Behind the Scenes

West Hollywood “Get On Board!” Transit Forum

On Wednesday, November 16, 2016 the City of West Hollywood L.A. County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl and the West Hollywood Comprehensive Service Center hosted a public forum to inform residents about local transportation options.

At the event were presentations given regarding how to use transit mobile applications to assist riders when using public transportation. Also at the event was a panel of transportation professionals available from the City of West Hollywood, Metro and Access Services to answer questions and comments.

West Hollywood Transportation Administrators, Perri Sloan Goodman and Francisco Gomez, presented on how to use the Metro Trip Planner and Google Transit. These tools offer real-time vehicle information in order to optimize travel times. Another presentation covered the topics of senior and disabled TAP discounts and the various methods of adding fare to a TAP card. Representatives from Metro shared information regarding, Metro’s On the Move Program, which focuses on connecting senior citizens with new friends, all the while gaining more independence through the use of public transportation.

I had an opportunity to share about Access’ eligibility criteria, the evaluation process, and about the benefits of being eligible for ADA paratransit services. I also discussed Access’ Mobility Management Program which provides information on alternative transportation options such as Dial-A-Ride services, Metro bus pass discounts, subsidy programs, and non-emergency transportation services.

The City of West Hollywood has made the presentation materials available online at www.youtube.com/wehotv.

Mayra Perez Calderon, Mobility Management Counselor

Executive Director’s Report

The Access Services Board of Directors met on November 14th in the Metro Board Room.

• The Board approved the Consent Calendar which included items to extend contract terms for Access’ Eligibility Services contractor and database consulting firm which is charged with the development and maintenance of Access’ internal customer management system also known as Rider 360.

• The Board also took action to approve contract rate modifications for Access’ contractors. The rate modifications, along with an increase of funds, were necessary for Access’ providers to address recently passed minimum wage laws and related issues of wage compression. In addition to recommending wage compression adjustments for the driver workforce, the Board directed staff to include liquidated damage provisions in provider contracts to stress the importance of on-time performance, late trips and safety.

• Lastly, the Board approved a lease extension for Access’ current administrative office space (3449 Santa Anita Avenue, El Monte) for another 5 years.

As always, please let me know if you would like additional information about these items or any other Access information.

Andre Colaiace, Interim Executive Director.

Mayra Perez Calderon, Mobility Management Counselor

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Mobility Management Outreach for October

October has been a very busy month for Access’ Mobility Management department staff. The mobility management department participated in eleven events this month.

- Metro’s On the Move Riders Club hosted their first Annual Older Adult Transportation Expo at Union Station. Over 300 attendees from senior centers around the County came to learn about using public transportation. The expo was coordinated by Lilly Ortiz, Metro community relations officer. The event was a tremendous success in educating older adults about using public transportation.

- Irwindale Senior Citizen Center hosted their Annual Health Fair to the community which highlighted health related services. There were over 100 people in attendance who received information regarding public transportation services.

- Southern California Resource Services for Independent Living (SRCS-IL) hosted their First Annual Disability Pride Parade and Festival which was held in the city of Downey. This event had over 700 individuals in attendance, with the goal of informing attendees that people with disabilities should be acknowledged for their contributions to their community.

- Disabled American Veterans hosted their monthly meeting at the Palmdale Sizzler which Christina Blanco, Operation Service Monitor, and I gave an Access presentation to over 50 veterans concerning their transportation options in and around the Antelope Valley and the Los Angeles basin.

- The San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center hosted their Information Fair. There were over 150 attendees.

- The City of Alhambra hosted a Wellness Expo which had over 500 attendees. Mobility Management Counselor, Mayra Perez-Calderon, and Mobility Management Partners Travel Trainer, Michelle Arevalo, distributed information and answered questions regarding Access.

- The City of Monterey Park held its Annual Fall Bazaar with the goal of providing local organizations and businesses the opportunity to distribute resources and educational tools for senior members of the community. Access staff were present to answer questions from over 600 attendees.

- The City of Inglewood held its annual Information Day, which was coordinated by Human Services Transportation Manager, Thomas Uwal. Louis Burns and I participated along with representatives from Metro and taxi-cab providers.

- The City of Long Beach Citizens Advisory Commission on Disabilities hosted their Disability
Employment Awareness Month Celebration in which Mayra Perez-Calderon had the pleasure of attending. This year’s theme was “Making a Difference: Promoting Inclusion in the Workplace” which focused on the issues affecting people with disabilities in the areas of employment, health services, housing, transportation, recreation and other life activities. There were over 100 attendees who received information from the Braille Institute of America, Disabled Resources Center, and numerous other city agencies.

- Metro Boardmember Jackie Dupont-Walker requested Access’ participation at the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Annual Congregational Conference which was held at the Los Angeles Hilton. This was the second year Access staff members Fayma Ishaq, Faustino Salvador, and I had the pleasure to attend.

- The Family Focus Resource Center’s Fair was held at the California State University, Northridge (CSUN). There were between 800 to 1,000 attendees who received information and small giveaways from over 75 exhibitors.

**Stephen Wrenn, Senior Mobility Management Counselor**

**Driver Job Fair**

In October, Access Services hosted a Driver Job Fair on behalf of Access’ providers and other partner agencies. Job seekers had the opportunity to be interviewed on the spot with several providers such as MV Transportation, San Gabriel Transit, Global Paratransit, Foothill Transit, West Covina Transit, and others. Potential driver candidates were able to distribute their resumes and introduce themselves to agency staff.

Employment Coordinators from the State of California Department of Rehabilitation also attended the job fair. Their purpose was to meet the Access team and the different providers. In addition to gathering information about the various positions available, they also wanted to discuss partnering with Access and the providers to provide driver candidates. Access has already reached out to the Pasadena and Van Nuys employment coordinators to host future driver job fairs at their locations.

**Alexis Sanchez, Training & Development Intern**
Rider Comments

“I would like to file a smile for Alexis from the Southern Region. She is very nice, efficient and straight to the point, and takes care of the customer properly. Alexis is very polite. I think she is a new employee, but she is doing a very good job.”

Frank Damiani  
(customer since November 2009)

“I would like to file a smile for San Fernando Valley call taker Danny. He is very respectful and cheerful.”

Arjang Ahdishoghi  
(customer since March 2016)

Santa Clarita Community Meeting

On November 7, 2016, Access Services began a new round of community meetings, starting with the Santa Clarita Region at the Old Town Newhall Library. Access customers and personal care assistants attended this meeting in order to voice their concerns, ask questions, and offer commendations on our service.

At this meeting, copies of the Rider’s Guides and other informational materials were made available to customers and attendees. A presentation was also given covering topics such as the Rider’s Guide, customer service, and the function of mobility management. Overall, the feedback from customers in the Santa Clarita Region was positive but there were also some suggestions made on how to improve the service. At the conclusion of the meeting staff from Access and the City of Santa Clarita answered questions from the attendees. I want to thank everyone who participated in this session. I strongly believe that having an open dialogue with our customers is the key to a successful service.

Rogelio Gomez, Project Administrator