

# access

## AGENDA

### COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) MEETING

Tuesday, September 11, 2018

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Access Services Headquarters

3449 Santa Anita Avenue

El Monte, California

Council Chambers Conference Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

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<i>Time</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Description/Presenter</i>	<i>Disposition</i>	<i>Pages</i>
	1.	Call to Order	Action	
10	2.	Introductions		
2	3.	Review & Approval of Minutes of August 14, 2018	Action	4-13
20	4.	General Public Comment	Information	
10	5.	Report from Board of Directors/ Theresa DeVera	Information	
10	6.	NextGen Study/ Metro	Presentation	
10	7.	Eligibility Program Update/ F-Scott Jewell	Presentation	
30	8.	CAC Elections Process and Voting/ Rycharde Martindale	Information	14
10	9.	OPS Report/ Mike Greenwood	Presentation	

10	10.	CAC Bylaws/ Matthew Avancena	Information
5	11.	Listening in to CAC meetings/ Matthew Avancena	Information
3	12.	New Business Raised Subsequent to the Posting of the Agenda	Possible Action
	13.	Adjournment	Action

*Access Services does not discriminate on the basis of disability. Accordingly, Access Services seeks to ensure that individuals with disabilities will have an equal opportunity to participate in the range of Access Services events and programs by providing appropriate auxiliary devices and services to facilitate communication. In determining the type of auxiliary devices and services for communication that will be provided, primary consideration is given to the request of the individual with disabilities. However, the final decision belongs to Access Services. To help ensure availability of those auxiliary devices and services you require, please make every effort to notify Access Services of your request at least three (3) business days (72 hours) prior to the meeting in which you wish to utilize those devices or services. You may do so by contacting (213) 270-6000.*

*Note: Access Services Community Advisory (CAC) meetings are held pursuant to the Ralph M. Brown Act [Cal. Gov. Code §54950] and are open to the public. The public may view and obtain all written information supporting this agenda provided both initially and supplementally prior to the meeting at the agency's offices located at 3449 Santa Anita Avenue, El Monte California and on its website at <http://accessla.org>. Documents, including Power Point handouts distributed to CAC by staff or CAC members at the meeting will simultaneously be made available to the public. Two opportunities are available for the public to address the CAC during a CAC meeting: (1) before a specific agenda item is debated and voted upon regarding that item and (2) general public comment. The exercise of the right to address the CAC is subject to restriction as to time and appropriate decorum. All persons wishing to make public comment must fill out a yellow Public Comment Form and submit it to the CAC secretary. Public comment is generally limited to three (3) minutes per speaker and the total time available for public comment may be limited at the discretion of the Chair. Persons whose speech is impaired such that they are unable to address the board at a normal rate of speed may request the accommodation of a limited amount of additional time from the Chair but only by checking the appropriate box on the Public Comment Form. Granting such an accommodation is in the discretion of the Chair. The CAC will not and cannot respond during the meeting to matters raised under general public comment. Pursuant to provisions of the Brown Act governing these proceedings, no discussion or action may be taken on these matters unless they are listed on the agenda, or unless certain emergency or special circumstances exist. However, the CAC may direct staff to investigate and/or schedule certain matters for consideration at a future CAC Meeting.*

*["Alternative accessible formats are available upon request."](#)*

ITEM 3

## MINUTES

Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting

August 14, 2018

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

### CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Conrad called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

### INTRODUCTIONS

**CAC Members Present:** Michael Conrad, Chair; Maria Aroch, First Vice-Chair; Olivia Almalel; Marie Francois; Wendy Cabil; Liz Lyons; Michael Arrigo; Kurt Baldwin; Tina Fofoa; Dina Garcia; Terri Lantz; Rachele Goeman; Jesse Padilla.

**CAC Members Not Present:** Gordon Cardona

**Board Members Present:** None.

**Access Services Staff Present:** Matthew Avancena; Randy Johnson; Mike Greenwood; Beth Ross; Susanna Cadenas; Sharon Astier; LaTisha Wilson; Art Chacon; Rogelio Gomez; Alex Chrisman; Bill Tsuei.

**Guests Present:** Dianne Lee (Cambria Technology); Jacqueline Sanchez (California Transit Inc.); Annette Arriola (Alta Resources); Katherine George Chu (Guest); Mr. Chu (Guest); Tonni Yee-Hemphill (QSS); Victor Dominguez (QSS); Yael Hagen (Rider); William Zuke (QSS); Wilma Ballew (Rider); Zayra Mindoiola (Metro); Victor Garate (Global Paratransit, Inc.); Karen Gilbert (MTM); Mary Griffitheth (Rider); Desiree Boykin (Guest).

### REVIEW & APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Conrad asked for a motion to approve the July 10, 2018 minutes.

Motion: Member Lyons

Seconded: Member Goeman

Motion: Passed.

Abstention: Wendy Cabil

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Victor Dominguez suggested that staff should update the Spanish Info-line.

Matthew Avancena assigned LaTisha Wilson to speak to Mr. Dominguez after the meeting.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

Matthew Avancena announced that Director Ida had to attend another meeting and would not be able to provide a board report.

## OPERATIONS PERFORMANCE UPDATE

Alex Chrisman, Project Administrator, presented the Operations Performance report for the month of July 2018. Operations met all Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the month of July 2018. He indicated that the July KPI data was not available for Preventable Incidents, Preventable Collisions and Miles between Road Calls. We now have a starter in the Northern Region at the Olive View Medical Center in Sylmar. The Starter's responsibility is to monitor and facilitate transportation, and also assists with transfer trips Monday through Friday during all transfer times. Additional transportation coordinators are stationed at Braille Los Angeles and Rancho Los Amigos in Downey. Mr. Chrisman announced that the West Central region received four Dodge Caravans in July and the Southern region would receive 10 Caravans sometime in August 2018. Additionally, the Antelope Valley region received four new cutaways back in May 2018.

Community Meeting Highlights included:

- Community meetings were held in all regions during June and July
- 142 people attended including 118 riders
- Presentations regarding the "Where's my Ride" app and Operational Performance was provided to riders
- Question and Answer sessions were held at each meeting
- Common rider concerns included travel time, share rides and routing.

Members Discussion:

Member Goeman stated that the Community meetings were boring compared to the 2017 meetings.

Mr. Chrisman thanked Ms. Goeman for her comment. He would definitely take that into consideration and try to come up with other ideas to make it more interesting.

Member Baldwin made a statement pertaining to performance measurements. He knows that trips could take a long time. He suggested including all of the trip lengths in the Board Box that would be helpful for people to understand excessively long trips are not the only trips that take longer than a comparable fixed route.

Mr. Chrisman thanked Mr. Baldwin for his comment and stated that he would take that under advisory.

Member Cabil asked Mr. Chrisman to elaborate more on denials. She asked how many people attended the Antelope Valley community meeting. Additionally, both the Community

Advisory Committee (CAC) and a Community Meeting was scheduled for the same day. Lastly, Ms. Cabil asked if a standby trip list exist.

Mr. Chrisman replied a denial is offering anything on either side or outside a requested trip time. An offer should be one hour before or somewhere within the requested time range. Secondly, approximately 10 people attended the community meeting in Antelope Valley. There is definitely an opportunity for improvement and we will do all we can to make sure that does not happen again. Lastly, we do not have a standby list.

Member Arrigo suggested including giveaways at future Community meetings.

Member Garcia asked would a denial count against a rider if they deny the requested time offered.

Mr. Chrisman replied no, that would not count against a rider.

Chairperson Conrad suggested including games and other activities at future Community meetings.

#### CAC OFFICER NOMINATIONS

Matthew Avancena informed the CAC Members that Rycharde Martindale was unable to attend the August 14, 2018 meeting. Mr. Avancena provided an update pertaining to the officer nominations process. The bylaws requires the formation of an officer Nominating Subcommittee of 3-5 CAC members. We received only one volunteer at the July meeting. Mr. Martindale reached out again to the committee approximately two weeks after that meeting requesting additional volunteers. Unfortunately, we did not receive any additional volunteers and we do not have enough members to form a nomination subcommittee. Staff is proposing to ask for nomination from the membership at the September 11, 2018 meeting and there would be a direct vote of the committee to select the CAC officers for the Chair and Vice-chair. Mr. Martindale plans to ask for candidate statements from those who want to run for the officer positions prior to the September meeting. The meeting would allow the candidates to give their speech as to why they should be elected chair or vice-chair and the committee would have an opportunity to vote.

Member Comments:

Member Goeman stated that the committee would have to do what is necessary to move forward before Mr. Conrad fulfills his tenure.

Member Arrigo stated that he agrees with Member Goeman comment.

Chair Conrad concurred as well as Member Lantz.

Mr. Avancena, in closing, stated that for those who are interested in the Chair and Vice-Chair position to reach out to both he and Mr. Martindale if you have not done so in order that we

can make note of your interest. Mr. Martindale will then send out a request for your candidate statements to be included in the member packet.

Member Lantz asked could they nominate someone.

Mr. Avancena replied you can do that and just let staff know.

## CHATBOT

Bill Tsuei, Director of Information Technology, shared that Access is trying to introduce a new technology that is available to the blind and low vision people that use Access Services. He introduced Dianna Lee from Cambria Solutions.

Ms. Lee provided background information pertaining to Cambria Solutions. This company is an IT and Management consulting firm that works with the public sector, agencies and organizations. Approximately, two years ago Cambria Solutions developed an online rider Id request system that allows a person to obtain an Access rider Id number for their eligibility application process. Secondly, Cambria Solutions is currently working with the Access' IT team on developing ride scheduling online. A rider can access the website by using their smart phone. Ms. Lee reviewed the Conversational User Interface (CUI).

- The Conversational User Interface (CUI) is known as a chatbot service.
- The CUI is designed to simulate a conversation with human users by leveraging artificial intelligence and natural language processing.
- This new technology allows you to speak and switch over to different languages.
- The Chatbot system actually mimics a person speaking and will talk to you like a real person.
- Identifies a person's difficulty speaking clearly.
- The technology recognizes a person's frustration and the system will say, "I'm sorry I will reroute the caller to an operator" and a live person would assist the caller.
- The system can also identify different variations in words. Example: yes or yeah

A chatbot is also known as virtual agents; talking heads; robotic process automation and other terminologies. Consumers have reported that chatbots provide three potential benefits: 24-hour service, instant responses, and answers to simple questions. Ms. Lee stated that 30 percent of tech interactions would be through voice in 2018. Cost savings from chatbots are expected to be over \$8 billion by 2022 and 80 percent of organizations are already using or intend to use chatbots by 2020. Additionally, thirty percent of government employee tasks are predicted to be assisted by Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the next decade. Chatbots use two basic processes to ensure security. 1) Authentication- the process of verifying a user's identity. 2) Authorizations- the process of granting a user permission to execute a given task. Lastly, Ms. Lee demonstrated a test version on how to obtain a rider Id number and how to schedule a ride through the chatbot service. The system validated the trip request by providing a map of the pick-up and drop off locations to the rider.

Members Comments:

Member Lantz asked was the system tested to identify and respond back to people with speech difficulty and for those who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). Ms. Lee replied the system has not been tested to identify speech difficulties nor AAC. The AI system will recognize a person's voice after multiple uses of the system. If Access were to build something like this system her team would actually gather as many testers so that the system would get acquainted and familiar with the different speech difficulties.

Member Baldwin clarified the statement referring to the chatbot system being ADA friendly, which means another way for people to interface with a computer program through voice. He stated that Access Services consist of mostly older people and they do not like the bot interface. Member Baldwin expressed that the computers cannot do everything and we need people to interface with other people in order to make this process not so complicated for the riders.

Mr. Tsuei replied we are not trying to replace anything we are just trying to provide other options. In the real world we would try to accommodate the three options similar to what you have experienced through the customer service reservation line and try to mimic or mirror that particular process. We are just trying to show the potential of this particular technology.

Member Francois asked what is the capacity of this program and can it withstand any emergencies? Additionally, she made a comment pertaining to ridership and financial growth, stating that this would be a costly investment.

Ms. Lee replied it depends on how we structure and build the program and we would need to determine what the things we have to account for are. The capacity would continue to increase in order to accommodate ridership growth and whenever you grow anything there is going to be an investment. In addition, there may not be any cost savings in the beginning.

Member Goeman asked what conditions would be built in for those who do not have a Smartphone. Secondly, she asked would there be a backup question regarding equipment when it pertains to a service animal? Such as; "do you need an approach". Lastly, Ms. Goeman believes this is going to be a great investment for Access' and she concurs with Ms. Francois comment pertaining to the program expensive cost.

Ms. Lee replied to the approach on the service animal. This was designed purely on what we understand of the process through the online application that her team built. We would definitely team with Access to determine the best design in order to meet the rider's accommodations and address all the different variations if Access decided to build this program. Ms. Lee stated that the technology cost is rather inexpensive and it would cost approximately \$250,000 to start the program. The program would be easy to build most likely within a 6 weeks' timeframe. If we attempt to build too much then it would most likely increase riders frustration and then they would never want to use it. For people who do not have Smartphones the issue would always be there and they would have to call customer service representative.

Member Garcia expressed her concerns about the system being able to recognize voice variations. Ms. Garcia asked if she could text instead.

Ms. Lee replied the other option would be to go online onto the computer and use the IM chat and the chatbot could have the same ability as well. She could also text as well.

Member Cabil asked what is the timeframe to make a decision on the chatbot program for the future. Secondly, she asked would this service be available 24 hours.

Mr. Avancena replied this is just a demo at this point. Staff just wanted to show the members what potential technology Access is looking into and this is going to be a long-term decision to make.

Ms. Lee replied yes it could be a 24-hour service.

Member Lyons stated that she usually gets frustrated due to her speech problem. She suggested to provide the option to press zero to get a live person.

Ms. Lee replied we can design the system to meet many of the rider's challenges and others may have to speak to a live person to address their needs.

Member Padilla stated that it would be nice to include the Where's my Ride app into the Chatbot system.

Member Baldwin emphasized that we do not want people to get to the frustration level and that is the reason for customer service.

Member Lantz stated that there are technologies that have been developed for people who have disabilities and speech impairment that use computers. She suggested reaching out to other vendors that have experience in a specialized technology that could help in anyway, instead of reinventing the wheel. The "Where's my Ride" app has been incredibly helpful for people who are trying to assist individuals that may not be able to fully use the technology and don't have a Smartphone. They are starting to see people with disabilities have better use of the WMR app.

Ms. Lee replied we do not plan to reinvent the wheel. We plan to engage and gather the member's thoughts and experiences into this new technology

Mr. Tsuei replied moving forward, staff plans to form different test groups. In addition, we plan to meet with Operations and invite the CAC members to determine what areas to incorporate into the design, then come back to get the CAC members to get their approval.

Member Almalel thanked Ms. Lee for the presentation. Ms. Almalel made a comment in regards to reservations and routing software. She believes not all of the regions use the same routing software. She asked if the new technology would work in tandem with the different types of software being utilized now along with a live agent in tandem. In addition, would the system provide an opt out button to speak to a live person, should there be that frustration level with the systems?

Mr. Tsuei replied similar to the online booking, we plan to go region to region and work with the providers on their app and try to provide a generic prototype. The app would look the same in all of the regions.

Public Comment:

Yael Hagen stated that she is quite familiar with dictating to voice recognition software. So that leaves room for error that is unprotected is great. For example, I say to the computer my name, it may spell it incorrectly. She suggested that in order for this not to be an issue, the system should read and spell back letter by letter to avoid confusion.

Katherine George Chu stated that she loves this ideal and where it is headed. She believes this service would take Access" into the future and she is not familiar with the online rider's ID program. Ms. Chu stated that the millennials prefer the new technology rather than calling to speak to a live person. This program would benefit them greatly.

Chairperson Conrad thanked Ms. Lee for providing a very informative presentation.

#### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Beth Ross presented the Emergency Management update. Staff completed the Federal Emergency Management (FEMA) training along with Local and State certified emergency training. In addition, staff conducted a Government Emergency Telecommunication Service drill. Access updated their Severe Weather Annex Emergency Plan.

- Developed performance standards to track emergency management progress
- Staff participated in two Southern California Catastrophic Earthquake Plan workshops with local, regional, state and federal partners

Ms. Ross stated that staff attended transportation mutual assistance and operational area training exercise subcommittee meetings. Staff also provided valuable paratransit insight at the Silver Jackets Army Corp of Engineers as well as an emergency preparedness update at all six of the community meetings. On July 7, 2018, the Los Angeles Emergency Management Department requested Access' assistance to evacuate and transport 11 disabled residents from the Rehabilitation Centre of Beverly Hills due to a power outage. An after action report was developed to look at what we did right and what we could do better next time. Lastly, Ms. Ross reviewed the Excessive Heat Preparedness and provided the cooling centers in LA County.

Member Arrigo stated that you had mentioned many events attended by staff and suggested that the CAC Members should have been invited.

Ms. Ross replied unfortunately, some of the events are closed off and other agencies have their own invite list. She would definitely look into other agencies that could come out to present at the CAC meetings.

Public Comment:

Yale Hagen stated that there should be a policy in place for people to take shelter during the event of excessive heat. There is nothing in place to help riders. Such as: allowing extra time to come from a shelter area to the vehicle, which would be a lot more helpful. The emergency plan should also speak to riders experiences.

Member Lantz stated that Access use to have backup vehicles in case of a stranded rider and wonder if that is still in place. If so, how many and where are they stationed?

Mike Greenwood replied yes Access still has the ability through OMC to call on a backup provider to provide emergency service for a rider that is stranded or missed their trip due unforeseen circumstances. The volume of backup service usage is lower than what it used to be and part of is that we require a contractor to resolve an issue before it gets to were a backup is needed.

Ms. Lantz stated there have been times were she had to ask for a supervisor due to a provider would not provide backup vehicle. She suggested that Access' should include training for the providers and OMC and find out what is really going on.

Mr. Greenwood replied OMC provides the backup vehicles.

Member Baldwin commented that riders should not have to wait in excessive heat.

Member Goeman stated that she has called OMC and 95 percent of the time they do not have any back up vehicles and you have to wait two hours.

Chairperson Conrad stated that OMC use to send out back up vehicles when it was really needed. OMC will turn you over to the provider and say we do not have any back up vehicles.

Member Almalel she had a driver suggest what about the possibility of an automated call out if your ride is going to show up after the twenty-minute window. She experienced two incidents were drivers was sent to lunch as they received her trip. Therefore, the driver have to have their thirty-minute lunch and get to the rider. She suggested that maybe dispatch should inform riders that are stranded in the heat to know we are doing the best we can to make sure you are safe. Riders want to know that staff cares for their safety.

### CAC BYLAWS

Matthew Avancena announced the CAC September meeting will be held at Access Services Headquarters in the Council Chambers due to all of the Metro conference rooms are reserved. Staff will be on site as well as signage to assist.

Member Baldwin stated that he has been to the El Monte location a couple of times. He stated that the El Monte is an impossible place to get to for most of the people in the Valley, North and West Los Angeles areas. He suggested that if El Monte is the only place to have the CAC meeting then that should not be the day to have the officer elections.

Member Lantz concurred with Mr. Baldwin statement. She stated that the building address is a bit challenging to find and if you drive parking is a real concern. She can no longer walk from the parking located in the far back. The ADA requires an accessible path to a building.

Mr. Avancena replied we will work with our providers and staff to make sure that there is ample signage and direction given and make your trip as easy as possible to avoid any complications. Mr. Avancena asked the CAC members would they opposed to postponing the elections until the October meeting back at the Metro location.

Chairperson Conrad asked when does the Chair term end?

Mr. Avancena replied according to the bylaws the term ends in September and since we have a unique situation where we need folks to be present in order for their voices to be heard. There is flexibility in the bylaws for an additional month as CAC Chair.

All members agreed to move the officer elections to the October meeting.

Member Goeman stated that the month of September's weather would be in the nineties. She suggested that the rides should be on time and provide enough seating for the riders in the lobby.

#### MEMBER COMMUNICATION

None.

#### NEW BUSINESS RAISED SUBSEQUENT TO THE POSTING OF THE AGENDA

None.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Chair Conrad asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Member Goeman

Second: Member Francois

The meeting adjourned at 2:59 pm.

September 11, 2018

TO: ACCESS COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FROM: R. P. Martindale-Essington, Customer Relations Supervisor

RE: CAC Officer Direct Nomination Process

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ISSUE:

Three (3) volunteers could not be found to sit on the CAC Officer Nominations Subcommittee to fulfill the requirements of Article V in the CAC Bylaws. Therefore, selection of a CAC Chair and First Vice-Chair will proceed by a vote of CAC members present as directed by Article V.

In short, the Officer Nomination Subcommittee process of identifying, selecting a Chairperson and First Vice-Chairperson will be skipped, and we will move to the next part of the process in the Bylaws, direct voting for each position.

BACKGROUND:

At the July 10, 2018 CAC meeting, staff asked for 3-5 volunteers to serve on the Officer Nominations Subcommittee. This Subcommittee was to identify and screen candidates desiring to fill upcoming officer positions. Unfortunately, only one volunteer could be identified. Without a Subcommittee, the next allowable way under the Bylaws is to select candidates by direct vote. This process will involve officer candidates preparing a short Candidate Statement to be sent out to all CAC members, a 3-5 minute campaign speech to the CAC, and voting by a secret ballot process to protect members' privacy.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff receive candidates' prepared written statements, which will then be distributed to the full CAC prior to the October 9, 2018 meeting. At the October meeting, candidates will be given three-five (3-5) minutes each to give a presentation explaining their reasons for wanting to hold office. After all candidates have made their presentations, secret ballots will be distributed and then collected. Access staff will count these ballots and announce the vote count of each candidate to the CAC. In the event that there is a tie vote for a specific office, a run-off election will be held using the same ballot process and again, the results will be counted by Access staff and reported to the CAC. The candidate with the highest number of votes will

be declared the winner of the specific office sought. The winning candidates for each office will then be submitted to the Access Board of Directors for ratification.