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Behind the Scenes

Executive Director's Report

The Access Services Board of Directors met on May 21, 2018.

The Board approved the Consent Calendar, which included a contract award for voice communication services and some minor modifications to the No-Show Policy.

The Board also took action and authorized the purchase of 20 CNG-powered paratransit vehicles along with renewing the Self-Insured Retention program and its corresponding commercial business package insurance policies.

The Board authorized the contract for ADA paratransit service in the Santa Clarita Region with the City of Santa Clarita. This is a four (4) year base term contract with a value of close to \$9 million dollars.

The Board also passed a motion directing staff to bring back options related to continuing the Parents with Disabilities Program at the next Board meeting.

Finally, the Board received a presentation on information technology projects, including an update on Access' autonomous vehicle pilot project.

The next meeting of the Board of Directors is on June 25, 2018 and will be at Access Services, 3449 Santa Anita Avenue, El Monte.

Andre Colaiace
Executive Director

Access hosts Appeals Specialist Meeting

On May 18, the Access Eligibility Department hosted an Appeals Specialist meeting at Access' Eligibility Center in the city of Commerce. The meeting, which occurs on a semi-annual basis, provided an opportunity to meet with Access' Appeals Specialists to discuss trends and relevant topics relating to appeals and ADA paratransit eligibility.

Staff also provided a tour of the facility and a presentation on Access' eligibility process so that the Appeals Specialists would have an enhanced understanding of how the initial in-person evaluations are conducted. One of the Appeals Specialists shared their feedback after the meeting and stated they were very impressed with the process and methodology used by the eligibility contractor (MTM) to conduct the evaluations. She added that the documentation was very detailed and MTM's testing techniques and the tools they use were appropriate additions to the initial evaluation process.

MTM utilizes industry recognized testing methodologies in addition to the observations made by the evaluator and the information provided by the applicant in their application and in person interview. One test, for example, called the Functional Assessment of Cognitive Transit Skills (FACTS) test, is designed to determine if a person with developmental or cognitive disabilities has the functional ability to use fixed route transit.

Overall, the meeting was very positive and Access looks forward to hosting another meeting in the future.

Geoffrey Okamoto
Manager of Eligibility

2018 APTA Bus & Paratransit Conference

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) held its annual Bus & Paratransit Conference and International Bus Rodeo from May 6th to May 9th in Tampa, Florida. More than 1,800 bus and paratransit professionals from across the country attended the conference to network and share best practices.

Access Services has been a proud member of APTA for almost two decades. Represented at this year's conference were Doran Barnes, Access Board member and Foothill Transit Executive Director, along with Access staff Andre Colaiace, Executive Director; Bill Tsuei, Director of Information Technology;



Ruben Prieto, Systems Administrator and myself. Access staff participated in several of the APTA committees and working groups during the conference. Bill Tsuei was a guest speaker on the topic of Accessibility and Autonomous Vehicles and served as a moderator for a session about technological innovation.

The conference provided an opportunity to discuss several topics currently affecting the transit industry such as micro-transit, access to healthcare, flex service and autonomous vehicles. Conference participants attended several educational sessions that brought together FTA officials, public transit executives, and industry experts sharing their knowledge on building and maintaining the best transit system for their riders.

In addition, there were more than 140 exhibitors in the Bus Products and Services Showcase, where attendees could learn about what's new and innovative in bus and paratransit.

Randy Johnson
Manager, Government Affairs and Outreach

Access attends Drug and Alcohol Program National Conference

On November 13, 2017, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) published a final rule revising 49 CFR Part 40 (Procedures for Transportation Workplace Drug & Alcohol Testing). The changes, which took effect January 1, 2018, are designed to significantly advance public transportation safety and deter opioid abuse.

The recent rule change and the opioid abuse sweeping the nation brought over 600 transit professionals to the annual Federal Transit Administration Drug and Alcohol Conference.

The three day conference was held in Fort Lauderdale, Florida on May 8-10. The emerging drug patterns and shifting demographics of drug use is a major concern across all U.S. DOT regulated modes of transportation. The recent rule change and the evolving opioid crisis was the trending topic at the conference.

National Center for Health Statistics reports the following:

Every day, more than 115 people in the United States die after overdosing on opioids. The misuse of and addiction to opioids—including prescription pain relievers, heroin, and synthetic opioids such as fentanyl—is a serious national crisis that affects public health as well as social and economic welfare.

The rule change was implemented to combat the opioid abuse amongst transit employees. The drug testing panel has been expanded to include four “semi-synthetic” opioids drugs: hydrocodone, hydromorphone, oxycodone and oxymorphone, also labeled as Schedule II Drugs of the Controlled Substance Act. Conference attendees had an opportunity to speak with veteran transit professionals, including medical professionals, to learn about the effects and impairments of Schedule II drugs and their workplace impacts. Attendees also had an opportunity to discuss and review best methods in implementing the rule change and maintaining a safe transit system.

USDOT will continue to monitor the results and track statistics as the new rule takes effect. The inclusion of the Schedule II testing is to enhance safety in the workplace and the safety for the public we serve.

Alvina Narayan
Manager of Training and Compliance

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Rider Commendations

"I would like to file a smile for Grace from the Northern Region. She did an excellent job booking my reservation for my upcoming trip. Thank you Access and a big thank you to the Northern Region."

Hae Park
Rider since October 2014

"I would like to file a smile for Rochelle from the Southern Region. She was very professional and took her time when booking my trip. She made sure that my return trip was going to the correct region."

Annie Mae Curry Sells
Rider since December 2014

Access attends Griffith Park Adult Community Center Fair

On May 16, it was my pleasure to attend the Griffith Park Adult Community Center Transportation Fair. St. Barnabas Senior Services (SBSS), LADOT's DASH and Cityride service, Metro's On the Move Riders Club and Access' Mobility Management staff all attended to discuss the various transportation options that are available to seniors in the Los Feliz and Echo Park area.

The fair opened with a presentation from senior center staff on the transportation services offered to Echo Park residents. In addition, staff explained a limited pilot program between the senior center and Go-Go Grandparent, a specialized app that allows seniors to schedule TNC trips with Uber or Lyft via their smartphone.

Representatives from LADOT explained that DASH provides frequent, inexpensive bus service in 27 neighborhoods and connects to other regional transit services such as Metro and Metrolink. In addition, if seniors require dial-a-ride service, Cityride is the appropriate service for L.A. city residents.

Metro staff presented the On the Move Riders Club, which teaches seniors how to ride public transportation. The club tailors activities from group sightseeing trips to one-on-one outings to the store and other landmarks throughout the County.

I closed the presentation with an overview of Access Services followed with information on Access' mobility management department.

Stephen Wrenn
Senior Mobility Management Counselor