Executive Director’s Report

This week there are two items of interest:

The first item had a large impact on one of our service areas – The Antelope Valley. AVTA service was impacted by a labor dispute during the month of March 2017. While the labor issue has now been resolved, the effects of the labor strike continue to impact Access Services. Last Sunday, our service demand was 40% higher than a normal Sunday. As of today, demand for our service continues to be higher than normal but expect demand to return to normal promptly.

The other item of interest is the Measure M Policy Advisory Council - The first meeting of this Council occurred this past Wednesday. This Council will continue to meet indefinitely to provide Metro with suggestions. Individuals will also have the opportunity to submit their suggestions and or comments.

To view all of the documents related to Measure M, please visit http://theplan.metro.net Suggestions may be submitted via email at theplan@metro.net

Hector Rodriguez
Deputy Executive Director, Finance

2017 Abilities Expo

On Friday, March 24, 2017, Alexis Sanchez and I had the distinct opportunity to volunteer at this year’s Abilities Expo held at the Los Angeles Convention Center in downtown Los Angeles. The Expo was a three-day event that provided information and shared resources with members of the disability community. The Abilities Expo featured several public, private and non-profit organizations as well as vendors displaying the new technology and design improvements of products that are consumed by persons with disabilities.

During my time at the event, I was able to observe the operations side of transporting Access riders to the Expo and assist in volunteering at the Access Services booth. Access riders from every part of Los Angeles County were able to attend this event and to accommodate such a large number of Access riders, a pick-up and drop-off station was located at the northwest corner of the Convention Center. At this location, there were representatives from Access’ service providers, for rider check in as well as inform them of their pick-up times. Drop-offs began as early as 10:45 a.m. and the first pick-up was scheduled for 12:45 p.m. Drop-Offs and pickups continued throughout the day, and this required coordination by each of the drivers to find the right passenger, as well as drop off whoever needed to get to the Expo. It was an extraordinary accomplishment by Access’ operations team.

At the Access Services booth, on the Convention floor, many of our staff had the opportunity to share information about Access Services as well as field questions from the public. Attendees were able to take home flyers and some Access give-aways including tote bags, jar openers, pencils, and a water bottle. Alexis and I were also able to reach out and share information with people who were bilingual and wanted the information in Spanish. Overall, I had an enjoyable experience at the Abilities Expo. Even though I was only there for a few hours, I was able to see the hard work provided by Access staff to make sure those current Access customers had a safe and beneficial experience, as well as reach out to potential future riders who may someday need to utilize Access for their transportation needs.

Douglas Tohom, Intern, Planning Department
Photos from the Abilities Expo
Mobility on Demand Kickoff Meeting

On March 22nd, Metro coordinated and led the kickoff meeting for the local FTA Mobility on Demand (MOD) pilot project, which seeks to improve first mile/last mile connections in Los Angeles County. The pilot project is a partnership between Metro, Sound Transit, and Lyft, the ride-sharing company, to provide short trips to and from transit stations. In addition, local and national research centers will track and document lessons learned. Access is participating in the pilot by supporting outreach to Access customers and provide the project team with guidance on serving people with disabilities. A key element of the pilot is to demonstrate that such programs can provide equivalent services to people with disabilities, particularly those needing a wheelchair accessible vehicle.

The kickoff meeting introduced all the members of the project team, which also include Access member agencies Foothill Transit and LADOT. The Eno Center for Transportation provided a brief overview of their research goals for the project. The Federal Transit Administration presented an overview of the MOD program requirements and procedures, while the Shared-Use Mobility Center provided plans for future knowledge sharing. This project includes a concurrent pilot program to take place in the Seattle, Washington area. The scheduled pilot launch is for January 2018. Stay tuned for more info.

Bill Tsuei, Director of Information Technology
Alfredo Torales, Special Projects Administrator

Olive View - Social Work Fair

March is recognized as National Professional Social Work Month. The official theme for Social Work Month in 2017 is “Social Workers Stand Up!” This event aims to spotlight the significant contributions social workers make to society. Access was invited to celebrate and recognize the social workers and medical professions at Olive View-UCLA Medical Center on March 13, 2017. With Olive-View being the largest Access ridership generator in LA County with more than 15,000 pick-ups in the last year, Mobility Management Counselor, Mayra Perez-Calderon, and Project Administrators Fayma Ishaq and Lisa Potter attended the Social Work Fair. This event gives various organizations an opportunity to network with the social workers and staff of Olive View while providing information and added resources that are available to serve their patients.

The event included a slide show exhibiting Olive View social workers and their on the job contributions. One of the slides quoted a social worker who stated, “I love butterflies because they represent various souls. While providing a service to the public, it is amazing to reflect on how many butterflies we have served.” It was great to see so many organizations come together to help these social workers achieve their goal of continued service to their patients. We look forward to attending again next year.

Lisa Potter, Project Administrator

Access Outreach (L) Mayra Perez-Calderon, (R) Lisa Potter
Rider Comments

“I would like to file a smile for Virginia from the Eastern Region. Virginia was courteous, professional and has a pleasant demeanor.”

Muhammad-Azim Shaikh
(customer since December 2010)

I would like to file a smile for reservationist - Michelle from the Southern region. She was very kind and patient.”

Beatrice Young
(customer since March 2004)

“Where’s My Ride” demo at UCP

On March 10, Randy Johnson and I visited the United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) facility in Culver City. We were invited by Terri Lantz to demonstrate the “Where’s My Ride” passenger information system to see if any of the participants were interested in joining the current test group for this new program. UCP is a leader in the disability community and was founded in 1949 by a group of families seeking better services and a higher quality of life for their children with disabilities.

During the demonstration, we showed the participants how to use the system to obtain arrival times and vehicle locations by using their smartphone, tablet, and computer. We informed the members that a relative or caretaker could also use the system on their behalf as an option. Terri was extremely supportive and explained to the group the advantages of using the system, such as not having to make a phone call for an ETA inquiry and knowing exactly what time a loved one was picked up or dropped off by merely glancing at their phone.

The participants were excited to learn about the new system and offered to sign up to be part of the beta group. As a bonus, Access provided UCP a “Where’s My Ride” dashboard utility that will allow facility staff to monitor arrival and departure vehicle times from any web browser.

It is rewarding to know that providing UCP participants access to the “Where’s My Ride” system is contributing to UCP’s mission, which is to advance independence and productivity.

Ruben Prieto, Systems Analyst