



# Behind the Scenes

## Executive Director's Report

The Board committees met on September 19 and addressed the following:

The Performance Monitoring committee took action and approved a one-year extension for the Northern Region Service Provider contract through July 2024. They also approved the award of a contract for travel training services.

The Planning and Development committee took action and approved an extension for legal services, authorized the renewal of agency insurance policies, and added two new agency holidays. They also heard a presentation on the impact of Metro's NextGen and other fixed route operators service changes on the Access service area map.

The External/Stakeholder Relations committee took action and approved reappointments to the Transportation Professionals Advisory Committee along with the award of the customer service call center contract. They also received legislative updates from Access' federal, state and local lobbyists.

The next full meeting of the Board of Directors will be on October 17, 2022.

**Andre Colaiace**  
*Executive Director*

**access**

## Leadership APTA 2022

I had the honor of participating in the Leadership APTA Program for the last several months. It is an intensive year-long program that brings together 35 dedicated transit professionals from around the country with the intent of developing and refining their leadership skills. APTA (American Public Transportation Association) is the premier transportation association of more than 1,500 public and private sector member organizations. Access is a long-standing member of APTA and participates regularly in their conferences, seminars and working committees.



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There are many highlights of the program and key take-aways that I could write but I want to focus on two, which are the TED Talk I gave to our class and my Capstone Project, similar to a master's thesis. I feel like I'm back in graduate school

which is a good thing as I am learning so much from the seminars/classes and particularly from my colleagues.

The TED Talk that I gave focused on paratransit and the need to embrace the realities of what is happening in our country. You may or may not know 26% of adults in the U.S. have some type of disability and, for those over age 65, the percentage goes up to 40%. The statistic that our country really needs to get prepared for, though, is that by the year 2060 almost 24% of our population will be 65 and older. This means that demand for affordable, efficient and friendly paratransit services will continue to climb year over year. Our industry has a huge challenge in providing excellent ADA transportation services while keeping costs down and this challenge is only going to keep getting harder.

In the second part of the TED Talk I was able to share two stories of real paratransit riders. I want to express my deep appreciation to Luz Padua and Carlos Benavides who allowed me to share some of their experiences over the last several years as they have been part of the Access family. Transit, and especially paratransit,

*continued*

is not about providing “x” number of rides to this or that destination but rather providing much needed transportation to real people, one individual at a time.

In our Capstone Project, my team focused on how we can help Transit executives prepare their agencies for the transition to a Low or No Emission Fuel Program for their vehicle fleet. This is another challenge that Access and all agencies around the country will be focused on in the next 10-20 years.

**Bruce Frink**  
**Senior Manager, Finance**

## Access installs new safety equipment

Access Services is pleased to introduce three new features and modifications to the agency’s 2022 Cutaways and Dodge ProMasters. First, the Q’Straint One (Q1) all-in-one wheelchair securement station platform system. This summer, Access and provider staff visited First Transit’s operating facility in Antelope Valley and took part in the installation and training process, which was facilitated by Q’Straint personnel.

To use the Q1 device the driver/operator loads the mobility device onto the platform. Clear visual indicators integrated into the platform help guide the mobility device into place. Then, the pre-positioned occupant belt minimizes awkward positioning and bending while maximizing the personal space for passengers, giving drivers plenty of room to engage the occupant restraints.



Lastly, simple push-button operation with visual and audio feedback allows operators to lock or unlock the securements. The system is interlocked with the vehicle, automatically locking once the vehicle starts moving, eliminating any possibility of operator error. The new securement system allows for a faster and safer securement process and replaces the many parts and obstacles of traditional 4-point securement with a simplified single platform system. The new securement system is currently installed on three new cutaways, and

they are being used by our Antelope Valley contractor First Transit.

We are also pleased to introduce the brand-new Freedman Seatlink. This new feature is mounted near the driver’s center rear view mirror, and it is designed to detect and display the occupancy and belt buckle status of all seating positions in the vehicle. The operator will be visually notified of the following activity in the vehicle: sitting, getting out of seat, and buckling of seat belt. This helps the operator remind passengers to keep their seat belts on while the vehicle is in motion.

Another safety feature that was enhanced was the shoulder and lap belt L Track rails which are located inside the Dodge Promasters. The L Tracks are used to secure the shoulder belts, which allows for different positioning of the belts to accommodate riders of different heights. The installation and training also took place at First Transit’s facility.

**Luis Pacheco**  
**Safety Analyst**

## **Commendations**

"I am filing a commendation for my driver. During my ride, another passenger was being disruptive and insisting that their needs should be accommodated before everyone else's. I was impressed with how the driver handled the situation while maintaining professionalism and a wonderful attitude."

***Esther Baum***

***Rider since July 1999***

"Juan De Dios Rogue is a great driver! I am returning the smile he gave me. Juan is nice, helpful, and maintains an exceptionally clean vehicle. Juan also helped me with every request I had."

***Gloria Hymes***

***Rider since June 2020***