

Behind the Scenes



Executive Director's Report

The Access Services Board of Directors met on December 7, 2020.

The Board approved the Consent Calendar, which included items that extended the MOU for TAP cards, authorized the assignment of the contract for audit services, and ratified the renewal of agency insurance policies. The consent calendar also included the approval of changes to the Access employee handbook, approval of the 2021 Board meeting calendar and reappointment of Community Advisory Committee members. The Board also approved the award of a contract for construction project management services.

There will be Board committee meetings on January 11, 2021 and the next full meeting of the Board of Directors will be on February 22, 2021.

Andre Colaiace
Executive Director

Access kicks off Virtual Outreach presentations

Access recently kicked off its first virtual outreach presentation since Los Angeles County issued their Safer at Home Order in March. Frank D Lanterman Regional Center invited its consumers and families to learn all about the benefits of paratransit services. I provided an all-Spanish outreach presentation regarding the current eligibility process during COVID-19 and discussed the measures and safety protocols taken to ensure safe travel for our riders during the ongoing pandemic.

Topics included temporary suspension of in-person evaluations, implementation of a phone interview process for both new and renewing applicants, eliminating share rides, enhanced vehicle disinfection and personal protective equipment requirement for drivers and riders. In addition, we provided updates and information on Access' same day trips and curbside service during the pandemic. Access Project Administrator, Faustino Salvador, provided additional information on Access' COVID response.

Monica Marroquin, Mobility Specialist Supervisor for Mobility Management Partners (MMP), presented on the benefits of travel training and briefly covered safety protocols for one-on-one training and tips for traveling on public transit during the pandemic. Miguel Torres, Transportation Mobility Specialist, provided an update on Metro's STAR Program (Safely Transporting All Riders). Although Access has suspended their marking and tethering services, Metro has resumed offering Marking and Tethering Services through their STAR Program, by appointment only. If anyone is interested, they can visit Metro's website at <https://www.metro.net/riding/riders-disabilities/> or for free securement straps or marking installation, consumers may contact Metro directly at (213) 922-8800.

Access was excited to provide much needed information and resources to an event that was attended by over 60 participants. Access plans to continue our outreach efforts by working with area Regional Centers to ensure the community is aware of our safe and reliable transportation options.

Mayra Pérez-Calderón
Project Administrator, Customer Relations

Metro hosts “Thank You” virtual meeting for NextGen working group members

L.A. Metro recently completed its NextGen Bus Plan, which was a multi-year comprehensive examination of its entire fixed route service with goals to make the service more convenient for riders across Los Angeles County. Following multiple working-group meetings and public workshops, the final NextGen Bus Plan introduced a series of recommendations to improve Metro’s fixed route service.

On Tuesday, November 10th, Metro’s NextGen staff hosted a virtual event via Zoom, highlighting the work done throughout the Plan’s development, summarizing the recommendations of the Plan and thanking the many stakeholders who contributed to the Plan’s development.



Starting in December, when Metro often introduces semi-annual bus schedule changes, the first service modifications will be rolled out. These initial changes will include consolidating Rapid and Local bus lines traveling along the same routes in order to provide more buses for all stops and increasing capacity and speed on those corridors.

Additional improvements will be introduced in June 2021 with the last improvements to be launched as part of the December 2021 semi-annual service change.

Although ridership is currently much lower due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is expected that when ridership does return, these improvements will make getting around L.A. easier and faster for those taking L.A. Metro’s fixed route services.

Eric J. Haack
Strategic Planner

Metro hosts virtual working group meetings for L.A. County Coordinated Plan

The Los Angeles County Coordinated Plan lists the variety of transportation resources available throughout the County for seniors, persons with disabilities, veterans, and persons with low-income earnings. The Plan also provides recommendations as to how to connect these transportation services with the communities they can best serve and reducing or eliminating gaps in the transportation network of the region.

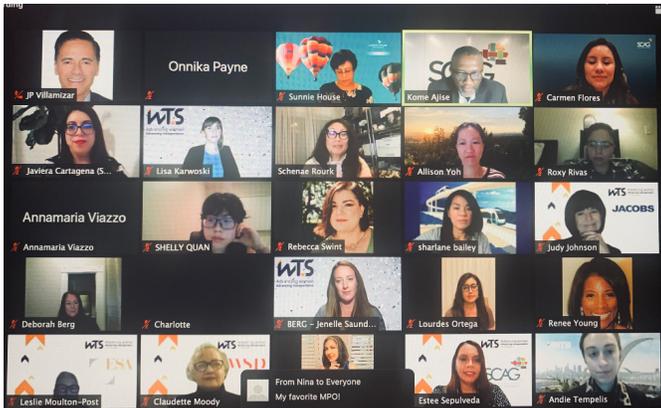
Publishing an updated Coordinated Plan allows Metro to be eligible for certain federal funds that can help enhance and expand transportation services throughout the County.

Metro hosted three virtual working group meetings last month. Representatives from Metro laid out the elements that would be included in the updated Coordinated Plan and then hosted a series of virtual “breakout groups” where attendees could discuss existing transportation needs and propose steps that could be taken to expand access to transportation for communities with limited transportation resources.

In addition to the working group meetings, Metro is also conducting an on-line survey to gather results with the intention of completing the updated Coordinated Plan by the summer of 2021.

Eric J. Haack
Strategic Planner

WTS Annual Scholarship & Award Celebration



Access Services sponsored a virtual table at the Los Angeles Women's Transportation Seminar's Annual Scholarship and Award Celebration. This year WTS-LA distributed \$100,000 in competitive academic scholarships to women in high school, community college, undergraduate, and graduate programs in transportation-related fields. WTS also recognized recipients of notable awards like Employer of the Year and Women of the Year.

WTS-Los Angeles is one of the largest WTS chapters. Their mission is to attract, sustain, connect and advance women's careers to strengthen the

transportation industry. They are leaders in supporting and mentoring the next generation of transportation professionals in Southern California.

The Annual Scholarship and Award Celebration honored the achievements of current and future members of the transit community. Attendees joined the chapter in celebrating each scholarship and award recipient. Winner profiles were showcased in short video clips throughout the event. Congratulations to each of the recipients on their accomplishments; we look forward to hearing more about their future contributions to the transportation industry!

Melissa Lucero
CTSA Analyst

Commendations

"I would like to file a double happy face for Yael Hernandez. While booking my reservation, Ms. Hernandez was efficient, upbeat, and professional making her a great representative of Access Services. I am very pleased with the customer service I received. Thank you, Yael!"

Saul Castrejon
Rider since January 2012

"I am filing a smile for my driver Miguel Mejia. I was impressed with how caring and attentive he was to his passengers. Miguel went above and beyond to ensure that all the passengers and I were safe and correctly secured."

Marie Edwards
Rider since October 2012