



Behind the Scenes

Executive Director's Report

Thanks to the advocacy efforts of the California Transit Association and many individual agencies, California's transit industry received good news last week when the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued updated state guidance to prioritize vaccinations for transit workers statewide, acknowledging public transit's critical role in California's recovery.

In response, I am pleased to report that the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has opened up COVID-19 vaccinations for transit workers. Access has been working with its contractors to make them aware of this new guidance and is offering to provide a "letter of attestation" if necessary although it appears that an employee badge is sufficient. This is great news for all Los Angeles County transit workers and will make our system safer for both our operators and customers.

As for Access' other efforts to ensure our customers have transportation to vaccine sites, we are now serving eight "drive through" vaccination sites and have transported over 70 customers to get vaccinated. Special lanes have been set up for our vehicles and the customer remains in the vehicle to receive their vaccination. We have also transported over 1,000 customers to drop off sites, such as pharmacies and medical offices.

Andre Colaiace
Executive Director

Launch of the El Monte Safe Streets Technical Advisory Committee

In order to ensure its roads and sidewalks are as safe as possible, the city of El Monte has contracted with a municipal planning company, KTUA, who in turn have reached out to various community-based organizations to create an advisory committee, El Monte Zero Action Plan (EMZAP) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

The TAC is made up of representatives from Caltrans, Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), the City of El Monte and El Monte Union High School. The city of El Monte also reached out to Access Services in order to have input from paratransit services as well as the disability community on street safety. Access has appointed me as their representative on this project.

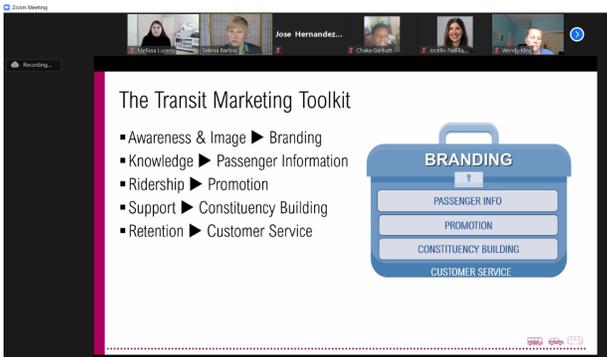
The goal of the committee is to develop and apply policies for increasing safety for all modes of transportation. The committee will look at the streets and sidewalks of El Monte in order to provide the necessary tools and guidance to make the bicycle and pedestrian environment safer for everyone. In addition to working with TAC, El Monte will also be seeking input from the community through online presentations and surveys.

In the first meeting, the goals of the project were discussed with each person providing their unique perspective of what they would like to see change around El Monte. For example, Access Services wants to make sure all paths of travel are safe and accessible for seniors and people with disabilities. The future meetings of the El Monte TAC will dive deeper into how and where to introduce safety measures. It will be a lot to learn, and I look forward to the challenge.

Dina Garcia
Administrative Assistant Analyst

CTSA Extension hosts Public Transit Marketing training

Last month CTSA Extension hosted a one-day intensive training on Public Transit Marketing. Instructor Selena Barlow, the owner of Transit Marketing LLC, facilitated the course. With over 25 years of consulting experience in the transit industry, Ms. Barlow shared the building blocks of cultivating a successful marketing plan. A diverse group of transit professionals and social services representatives from across L.A. County participated in the live-online training.



A strong marketing strategy with a clear purpose enhances an agency's ability to connect with its community. Attendees learned about marketing tools for building positive brand awareness, ridership promotion, and customer loyalty. The course also provided participants with an overview of techniques for effective advertising via varying communication channels. Marketing reinforces an agency's outreach efforts, but as stated by instructor Barlow, "[it] is not a magic wand. It's a crowbar that provides leverage to help good transit service succeed."

Overall, the class was well received with one participant remarking, "This webinar was well put together and made great use of time. Seeing a long time frame like 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. can be a little daunting, but the information was so well put together and the flow so smooth, the day went by super-fast! This is a valuable resource for professionals involved in public transit. Looking forward to more!"

This class marked the beginning of the 2021 Learning & Development Program and Access looks forward to hosting a robust line-up of workshops and events. To learn more about upcoming trainings and registration, please visit Access Services website. For questions, please contact CTSA Analyst at ctsa@accessla.org.

Melissa Lucero
CTSA Analyst

Helping our community with meal delivery services

On April 6, 2020, Access began assisting the City of Los Angeles with meal deliveries to senior citizens by entering into a partnership with several social service and nonprofit organizations, including the Department of Aging and Department on Disability, Jewish Family Services, Food to Life, I Did Something Good Today and Khalsa Care Foundation.

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the livelihood of every American. Many lost their sources of income as businesses closed and employers laid off workers due to the Stay at Home Orders. These personal challenges faced by individuals in our community provided an opportunity for Access to give something more than safe transportation.

Rabbi Ari Montanari, who helped connect Access with the Food to Life meal delivery program for US veterans, remarked, "I have been watching. Very smooth. Wonderful drivers. I think it's been great. We certainly appreciate this."

To date, Access has delivered over 400,000 meals to residents in need across Los Angeles County. This effort would not have been possible without these special partnerships. Access looks forward to continued collaboration with these organizations, and most importantly, supporting the community through these difficult times.

Carlos Bermejo
Customer Relations Associate



Commendations

"I would like to file a smile for the driver. I accidentally forgot my daughter's lunch on the vehicle. Without hesitation, my driver turned around and delivered the lunch to the front office at my daughter's school. They were a lifesaver. It's actions like these, where a driver willingly surpasses expectations, that are impactful, and make Access stand apart from other transportation agencies."

Luz Padua
Rider since March 2012

"I would like to file a commendation for my driver, Augustine. I was not feeling well during my ride and Augustine went above and beyond to assist me. He was concerned about making me feel as comfortable as possible and his concern was able to put me at ease. Above this commendation, I want to wish him well and thank him for providing me with great customer service."

Charles Newhouse
Rider since July 2011