



Behind the Scenes

Executive Director's Report

The Board committees met on May 22 and addressed the following:

- > The Performance Monitoring committee took action and approved a contract extension for the on-board vehicle camera recording system. They also received an update on the TNC pilot project.
- > The Planning and Development committee took action and approved the award of a financial audit services contract along with approving a new service area map policy. The committee also approved the proposed FY2023/24 budget.
- > The External/Stakeholder Relations committee heard the results of the customer survey on travel mode choices and received legislative updates from Access' federal, state, and local lobbyists.

The next full meeting of the Board of Directors will be on June 26, 2023.

Andre Colaiace
Executive Director

2023 California Transit Association Spring Legislative Conference



Last week, I attended the annual California Transit Association (CTA) Spring Legislative Conference in Sacramento. With Coming Together to Advance Our Goals as the unifying theme, the one-day program highlighted the Association's highest priorities and concerns regarding state

legislative and regulatory efforts and the potential impact on transit and paratransit services in California.

The CTA's gravest concern is the looming fiscal cliff many transit agencies are facing. Since the pandemic, transit systems have experienced an unprecedented drop in ridership and revenue levels. At the same time, there have been lower farebox recoveries and rising expenses for both labor and capital, like electric buses. With COVID-19 relief funding set to expire, many transit agencies are faced with the prospect of cutting services and programs due to limited operations funding. The Association has proposed a series of funding and policy recommendations to address the near-term operating deficits so that transit agencies can mitigate these financial challenges and avoid severely impacting the lives of transit-dependent riders throughout the state.

While I was in Sacramento, Jason and Paul Gonsalves, our state advocates, arranged a meeting with Assemblymember Tasha Boerner Horvath's office. We met with Rob Charles, Chief of Staff, and expressed our gratitude for the Assemblymember's authorship of Assembly Bill 719. The bill, which is making its way through the Legislature, could be significant for Access. It would require that managed care health plans contract with public transportation operators, such as Access, and reimburse them for providing medical trips for Medi-Cal recipients. This important advocacy is one of the many ways the Agency seeks funding to provide its essential services to the community.

Randy Johnson
Director of Government Affairs and Outreach

Access staff speaks at CalACT 2023 Spring Conference and Expo



The California Association for Coordinated Transportation (CalACT) Conference brings together transportation professionals, vendors, and advocates from California to network, obtain training and education to serve customers. This year's conference was in Olympic Valley, CA at the Everline Resort and Spa.

There were 444 registered attendees and 85 of those attendees were speakers. I had the opportunity to speak on ADA Paratransit Eligibility. Our session had three panelists: me, representing Access; Gracie Davis, Section Manager II at Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA); and Rashida Kamara,

Director of Accessible Services at Central Contra Costa Transit Authority. Our session was titled: "Lessons Learned from COVID-19 and Next Steps for ADA Eligibility Certification Assessments".

In this session, we were also joined by Access Services Strategic Planner Eric Haack, who was the moderator. He ensured questions and comments flowed smoothly throughout the session. We discussed methods and processes we have applied to paratransit eligibility before, during, and after the pandemic.

Our audience had great questions! Some centered on resuming in-person evaluations now that the pandemic is ending. Some agencies shared that they are slowly transitioning, while others are still trying to figure out what works best and what's the "new normal" for their program.

In addition to our session, Access Sr. Manager of Fleet Design & Maintenance Rick Streiff held a discussion on "Passenger Safety in Transit". He also provided Eric and I with the opportunity to board the Ram ProMaster 159, and the Ford Transit EL high roof with a rear bus door. This was my first time attending this conference and I look forward to many more!

Karen Gilbert
Eligibility Manager

Commendations

"I am filing a Smile for the driver who always picked-up me and my late husband. I appreciated his help during a difficult time."

Praxedes A. Oris
Rider since May 2012

"My driver was punctual and sweet. He made me feel safe and I value that. Please file a Smile for him."

Rosa Burgee
Rider since Aug 2016