



Behind the Scenes

Executive Director's Report

I am pleased to report that this Wednesday, June 18th, the Metro Finance, Budget and Audit Committee approved funding for the FY 26 Access Services budget.

The total FY 26 budget is \$368 million with \$316 million funding Agency operations and \$52 million for various Agency capital projects, mainly accessible vehicle replacement and facility development.

After a presentation about the budget, Committee members asked questions about ridership growth, replacement vehicle purchasing practices, Access' electric vehicle pilot program and the impact of government cutbacks on ridership.

The budget now moves to the full Metro Board of Directors for approval and the Access Services Board will also consider the Agency's budget at its June 30th meeting.

Andre Colaiace
Executive Director

Access achieves flawless FTA Triennial Review

Last month, Access successfully completed its Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Triennial Review, conducted by consultants from RLS and Associates. This comprehensive review, mandated by Congress in 1982 and occurring every three years, is a critical tool the FTA uses to evaluate how recipients of Urbanized Area Formula Program funds adhere to federal requirements and policies.



Federal Transit Administration

During the two-day on-site review, Access was evaluated across 23 key areas, including Financial Management and Capacity, Technical Capacity and Program Management, Maintenance, Procurement, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance. We are thrilled to announce that Access received no deficiency findings.

This achievement is particularly significant given the agency's recent growth. Access is currently providing more trips and transporting more passengers than before the pandemic, and we are managing a greater number of federal grants than at any point in our history. Receiving a perfect review is a direct reflection of the hard work and dedication of Access administrative staff and the singular focus of our drivers, dispatchers, mechanics, and other contractor staff who are all part of the Access Services family.

Matt Avancena
Director, Planning and Coordination

First Transit's Skills Course

First Transit, our Antelope Valley contractor, has implemented a comprehensive Driver Skills Course to enhance driver safety and performance. This program emphasizes critical behaviors such as spatial awareness, hazard recognition, and sound decision-making under pressure, utilizing realistic, scenario-based exercises to foster proactive, defensive driving habits. Each module addresses common driving challenges and reinforces the core principles of safe vehicle operation, helping drivers build the confidence and judgment needed to navigate complex or unpredictable environments by focusing on both technical skill and situational awareness.



The Driver Skills Course begins with exercises like parallel parking, where drivers are evaluated on their ability to maneuver within 18 inches of the curb, effectively use mirrors, and remain aware of hazards. Subsequent stations include making complete stops at stop signs with a left-right-left visual scan and performing right-hand turns while scanning at least 20 feet ahead for obstacles. A cul-de-sac scenario tests low-speed maneuvering and judgment, requiring drivers to avoid U-turns and use the "GOAL" method (Get Out And Look) for three-point turns when visibility is limited. The course also simulates roadside hazards, such as a missing cone representing an unseen planter, to challenge driver recognition and response.

The final section of the course involves navigating a narrow passageway with speed bumps, overhead clearance signs, and overhanging tree branches. Drivers must use spatial judgment to evaluate clearances on all sides of the vehicle, making a safe "go/no-go" decision based on the environment. This concluding segment is designed to reinforce the importance of cautious navigation through tight spaces and constant environmental awareness.

Collectively, this Driver Skills Course is designed to strengthen core driving skills and promote safe, deliberate, and attentive vehicle operation. The ultimate goal is not only to assess current performance but to cultivate long-term driving habits that promote safety, accountability, and confidence behind the wheel.

Byron Barrientos
Project Administrator

Recommendations

Northern Region

"My driver was friendly, had a good sense of humor, and had excellent driving skills. He made me feel comfortable and safe."

Joel Schneider
Rider since December 2023

ALTA

"I would like to give a huge thank you to LaTisha for being professional, patient, caring, and helpful. She was very empathetic and kind, and I can tell she cares about the well-being of others. I can see that Access really cares about my father through LaTisha's excellent customer service. As a caregiver, we need a lot of support, and LaTisha gave me that support."

(Daughter of) Donald Franklin
Rider since February 2020