



# Behind the Scenes

## Executive Director's Report

As a new fiscal year starts, Access is planning to continue working on a number of exciting projects in FY 2025.

These include:

- > Continue development of the Antelope Valley region paratransit operations and maintenance facility
- > Continue collaboration with Metro staff and LA28 on preparation for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic games and seek federal funding for a facility legacy project in the Southern region
- > Initiate a pilot program for accessible electric and hydrogen paratransit vehicles
- > Provide results of the Agency's most recent customer satisfaction survey at the July Board meeting

For more information on the Access FY 2025 budget and to see a complete list of the Agency's accomplishments and goals, please use the following link: <https://accessla.org/sites/default/files/Agendas/Attachment%201.pdf>.

As always, please contact me if you have any questions about the budget or any other Access issue.

**Andre Colaiace**  
**Executive Director**

## Access Board of Directors approves FY2025 Budget

On June 24th, the Access Board of Directors approved the FY2024/2025 proposed budget.

The ridership projections provided by Hollingsworth Consulting LLC estimate that ridership will surpass levels not seen since 2019. The return of projected ridership is already evident as fiscal year 2024 surpassed the annual projection even before the end of May 2024 – a full month before the end of the fiscal year. Access estimates that FY2024 ridership will exceed the forecast provided by the prior forecasting firm by over 10%.

Projected ridership, when compared to the initial forecast for FY24 will increase by over 25%, and about 12% when compared to the projected actual ridership in Fiscal Year 2024.

Because of the increase in ridership, operational expenses rose almost in step with the increase in ridership. Overall, the now approved budget will increase by 22% or about \$55 million. The vast majority of the increase is related to Contract Operations, which funds paratransit service delivery. On the other hand, the Access Board recently approved a change in the eligibility period from three to five years. This is an added convenience for our customers and will save over \$3.6 million in FY25 and several million dollars over the next few years.

On the capital side, Access had placed orders for vehicles that were delayed due to the pandemic. Early in FY24, vehicles once again became available and all orders that were placed last year will be completed before the end of the calendar year. This fiscal year, Access requested and received funding to purchase 164 replacement vehicles. The capital budget also includes funding for the potential construction of an operating facility in the Antelope Valley.

The chart illustrates the budget by category for FY 2024 and FY 2025.

	<b>FY24 Budget</b>	<b>FY25 Budget</b>
Contract Operations	\$204.7	\$262.5
Contract Management	\$5.4	\$5.7
Eligibility Determination	\$13.6	\$9.9
CTSA	\$0.4	\$0.4
Administration	\$11.9	\$12.6
<b>Operating Expense</b>	<b>\$235.9</b>	<b>\$291.2</b>
Capital Expense	\$36.8	\$46.9
<b>Total Operating and Capital Expenses</b>	<b>\$272.7</b>	<b>\$338.1</b>

**Hector Rodriguez**  
Deputy Executive Director

## Access staff attends 2024 WTS Conference

WTS International (formerly called Women’s Transportation Seminar) is dedicated to creating a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable transportation industry through the global advancement of women. To that end, this year’s theme at the WTS Annual Conference was “Connecting Cultures, Connecting Communities”. The meeting was held in the vibrant city of New Orleans, where attendees engaged with the rich heritage, music, and cuisine influenced by European, African, and American cultures. In addition, since 1835, the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (RTA) has been operating its iconic transit system with streetcars, ferries, and bus lines.



The three-day conference offered many events that included walking excursions, streetcar tours, breakout sessions with professional experts and leaders, networking mixers, jazz breaks, and an opening and closing ceremony. One of highlights of the conference was the keynote speaker, Donna Orender. As the former President of the WNBA, a senior executive and member of the PGA Tour and CEO of Orender Unlimited, Donna spoke about the challenges and tough decisions she had to face during her time as a former professional basketball player. She highlighted the importance of pushing through and taking risks in your career. Her speech stressed the importance of believing in yourself no matter the circumstances.

Amongst the various networking mixers, I had the pleasure of engaging with many professional women from all backgrounds. We discussed everything from challenges in the workplace, succession planning, and how to balance our personal and professional lives. We all came together as one to learn more about the transit industry, but more importantly to learn about fostering a better relationship with ourselves. Create the life you want inside and out of the workplace and understand it is a marathon, not a sprint, to your goal.

**Onnika Payne**  
Transportation Planner

## Commendations

"My driver was on time and very friendly, making sure I was seat belted and comfortable. And he had a smile on his face."

***Madrienne Hampton***  
***Rider since May 2016***

"My driver was wonderful. She safely removed me from the van because I had some leg issues and couldn't see. She also took me to the front door of my daughter's house."

***Christine Mora***  
***Rider since March 2017***