



Five Year Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2019 - 2023

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Mission & Vision

Mission

Access Services promotes access to all modes of transportation and provides quality and safe ADA paratransit service on behalf of public transit agencies in Los Angeles County.

Vision

Access Services serves the community as the leader in promoting accessible and innovative transportation solutions.

We accomplish this vision by:

- > Providing quality, efficient, safe and dependable ADA paratransit service.
- > Leading the national dialogue as an advocate for universal access to transportation.
- > Partnering with other entities to secure alternate funding sources and legislation that expands transportation options.

Access Values

Leadership

Develop and implement innovative ideas as part of a nationally recognized team.

Responsiveness

Be sensitive to the needs of our customers and respond to their requests in a timely manner.

Respect

Treat all customers the way we, ourselves, would want to be treated.

Professionalism

Demonstrate a measured and expert approach to the business at hand.

Quality

Deliver results that exceed our customers' expectations.

Introduction to Access Services and This Strategic Plan

Access Services is a public transit agency which provides American with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit services and administers Los Angeles County's Coordinated Paratransit Plan on behalf of the County's forty-five public fixed route operators.

Access provides next day, curb-to-curb transportation services for eligible riders who, due to a disability, are unable to utilize fixed route bus and light rail services. Although Access' paratransit service is an alternative mode of flexible passenger transportation that does not follow fixed routes or schedules, Access is required to operate in all areas and during times when fixed route service is in operation. Specifically, the Access service area is within a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile corridor on either side of a fixed-route bus or rail line.

In addition to Access' paratransit service, Access also acts as the Los Angeles County Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA), a state mandated facilitator charged with the development and implementation of regional coordination of social service transportation to seniors, persons with disabilities, youth, and low-income disadvantaged persons.

Access' service area is comprised of six regions served by separate

contractors: Santa Clarita, Antelope Valley, Northern, Eastern, West-Central, and Southern regions.

Access Services is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors. Access also has two advisory committees: 1) the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) made up of customers and social service professionals; and 2) the Transportation Professionals Advisory Committee (TPAC) made up of public transit professionals and social service agency staff. Both committees have fifteen voting members.

Access' staff receives guidance from the Board and advisory committees. Day-to-day operations of Access' service are led by an Executive Director and other management staff.

Access employs seventy-one (71) staff members who are dedicated to ensuring that quality service is provided by Access' contractors to its customers.



SANTA MONICA

★ YACHT HARBOR ★
SPORT FISHING ★ BOATING ★
Cafes

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SANTA MONICA PIER
WEIGHT LIMIT
10 TONS
PIER PARKING LOT
WEIGHT LIMIT
3 TONS

NO
BUSES
OR VEHICLES
OVER 22 FEET

SANTA MONICA PIER
Pier

Five Year Strategic Plan and Annual Update

The fast changing environment presents a number of challenges that need to be addressed and this Strategic Plan will provide details on how Access plans to address them.

Access' Five Year Strategic Plan is designed to be a document recording major initiatives that the agency intends to pursue over the next five years (FY 2019 to FY 2023).

The Strategic Plan will be a "living document". The goals of the agency will be revisited and updated annually. The annual

revisions of the Strategic Plan will be presented to Access' Board and advisory committees. Annual revisions will provide updates on projects and introduce new projects that the agency is considering pursuing.

Challenges

Providing ADA paratransit services in any region is challenging but it is particularly challenging in Los Angeles County, one of the most populous and heavily congested areas in the United States.

Looking forward, Access anticipates a number of difficult challenges that have to be considered to ensure that the Agency can continue to provide quality paratransit service to its customers.

Driver Shortages

Even with sustained recruiting and retention efforts as well as actions by the Access Board of Directors to address driver wages, Access' contractors are experiencing a net loss of drivers. Over the past several years, the four largest Access contractors have increasingly turned to taxi sub-contractors as a way to ensure Key Performance Indicators are met. However, taxi subcontractors are also finding it a challenge to attract drivers because of competition from transportation network companies such as Lyft and Uber. The good news is that more of the taxi drivers who have remained in the industry have expressed a desire to become certified to provide Access trips. It is essential that Access monitor

this trend to ensure the increased use of taxi subcontractors is sustainable in the long run.

Facilities

Existing Access contractors either have long-term leases or own their facilities outright giving them significantly reduced costs compared to potential service contractors without existing facility arrangements. The cost to lease or purchase land for operations facilities may therefore reduce the number of potential bidders for future Access contracts, and by extension the competitiveness of the proposed rates because of diminished competition.

The Aging Baby Boom Generation

The number of people age 65 or older in Los Angeles County continues to grow. The demand forecast over the next five years call for an increase in the senior population, and a corresponding increase in the number of potential persons with disabilities who



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**Union
Station
East**

FPO Gateway Center

Stand 1

would qualify for Access. Demand for Access trips and the number of individuals found eligible for Access is expected to continue to increase in the years ahead.

Rising costs

Through its usage of taxi subcontractors and other strategies, Access has continually sought ways to maintain a relatively low

cost structure since its inception. However, in addition to the costs of increased ridership, labor costs are rising due to low unemployment, the recent passage of minimum wage laws, and mandated health care and workers' compensation costs.





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Current Initiatives

The following section provides details of major projects which are scheduled to be fully implemented before the start of the FY 2019 fiscal year.

Where's My Ride (WMR) Mobile App Introduction/Text ETAs

By introducing Access' first mobile application, Access seeks to improve customer service by providing a tool to our customers that gives them an Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA) for their scheduled trips and also allows them to give immediate feedback on their trip. The WMR app will have a secondary benefit of reducing the number of ETA calls to our Customer Service and Provider call centers.

This mobile application is intended to be rolled out to the four Los Angeles basin regions in 2017 with the Santa Clarita and Antelope Valley regions having this service activated for customers in the first half of 2018. Access is also in the process of giving customer's the option of receiving ETAs via text message in addition to the standard telephone "call-out."

Enhanced Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Contractors

The ultimate goal of expanded

KPIs is to improve customer service by measuring performance and ensuring that the highest quality service is delivered to customers. Access will be making these modifications to contract terms when current contracts are re-bid, which should be complete no later than fiscal year 2020. (Current contracts do have KPIs but, after 2020, will have the enhanced KPIs discussed above.)

Liquidated Damages

In conjunction with new KPIs, Access recently introduced liquidated damages clauses into its transportation service provider contracts. The liquidated damages language gives Access another tool to hold contractors accountable. As Access will be making these modifications to contract terms when current contracts are re-bid, this process should be complete no later than fiscal year 2020. (Current contracts do have liquidated damages but, after 2020, all contracts will have liquidated

damages that are aligned with the enhanced KPIs discussed above.)

Fleet Management Software

Access has been developing a new Fleet Management Program that will allow Access to monitor the status of paratransit vehicles in Access' fleet. The new software package will be able to signal reminders for future vehicle maintenance vehicle dates and at the same time have a single location where one can electronically access previous vehicle maintenance records.

Enhanced Revenue for Paratransit

Access continues to seek new revenue sources to assist the region in meeting the financial demands of its paratransit system. Currently, we are the recipients of several federal grants, and have successfully worked with our partners at Metro to identify other potential revenue sources,

such as Measure M. Another area that has been identified as a potential source of revenue is the federal Medicaid program (known as Medi-Cal in California). Staff has been working with County, State and Federal officials to participate in this program which may provide reimbursement to Access for providing Medi-Cal trips. Staff expects to bring a draft contract to the Access Board in FY 18 that will allow Access to bill for Medi-Cal trips.

Capital Planning

Given the increased use of taxi subcontractors, staff is in the process of revising the Agency's method for allocating vehicles to its contractors. This new process will be implemented in the FY 19 budget process.



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Meeting the Challenges: Proposed Projects for Fiscal Years 2019-2023

In preparing this Strategic Plan, staff surveyed Agency departments to determine what their priorities were for the coming years. These priorities were then categorized into four main themes as outlined below.

Safety Improvements

Since Access' launch in 1994, safety has been a principal goal of the agency and Access has worked at continuously improving its safety program. Over the next five years, Access intends to pursue programs that will make the Agency safer for our customers, more responsive to incidents and emergencies, and enhance its existing emergency back-up infrastructure, so that in the event of a natural disaster or other large emergency, Access' service will be able to continue without interruption.

Enhance Safety Programs Increase supervision in the field

As trips increase, both Access and its providers will need an increased presence out in the field to ensure the safe and efficient transport of Access customers.

Going forward, Access is proposing to implement the following:

- > Increase the number of Access Road Safety Inspectors (RSIs) on staff;
- > Mandate in future RFPs (to be completed by 2020) that contractors have an increased number of their own road supervisors;
- > Mandate in future RFPs (to be completed by 2020) that contractors have Transportation Coordinators at certain high trip generators. For example, the recently-released Northern Region RFP mandates that a Transportation Coordinator be stationed at the Olive View Medical Center which is Access' transfer point between the North County and the Los Angeles basin.

Increase equipment audits

As service demand has grown over the last decade, the number of vehicles required to deliver service has increased to as many as 2,400 vehicles. Many of these vehicles are taxis that are owned by a third party. The plan calls for setting a percent goal of vehicles to be audited on an annual basis. Thus as the size of the fleet fluctuates, so will the number of actual safety inspections.

Establishment of Redundant Information Technology Infrastructure

Access' Information Technology department is in the process of developing the necessary redundant and reliable IT systems for Access to ensure the reliable delivery of service to Access customers. The IT Department will also be establishing similar contractual standards for our providers.

Cyber-Security Enhancement

IT will also develop enhanced cyber-security safeguards to reduce the risk of a security breach at Access or our providers which could lead to service interruptions to our customers.

Back-up/Disaster Recovery Establishment

IT will be working to ensure continuity of operations for Access and our providers by establishing remote servers that would take over if a main server was disabled by a natural disaster or other event.

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3	Review & Approval March 8, 2016
10	4. General Public
5	5. Report from Board
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Customer Service and Customer Education

Over the next five years, Access intends to pursue long-term programs in the area of Customer Service and Customer Education to enhance the experience of our clientele.

The proposed measures will (1) give more trip booking options to customers; (2) improve customer education materials for new and existing customers, and (3) work to reduce the number of missed trips and “no-shows.”

Web Booking Introduction

Another means of improving the customer experience, empowering customers, and reducing the overall number of telephone calls to Access’ providers is with the introduction of an internet portal where customers may reserve (or cancel) their own next day trips. This, along with the Where’s My Ride application, will help enhance the customer’s ability to manage their transportation.

Complete the Access Application Process On-Line

Currently, a person interested in applying for Access can go on-line, request an application and receive a “Customer I.D.” number. Access plans to give its customers the options of completing these applications online as well as scheduling their evaluation appointments.

Improve Customer Communication Channels and Improve Customer Education Opportunities

Access Website Redesign

Access Services’ website contains a wealth of information about Access Services that is important to a variety of stakeholders. Access’ current website has been in its current format for many years and improvements are necessary, both to share crucial agency information and to ensure that the agency is able to communicate effectively with Access’ stakeholders.

The redesigned website will be a better vehicle to share information about the agency both in terms of access to agency information, but also educational videos and other tools for individuals interested in finding out more about Access.

Customer Education Videos Development

In order to provide a better understanding of the services that Access provides to its customers, Access is exploring the possibility of developing a series of video tutorials. These videos may be embedded in a redesigned Access website, made available via YouTube or similar video format, and also be made available for viewing at various centers and events that Access visits as part of its outreach program.

The videos would target certain sections of information contained in Access' Rider's Guide and provide a brief overview of topics such as "safe boarding of an Access vehicle"

and "fare policy." As needs are identified, additional training videos may be developed to address those needs.

Pre-made educational videos about Access can be shown at outreach events on tablets or shared with social service centers on CDs or USB drives for them to share with clients interested in finding out more about Access.

Access Branding and Signage Expand the use of Access stand signs to reduce Missed Trips/No-Shows

Due to its success in alleviating no-shows and missed trips, Access will expand the designated pick-up location signage program. There are currently 73 signs placed throughout the service area. New sign locations will be identified through an analysis of major trip generators or upon recommendation by clients.



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Improve taxi signage on Access vehicles

The taxi vehicles that are certified to perform paratransit trips have decals that indicate they are Access certified. The current decals have been in use for several decades and are difficult to read at any distance. Access is updating these decals to make them easier to identify. The new decals will stand out against the taxi paint color and will also be much easier for customers to recognize.

Introduce an Illuminated Access Logo for Access Vehicles

Further down the horizon, Access will experiment with illuminated signs that may assist our customers - especially at night - identify and locate Access vehicles. The project, if proven successful, would ultimately install these lighted signs on all Access vehicles, owned/non-owned, dedicated as well non-dedicated taxis.



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A photograph of a man and a woman sitting in wheelchairs on a paved plaza at night. The man, on the left, is wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, dark pants, and a black headband. The woman, on the right, is wearing a pink off-the-shoulder top and dark pants. They are both smiling and looking towards each other. The background features a modern building with large glass windows and a series of warm white string lights strung across the sky. The overall atmosphere is warm and social.

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Cost Containment/Streamline Processes/Added Funding Resources

Over the next five years, Access intends to pursue long-term programs designed to stabilize Access' costs over the next several years and to streamline certain processes.

Access owned or controlled facilities

> Access staff believes that controlling our transportation facilities will be a key factor in controlling costs during this initial five year period as well as in the long run. Staff is also cognizant that the required expertise to proceed down this path is not currently in-house. Thus, in order to ensure that Access makes the best informed decisions for these projects, key subject matter experts will need to be retained under contract. Listed below you will find the key resources that will need to be procured in order to successfully deliver these real estate projects.

> Needs Assessment Consultant Work

The first stage to be completed for securing contractor facilities will be to retain the services of a real estate consultant who will perform a Needs Assessment. The Needs Assessment will

itemize the various elements needed for each contractor's facility site. It is expected that each facility site will have sufficient space to park all of the contractor's vehicles used to provide Access trips. The sites will also need to house maintenance facilities and some administrative offices.

Unlike traditional office leases, there are many additional elements that are involved for contractor facilities including environmental requirements for the on-site maintenance facilities as well as safety design elements with so many vehicles housed and operating on and out of such a facility.

> Real Estate Broker Assistance

Once the Needs Assessment is complete, Access will be able to retain the services of a real estate broker. Armed with a list of elements sought for each contractor site, the broker

will be able to determine what locations may meet Access' needs and provide a cost range for whether Access may wish to pursue a lease of a location or ownership of the land.

> **Timeline for New Contractor Facility Sites**

Access will explore the opportunity of securing new contractor facilities to coincide with the entering of new contracts with each of the service provider contractors.

Below is a list of the end dates of the individual service provider contracts. This would be the earliest that Access would be able to pursue having contractors move from their existing facilities to an Access-owned facility.

While some of these projects may be re-bid before the facilities are acquired, staff will plan to modify the contract(s) to allow the agency to require the contractor to relocate to an Access-owned facility should it become available during the applicable time period.

> **Funding for New Access Facilities**

Planning will actively seek out opportunities to help fund - through grants - Access' efforts to secure agency-owned facilities. The Executive Director will also work with our funding partners at Metro to seek financial assistance for these projects.

Service Region	Current Service Provider	Base Term End
Northern	MV Transportation	07/31/2018
Santa Clarita Valley*	City of Santa Clarita	08/03/2018
Eastern	San Gabriel Transit	03/31/2019
Southern	Global Paratransit	08/31/2019
Antelope Valley	Keolis	04/30/2020
West/Central	California Transit	08/28/2022

* Access is not seeking lease ownership for service operated by the City of Santa Clarita.

> **Centralized Trip Reservation Call Center**

A recommendation presented in Access' recent Comprehensive Operational Review of Operations described the benefit of having a single call center for all trip reservations. Customers would enjoy the convenience of a single call to schedule all of their trips for the next day.

> **Encourage Same Platform for All Transportation Contractors**

At present Access' transportation service provider contractors are using different scheduling and dispatch software platforms for the services that they provide. Some benefits would be realized if these different contractors were able to utilize the same software platform for service delivery.

> **Lower costs by Reducing Missed Trips to Eligibility Center Appointments**

Access staff will research different service delivery models for trips to and from the Eligibility center. Over the recent past, despite the best efforts of our contractor, the number of trips cancelled at the door has been as high as 40%. This is highly inefficient for both the transportation provider as well as the eligibility provider.

Improved Coordination and Partnerships

Access' continued success as a leader in the paratransit industry relies on its ability to expand its network of partnerships and also to strengthen those relationships that already exist.

What follows are the programs that Access intends to implement which are designed to further improve Access' existing partnerships and build new opportunities for coordination.

Improve Partnerships and Coordination to Help Meet Growing Demand

> Reinforce Coordination with Partner Agencies

Access provides ADA-complementary paratransit services for 45 Los Angeles County-based fixed route agencies. Planning is responsible for ensuring that each of our partners is familiar with Access' role on behalf of their fixed route agencies and also that the different partners are receiving information that they need regarding Access' operations. Planning intends to conduct a series of informational meetings with its different partners to meet Access' responsibilities as a partner to the multiple fixed route agencies.

> Better Coordination with Social Service Agencies and Partner Agencies

In addition to offering a broader and varying range of courses to Access' partner agencies, the agency will explore creating stronger working relationships with our contract providers and social service agencies as it relates to their training and development needs. Through this improved coordination, Access will be able to better serve as a resource of support to agencies facing certain workforce challenges (employee training and development and talent acquisition).

> Expanded Relationships with Social Service Agencies who Refer Clients to Access

Access has worked in the past with a variety of social service agencies that regularly direct clients to Access to seek eligibility for these clients. Access should work to strengthen the relationship with these



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agencies to ensure that clients are educated on what Access is and if it is the best alternative for their transportation needs.

> **Explore TNC Partnerships**

Access has had some discussions about ADA paratransit with Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) like Lyft and Via. In theory, these companies could help provide vital driver resources to our contractors as subcontractors. However, at this time, Lyft and Uber drivers do not meet Access' standards particularly in the areas of driver training, background checks and drug and alcohol testing.

Improve Coordination to Reduce Incidents of Missed Trips and No-Shows

> **Improved Partnerships with Hospital Campuses for Access Drop-off and Pick-up Coordination**

There are a number of large medical facility campuses throughout Los Angeles County. A challenge in providing service to these large campuses is ensuring that vehicles and customers are at convenient

locations for customer drop-offs and pick-ups. While the actual signage has already been redesigned, the next step is to work with the medical facility staff to identify the best pick up and drop off locations for our mutual customers

> **Autonomous Vehicle Pilot Project Feasibility Study - Partnership with V.A.**

Access will be exploring the possibility of developing a convenient shuttle service for Access customers in one or more parts of Los Angeles County. With the possible assistance of a Mobility on Demand grant from the Federal Transit Administration (expected to be accepting applications in late 2017), Access will be exploring the feasibility of launching a shuttle service using an autonomous or self-driving vehicle. Access will provide for an attendant to be on the vehicle throughout operation to provide assistance and information to customers using the service.

