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Behind the Scenes

Executive Director’s Report

The Access Board of Directors held its meeting on August 27, 2018.

The Board approved the consent calendar which included the following items:

The Board formed the Ad Hoc Budget, Audit and Compensation Subcommittee; approved an extension for Access’ DBE consultant; and approved the agency’s triennial DBE goal. The Board also appointed Yael Hagen and Nicole Campos as the newest CAC and TPAC member, respectively. The Board took action to renew the agency’s insurance policies; increased funds for an eligibility appeal services contract; increased funds for the Where’s My Ride interface implementation services; and approved a contract for transitional voice communication services.

The next meeting of the Board of Directors is tentatively scheduled for November 5, 2018 at Access Services, 3449 Santa Anita Avenue, El Monte.

Andre Colaiace
Executive Director

COMTO’s 47th Annual National Meeting & Training Conference

I had the pleasure of representing Access Services at the 2018 COMTO National Conference in Baltimore, Maryland. The 2018 National Conference’s focus was Many Paths, One Goal, and Multi-Modal Transportation. COMTO’s vision for continued growth led to a successful conference with over 800 attendees representing various modes of transportation including representatives from local and state political offices.



COMTO Southern California Chapter Members won Best Community Engagement Award

Since its inception, COMTO has supported the growth and advancement of individuals in transportation including Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs). The conference serves as a great platform for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises, including Small Business Enterprises, to learn about transportation and its evolution including the impact on communities. COMTO is an advocate for connecting DBEs and SBEs with primes working on federal projects. The events and workshops allowed attendees to connect and share with other transportation professionals.

COMTO believes increasing diversity promotes creative collaboration and innovation, which leads to positive contributions to communities. Keeping true to their mission of diversity and inclusion, the Accessibility Committee met to discuss the need to host ADA related workshops at the next COMTO conference. The committee members are working diligently to ensure ADA, mobility and accessibility is represented at the 2019 COMTO conference.

Alvina Narayan
Manager, Training and Compliance

Customers and staff continue to work on Parents with Disabilities program

Access' Parents with Disabilities program is designed to make paratransit easier to use for Access-eligible parents trying to travel for and with their children. Currently, the program is operating on a one year extension through June 2019.

Access staff and Parents with Disabilities customers are currently working together to find alternatives and possible partners. During the month of July, at the offices of the Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce, there was a meeting to find ways to allow the program to continue beyond the end of the current one-year extension.

The group discussed ways to best describe the benefits of the Parents with Disabilities program to potential program partners. I presented a collection of data on the program from number of trips, to on time performance data, to the frequency of same day trips offered.

Customers shared their positive experiences and many customers proposed to provide testimonials of their own personal experience to help provide a richer story of how this program has enriched their lives.

A future meeting with customers and Access staff was scheduled for next month, also at the Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce.

Eric J. Haack
Strategic Planner



Access Staff attend Braille Institute training



On August 21, 2018, the Access Safety Steering Committee had the opportunity to attend a training session hosted at the Braille Institute of America in Los Angeles. Ms. Tamar Tashjian, Orientation and Mobility Specialist for the Braille Institute, facilitated the training. The training provided insight on the different types of visual disabilities and best practices when interacting with people who are blind or have limited sight. Access and contractor staff, including trainers, safety managers, and road supervisors took part in the training.

The classroom session highlighted the different types of visual disabilities which included cataracts, diabetic retinopathy and nearsightedness. The trainer also discussed the various types of visual aids, such as a white canes and guide dogs. Tamar said, "Interacting with guide dogs when they are working is a distraction and the dog cannot focus on its job," which is to guide the blind person. Lastly, she informed all participants on the proper techniques when approaching, guiding and dropping off a rider who is blind.

Braille's Orientation and Mobility Specialist facilitated several hands-on exercises which provided a better perspective on how blind persons perform their daily activities. These exercises included being blindfolded and completing the following tasks - walking up and down stairs, finding a seat, going through doors, and walking along and around structures in the courtyard at the Braille facility.

The committee was thankful for the learning opportunity and the information gained will be shared with contractor staff to improve and enhance the service that is provided to our riders and the community.

Luis Pacheco
Safety Analyst

Access remembers Cynthia Perkins-Stevenson

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of long-time Access employee Cynthia Perkins-Stevenson.

Cynthia served Access for 16 years in the roles of Dispatch Coordinator, Road Supervisor, Operations Service Monitor, and most recently Safety Analyst. Cynthia is fondly remembered for her dedication to Access and its customers and her strong focus on providing a safe operation. Cynthia made positive contributions in recent years to Access' safety culture and oversaw Access' internal facility inspections and driver safety campaigns that included important topics such as emergency preparedness, sharing the road with cyclists, intersection safety and wheelchair securement.

She will be sorely missed by me and others who have had the privilege to work with her.

Andre Colaiace
Executive Director



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Rider Commendations

"I would like to file a smile for my driver Mariah. Mariah was not my scheduled driver. My driver hadn't shown up yet. I saw Mariah's vehicle and assumed it was my scheduled trip. When I approached her, she informed me that she wasn't scheduled to pick me up. While I was waiting for my driver, Mariah contacted dispatch and asked if she could take my trip. After a few minutes of back and forth, dispatch gave the ok. Mariah is a perfect example of above and beyond service. I'm so grateful for the service Mariah and Access provide me."

Jessica Diaz
Rider since April 2015

"I would like to file a smile for reservationist Martina. When I called to confirm my rides for today, Martina caught an error with my pickup address. She made all the corrections to ensure I would not have any issues with my trip. Martina speaks with respect and thoughtfulness that gave me the impression that my call was important to her. Her tone with customers is calming and made me smile. Martina is an excellent employee and should be training all reservationists on how to treat riders."

Katrina Shuford
Rider since November 2008

On The Move Rider's Club Pop-Up

Access was invited to attend a series of L.A. Metro "On the Move" Rider's Club (OTMRC) Pop-Up events throughout Los Angeles County.

- > Hawthorne Memorial Senior Center on 2/12/18
- > North Hollywood Recreation Center on 4/17/18
- > Long Beach Promenade Square Park on 6/19/18
- > Norwalk Senior Center on 6/20/18



Lilly Ortiz at the Norwalk Senior Center Pop-Up

Coordinated by Lilly Ortiz, On the Move Program Coordinator, OTMRC gives seniors the opportunity to connect with new friends in a peer-focused environment. Riders can teach each other about safety, adding funds to their TAP card and riding Metro bus, rail and trains. Using public transportation gives riders the freedom to take trips to visit family, run errands, visit their doctor or go anywhere they want to go. Metro's Pop-Up included registering for Metro Reduced Fare TAP cards as well as Rider Relief Transportation Program discounts. Registrants were provided a temporary TAP card while their application was being processed and while they wait for their card in the mail.

Access Services was on hand to provide riders who are not able to use public transportation with valuable information about paratransit services. In addition, staff was able to assist with registering patrons to receive an Access application in the mail, as well as providing information regarding, "What is Access," "What to expect at the evaluation center" and "How to ride Access," should they be found eligible. We look forward to continuing to work alongside other agencies to provide information about transportation resources in the County.

Mayra Perez-Calderon
Compliance Specialist, Eligibility Department

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