA paratransit service will have an equity impact on Metro and all Los Angeles County municipal and local operators who provide fixed route service. Access estimates that many of their riders living in high need communities in Los Angeles County's Equity Focus Communities (EFCs) are minorities and low-income with mobility needs. Access attempts to address these transportation issues by providing a quality, responsive paratransit system. A comprehensive Customer Satisfaction Survey will be conducted in January 2022 to capture updated and disaggregated demographic data on Access riders. Survey results will be provided in Spring of 2022.

The KPIs listed above are included in every Access operations contract to better track equity impacts to service throughout the region. The enhanced technology, which includes online reservations and the WMR app (real-time trip information/trip rating/customer comments via smartphone), are now available to most customers and Access is working to expand this technology to all regions by the end of this calendar year. According to Access' most recent data (February 2020), 78 percent of riders reported using a smartphone. Riders who do not have access to technology like a smartphone or the internet can call the reservation line to get the same information regarding their trips.

The recent inclusion of Access by Metro staff on several important task forces, which includes Metro's Aging and Disability Transportation Network (ADTN), Access for All Working Group and the NextGen Working Group, is an example of how Metro's Equity Platform is ensuring the transportation needs of people with disabilities are considered. Access continues to reach out to its customers through Access community meetings and by attending and presenting at various events throughout Los Angeles County. Access is committed to advancing equity countywide in order to better serve Los Angeles County's most vulnerable and marginalized communities.

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:

- Planning for a virtual, region-wide community meeting in January 2022;
- A financial and operational analysis of the impacts of Metro's NextGen plan on Access' service area;

- Enhancements to the *Where's My Ride* (WMR) app using \$330,000 Mobility for All federal grant funds;
- Beta testing online reservations in the Northern region (San Fernando Valley);
- Conduct a comprehensive Customer Satisfaction Survey;
- Implementation of the recently awarded Antelope Valley region contract.

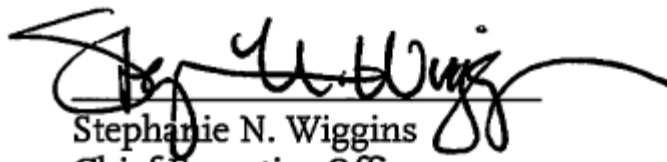
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