



Board Report

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FINANCE, BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE JANUARY 18, 2023

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 112,000 registered riders. Access' paratransit service is a next-day, shared-ride, curb-to-curb service with additional assistance available to qualified individuals. The service is operated by six contractors in the following regions: Eastern, Southern, West Central, Northern, Santa Clarita, and Antelope Valley. Access provides service to customers traveling between locations 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

Service Restoration

During the first part of FY23, Access focused on the operational challenges as outlined below:

- **Qualified drivers/key personnel:** Access' six contractors report that labor shortages are easing compared to FY22 due to increased wages and expanded efforts in marketing job opportunities.

- **Continuing shortages of taxi subcontractor capacity:** Access continues to face challenges with taxicab shortages, with only 32 percent of Access' trips currently being serviced by taxicabs compared to 50 percent pre-pandemic. At this time, contractors still report difficulties in attracting additional taxi resources to the paratransit system, given the attractiveness of cash fares. In response, as detailed later in this report, staff, while continuing to work with the taxi industry, is looking at the possibility of integrating Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) into the region's next-day paratransit system.
- **Continuing shortages of replacement vehicles:** Access expects production of 122 vehicles to start in late December, with tentative delivery in the spring of 2023. The timing of vehicle deliveries continues to be uncertain due to supply/chain issues and the availability of the vehicle chassis used in manufacturing Access' accessible minivans.

FY23 Operational Performance

Access has provided 923,462 passenger trips through October 2022, which is approximately 10.8 percent more than projected. This is about 75 percent of the trips provided during the same pre-pandemic period in 2019.

The start of school in mid-August signaled the beginning of a more difficult operating environment characterized by increased demand and substantially more traffic. Despite this, Access is meeting or close to meeting its KPIs. Staff is working with contractors who are not meeting certain KPIs by requesting service improvement plans and, if applicable, assessing liquidated damages.

Below are Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) established to ensure equitable service levels are provided throughout all regions of Los Angeles County. For more detailed information on Access' overall system statistics by service region, please see Access' monthly Board Box report at http://accessla.org/about_us/publications.html.

A comparison summary of the main KPIs is provided below:

Key Performance Indicators	Standard	FY22	FY23 YTD*
On Time Performance	≥ 91%	89.8%	90.8%
Excessively Late Trips	≤ 0.10%	0.14%	0.06%
Excessively Long Trips	≤ 5.0%	3.6%	4.2%
Missed Trips	≤ 0.75%	0.59%	0.49%
Denials	0	6	2
Access to Work On Time Performance	≥ 94%	95.8%	95.2%
Average Hold Time (Reservations)	≤ 120	66	68
Calls On Hold > 5 Min (Reservations)	≤ 5%	3.2%	2.7%
Calls On Hold > 5 Min (ETA)	≤ 10%	2.8%	2.1%
Complaints Per 1,000 Trips	≤ 4.0	3.2	3.3
Preventable Incidents per 100,000 miles	≤ 0.25	0.20	0.25
Preventable Collisions per 100,000 miles	≤ 0.75	0.74	0.86
Miles Between Road Calls	≥ 25,000	58,746	62,409

*Statistical data through October 31, 2022

Other Operational Initiatives

Electric Paratransit Vehicle Pilot Program: Access is working with paratransit vehicle manufacturers to identify an accessible electric vehicle suitable for a pilot program to begin in the calendar year 2023. While electric cars and full-size electric buses are now widely available, there are limited options for the paratransit market. Access anticipates that a pilot program will allow Access to test vehicles from multiple manufacturers to ensure that range, reliability, and safety are acceptable before making a long-term commitment.

Free Rides to the Polls: On Election Day, November 8, 304 free Access trips were booked to the polls. This service was marketed to customers via the Access website, reservation line recordings, and vehicle seat drops.

Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) Pilot Project: Access staff has proposed a pilot project that would allow its contractors to provide a limited number of ADA trips utilizing TNCs like Uber, as well as non-Access certified taxicabs. A working group comprised of Access' Board and Advisory Committee members recently met to discuss and advise staff on the proposed pilot, which will be brought to the Access Board in 2023. The proposal, which was developed to provide additional operational capacity to Access' contractors during peak times, envisions a "rider choice" program whereby TNCs and taxis would only be sent to customers who opt into the program.

Other Community Initiatives

FY23 Customer Survey: Access will conduct a customer survey in the early part of the calendar year 2023 to gather more information about the different transportation options available to people with disabilities in Los Angeles County and how frequently they are used. The survey results will give

Access better insight into customer transportation needs, identify transportation gaps, and assist Access in planning for future ridership demand.

Annual Meeting: Access held its Annual Meeting in November for its 46 Member Transit Agencies and other stakeholders to brief them on Access' yearly financial and operating results for FY22. Access awarded its Spirit of Accessibility Award to Carlos Benavides, the President of the Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities, for his efforts in making Los Angeles County more accessible for people with disabilities.

Working with Community Partners: 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 (LACCOD), Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center, and various Metro departments.

EQUITY PLATFORM

By federal mandate, Access paratransit exclusively serves people with disabilities. Most recently, Access analyzed its service area map to determine the percentage of riders served in Equity Focused Communities (EFCs). From January 1, 2022, through August 31, 2022, about 47 percent of all trips taken by 38,024 Access riders were picked up in EFCs.

As previously mentioned, Access will conduct a customer survey to acquire data on alternative transportation options available to people with disabilities to determine what services could be expanded to better serve EFCs. Results will be available in March of next year.

Access continues to enhance its online reservations and the Where's My Ride application (real-time trip information/trip rating/customer comments via smartphone). These services are available and accessible to most Access customers (74 percent of customers have access to the internet, and 75 percent have a smart phone). Riders who do not have access to a smart phone or the internet can call the reservation line to get the same information regarding their trips. Access will launch a multi-lingual, system-wide marketing campaign to increase awareness of the aforementioned technology options to all riders and stakeholders.

On a biannual basis, Access conducts countywide community meetings designed to allow all customers and stakeholders to receive information about Access and ask staff direct questions about their service experience. Closed captioning, translation services, braille, and large print materials are available upon request to ensure all customers throughout Los Angeles County can participate. The next community meeting is planned for early 2023.

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

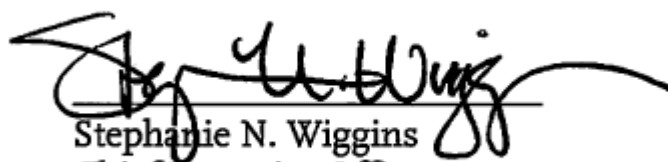
Access is working on the following:

- Implementing a pilot program to increase operational capacity through the use of TNCs and non-Access certified taxis
- Initiating a pilot program for accessible electric paratransit vehicles
- Conducting a Customer Survey in early 2023
- Hosting countywide community meetings via Zoom in early 2023
- Assisting Access contractors through Access' Contractor Hiring Assistance Program
- Seeking grant funding for Access-owned operating and maintenance facilities
- Beginning development of Access' FY24 budget

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