



Behind the Scenes

Executive Director's Report

The Access Services Board of Directors met on March 23, 2026.

- > The Board extended the Antelope Valley Region service provider contract with First Transit for an additional two years through April 2029.
- > The Board provided feedback to staff on the FY2026-30 Short Range Strategic Plan and asked that it be brought back for approval at a future Board meeting.
- > The Board also received a detailed presentation from Hollingsworth Consulting on the ridership forecasting models that utilize machine learning and advanced time series models which will better position Access to meet future demand.

It was also announced that Access Vice Chair Theresa de Vera has resigned from the Board of Directors after almost 20 years of service. The Board and I thanked her for her significant contributions to making Access a more effective and responsive transit agency.

The next full meeting of the Board of Directors is scheduled for April 28, 2026.

Andre Colaiace
Executive Director

Long Beach celebrates inclusion with 2026 Winter ParaParty

On Friday, March 6, 2026, the City of Long Beach welcomed residents to City Hall for the 2026 Winter ParaParty



Community Celebration, marking the official start of this year's Paralympic Games.

The event brought the community together to recognize athletic excellence, celebrate inclusion, and highlight the City's commitment to accessibility. Attendees had the opportunity to gather to watch the Paralympic Opening Ceremony or explore a variety of resource tables and hands-on activities. City departments, such as Long Beach Health and Human Services, Utilities and Long Beach Police Department, shared information and connected with community members, reinforcing the City's focus on service, safety, and support for all residents.

The program featured inspiring voices that emphasized the impact of the Paralympics and the importance of inclusion within the disability community. Olympians Amanda McGroy and Mariah Bell addressed the audience, sharing personal reflections on perseverance, overcoming challenges, and remaining committed to one's goals. Amanda, who currently serves on the Paralympic Committee, also highlighted the value of advocacy and representation in advancing opportunities for athletes with disabilities.

During the celebration, Access Services received special recognition from Councilwoman Mary Zendejas for its ongoing work to support the disabled community and promote accessibility, equity, and inclusion throughout Long Beach. The acknowledgment reflected the City's continued efforts to remove barriers and create opportunities for full participation.

Looking ahead, Long Beach is preparing to play a key role when the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games come to the Los Angeles region. The City plans to host seven Paralympic sporting events further demonstrating Long Beach's leadership in inclusive sports and community engagement. The 2026 Winter ParaParty served as a meaningful reminder that accessibility, resilience, and community pride remain at the heart of Long Beach.

Susanna Cadenas
Senior Manager

Celebrating Women in Transportation

March is Women's History Month—a time to honor the remarkable women whose leadership and creativity have transformed industries and communities.

In transportation, women play key roles as planners who shape equitable transit systems; engineers who enhance safety; operators who keep everything running smoothly; and executives who set policies and direct investments. Their contributions expand access, boost safety, and ensure that mobility solutions meet the needs of all passengers. This month celebrates women's achievements and emphasizes the importance of supporting their voices in moving mobility forward.



Recently, I attended the COMTO-LA "Hats Off: Celebrating Women in Transportation" event with my Access colleagues, Alvina Prasad and Tamika Arana. It was an uplifting afternoon, highlighting the leadership and innovation of women making a difference in transportation. The event gave me a chance to meet professionals from across the industry, share ideas, and connect with others dedicated to improving mobility and opportunities in our communities. Experiences like this truly show how essential collaboration, mentorship, and representation are within transportation. I'm thankful to the organizers and everyone who made this event unforgettable.

Congratulations to the 2026 award winners: LaShawn King Gillespie of Foothill Transit, Vayakone Terry of Morgner Construction Management, and Kathie Allen of Morgner Construction Management!

Onnika Payne
Transportation Planner

Commendations

Southern Region

"I want to file a smile for the driver who assisted me with transportation, was very kind to me, and provided excellent service."

Cynthia Brown Lee
Rider since August 2012

Eastern Region

"Driver Jose was punctual, professional, and handled himself well. He took care of my bags, was friendly, and provided high-quality service."

Jennifer Jo Wolfard
Rider since March 2008