

access

AGENDA

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) MEETING

Tuesday, July 11, 2023

1:00 pm - 3:15 pm

3449 Santa Anita Avenue
3rd Floor Council Conference Room
El Monte, CA 91731

Remote Public Link - <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86845911361>

Dial In - 888 788 0099 (Toll Free) or
669 900 6833

Meeting Number - is 868 4591 1361

*Please see note below.

<i>Time</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Description/Presenter</i>	<i>Disposition</i>	<i>Pages</i>
4	1.	Call to Order/Roll Call	Action	
2	2.	Review & Approval of Minutes of June 13, 2023	Action	5-15
10	3.	General Public Comments	Information	
8	4.	Board Member Report	Information	
13	5.	Executive Director's Report - Andre Colaiace	Information	
20	6.	Transfer Trip Update- Garrett Rodriguez	Possible Action	
8	7.	Vehicle Cleanliness - Colin Obeso	Information	

15	8.	Access to Work Program Update - Eric Haack	Discussion
11	9.	Operations Report - Anthony Santiago	Presentation
10	10.	Member Communications	Information
8	11.	Subcommittee Updates - Karen Gilbert, Susanna Cadenas, Mike Greenwood, Matthew Avancena	Information
1	12.	Adjournment	Action

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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.

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2. Enter an email address and your name. Your name will be visible online while you are speaking.
3. When the Committee Chair calls for the item on which you wish to speak, click on "raise hand." Speakers will be notified shortly before they are called to speak. Mute all other audio before speaking. Using multiple devices can cause audio feedback.
4. Please note that the "Chat" feature is not enabled during the meeting for general public attendees. If you cannot use the "raise hand" feature, then please submit a written comment as outlined above.
5. When called, please limit your remarks to three minutes. An audio signal will sound at the three-minute mark and the Chair will have the discretion to mute you at any point after that. After the comment has been given, the microphone for the speaker's Zoom profile will be muted.

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3. When the Committee Chair calls for the item on which you wish to speak, press *9 to raise a hand. Speakers will be notified shortly before they are called to speak. Speakers will be called by the last four digits of their phone number. Please note that phone numbers in their entirety will be visible online while speakers are speaking.

4. When called, please state your name and limit your remarks to three minutes. An audio signal will sound at the three-minute mark and the Chair will have the discretion to mute you at any point after that. After the comment has been given, the microphone for the speaker's Zoom profile will be muted.

5. If you cannot use the "raise hand" feature, then please submit a written comment as outlined above.

MINUTES

Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting

June 13, 2023

1:00 pm - 3:15 pm

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Yael Hagen called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

INTRODUCTIONS

CAC Members Present: Chair; Yael Hagen, Kimberly Hudson, Bhunit Shah, Terri Lantz, Jan Johnson, Rachele Goeman, Scott Barron, Michael Conrad, Wendy Cabil, Olivia Almalel and Liam Matthews, Gordon Cardona, Maria Aroch

CAC Members Not Present: Jesse Padilla

Board Members Present: Martin Gombert

Access Services Staff Present: Matthew Avancena, Veronica Guzman-Vanmarcke, Mike Greenwood, Andre Colaiace, Art Chacon, Karen Gilbert, Rycharde Martindale, Brian Lopez, Susanna Cadenas

Guests Present: None

REVIEW & APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 9, 2023

Chair Hagen asked for a motion to approve the May 9, 2023 minutes.

Motion: Member Hudson

Seconded: Member Goeman

Abstained: Member Shah and Member Cardona

Motion: Passed

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Cindy Soto made a public comment by stating that she is a quadriplegic and uses a motorized wheelchair which has a recline function that she needs to use to maintain her skin integrity. Unfortunately, the drivers put her in the front so that her legs are a bit under the console, and when she has long rides, is uncomfortable. She understands that it is a shared ride, and sometimes needs the room for other wheelchairs but most of the time, she is alone in the vehicle. She would like to speak to someone about

resolving this issue.

Lisa Anderson made a public comment by stating that she has issues when getting picked up, especially when going home, because the drivers don't approach the riders although in the notes to them it says, "please approach rider" and the drivers don't do it.

Carrie Madden made a public comment by stating that she is a systems change advocate at Cal Life Independent Living Center in Los Angeles. They are winding down from Covid and planning events, and she does outreach for events. They have had a lot of concerns about shared rides and the length of time they may be stuck on the vans. At the LA County Fair, a couple weeks ago, two people brought up that they were worried about the extended share rides. Out of the 10 people that attended the event, three of them had three-hour-long share rides. She believes it is difficult to plan events when they know that the consumers are going to be out on the road for such an extended amount of time. She would like someone to reach out to her on this issue.

Victor Dominguez made a public comment by stating that he had a little issue with the reservation line because he was supposed to be at an event. Thankfully, Luis Garcia saved him because when he called the line, he got disconnected. He also knows of some Spanish speakers having trouble getting on the line. He would like a follow up.

BOARD MEMBER REPORT

Director Martin Gombert gave the Board report on the May 9th meeting and on the May 22 committee meetings. There was a presentation made on the customer survey and an update on the TNC pilot project. The audit services contract was awarded. They received an update on the FY24 budget that's being presented to Metro, and that number is now over 270 million. When he joined the Board 12 years ago, it was around 200 million. The most important thing that was reviewed was the service area map policy and has been a big discussion by the CAC members over the last several months. With Metro's NextGen project, eliminating bus routes could have potentially impacted over a thousand Access riders if service had been discontinued. The recommendation was to not reduce service in any area and was approved by the Board.

MEMBER DISCUSSION

Member Lantz thanked Board Director Gombert and asked if she understood correctly about the service area, that there would be no change now, but that there could be a change in the future. Martin Gombert responded that this was approved on May 22nd and no changes will be made. Nothing can be reduced in the service area, unless it goes back to the Board of Directors.

Member Lantz thanked him and the Board because she believes this could have been

a disaster for many riders. Martin Gombert stated that there would be no impact to current or potential future Access members in our service area and he was happy about it.

Member Johnson stated that she knows of a rider that has already been cut off from service. Chair Hagen responded that happened many years ago and it didn't happen again.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Andre Colaiace stated that Metro's Finance Budget and Audit committee would be hearing about Access's budget the next day. Assuming it passed tomorrow, it will then be placed on the full metro agenda the following week. In terms of what the process is, the budget was already reviewed in May by the Planning Development committee, and the full Access Board of Directors will hear the budget on June 26th. Once Metro approves funding, and then the Board approves the more detailed budget. They will then work on developing a memorandum of understanding or MOU between Access and Metro. Board member Theresa De Vera and Randy Johnson met with him last week with State Senator Anthony Portantino and his staff to discuss Senate Bill 411, which would allow Los Angeles neighborhood councils to meet virtually. The bills should be expanded to allow more flexibility for both legislative bodies like the Access Board and advisory bodies like Access' community advisory committee to meet remotely. It was great having Director De Vera there because she is friends with Senator Portantino. They also discussed how virtual meetings really enhanced public participation, particularly for people with disabilities. It is unclear what the future is for Senate Bill 411 and other similar pieces of legislation that look to give local governmental bodies more flexibility.

MEMBER DISCUSSION

Member Lantz asked if there was anything that they as CAC members could or would be helpful in doing before decisions were made. Andre Colaiace responded there is probably something that would be helpful, but he is not sure. He doesn't know off the top of his head where they could continue to advocate but are working with their legislative advocate in the state level, Jason Gonzalez. He will let them know once he knows more.

Member Hudson asked if this could be put forth as a reasonable accommodation for an ADA person. Andre Colaiace stated that has been brought up, but it is a federal conflict that supersedes the State law. Thankfully there are a lot of champions defending this issue. There are logistics behind it. Mrs. Hudson stated she would no longer be able to attend meetings due to her disability and therefore not be able to be part of the CAC.

Chair Hagen stated that this was a good path to stay on and it was important to state

this was an issue on the State level. There are other States that allow virtual participation with no issues. There are people that have stopped participating in some committees because they cannot attend, and virtual meetings are ending.

Member Lantz stated that was her circumstance and it would eliminate many seniors from participating since they are the most vulnerable. Andre Colaiace recommended that they could call their local State Assembly member and Senator.

Member Almalel stated that at one point we will all become disabled and need this service.

Member Johnson stated that if they don't have disabled participants in the people making these laws, they would not have the appropriate knowledge to make an educated decision on this issue.

OFFICER NOMINATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Richard Martindale stated that he would be speaking on the annual officer's selection committee nomination process. He stated they needed to set up a committee to seek out nominations for both the Chair position and Vice Chair position for the CAC. He requested at least three to five members to help them find those nominees. He stated that the people who are thinking of running for those positions do not offer to be on the subcommittees as that would be a conflict of interest.

MEMBER DISCUSSION

Member Lantz made a comment by stating it doesn't take much time to volunteer and encouraged people to do it. She will volunteer if nobody else does but thinks that this is something very easy to do.

After some discussion, Members Cabil, Cardona, and Hudson volunteered to help call the CAC members and get their nominations. Member Lantz made a motion to approve the subcommittee and Member Hudson seconded that motion. Motion passed.

AUGUST 8 GOALS RETREAT

Matthew Avancena stated that the goals retreat would take place on August 8, on the same date as the regular CAC meeting and would be virtual. It would take place from 11am to 3pm or 3:30pm with breaks in between. They met primarily to fine tune the agenda items and whether or not they'll have guest speakers and a workshop at the retreat. They will focus the goals retreat on the goals that were formulated since the last retreat, and a recap or a progress report on the status of those goals since they were formulated.

RIDER'S GUIDE REVISIONS

Mike Greenwood presented the changes that were made to the Rider's Guide. He spoke about changes that came from suggestions from the CAC amongst others. The guide was updated back in April of 2022 and is available in electronic format on the website in multiple formats, including Word and PDF. Hard copies of the Rider's Guide are also available and issued to riders when they go through the eligibility process. They highlighted the expanded reservation hours in the Antelope Valley region that were implemented. The Rider's Guide also received updated information regarding stand signs and scheduling trips to complicated locations. They expanded information regarding the no-show process, including the dispatcher's role in managing that no-show process. They were also informed about the Parents with Disabilities program since it was expanding to go system wide. Updated information for the Lost and Found program was added as well. He went into the different changes made.

MEMBER DISCUSSION

Member Goeman asked if the rider's guide was available in Braille. Mike Greenwood stated they can provide this upon request and an audio version can be sent to them. Chair Hagen stated that the audio part was not included in the Rider's guide. Mike Greenwood took a note to make the addition to the guide in the future.

Chair Hagen encouraged everyone to read the guide and take notes on any input for the future.

Member Almalel stated that there were a lot of good updates for the rider's guide and will reach out to Mike Greenwood for some comments she has.

Member Cabil stated that Mike Greenwood did a great job with this item.

COMPLAINT RESPONSE LETTERS

Susanna Cadenas presented this item by stating that in February of 2019, Access was required to implement the process of offering response types after each complaint, whether via phone or email. They experienced a major shift in how they managed complaint responses. Prior to 2019, only 33% of complaints required responses, as opposed to now at 85% of complaints that require response. A majority of the time is spent either writing to customers or speaking on the phone. Historically Access has maintained an internal response time of 14 calendar days, which requires staff to turn it around rather quickly to maintain the average. Prior to responding to any complaint, she shared what the process entails. Once the initial complaint is entered, the customer relations associates review and assign complaints to themselves while ensuring accuracy of the complaint details and proper distribution of the complaint to the contractor. The contractor is then given seven days to investigate the complaint. The

customer relations associate will then review findings, follow up with the provider for additional information if needed, ensures that proper documentation of staff involved was completed, and may sometimes discuss serious issues or trends with the operations team. Once they are comfortable with the facts of the incident, responses are formulated using various pre-developed responses based on the complaint, with some personalization to address the customer's specific concern. These pre-formulated responses allow them to provide and meet the high demand of responses and help us to work more efficiently. She discussed the structure of the letter and what it included according to the customer's need.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lisa Anderson made a public comment by stating that her complaint is that nobody has called her back for over a month. If it's supposed to be two weeks, that is not her case. She also has issues with what a no-show entail and would like to get a call back.

MEMBER DISCUSSION

Member Hudson made a comment by stating that she sometimes finds the responses to complaints dissatisfying. She thinks they are too generic, and she is not sure if there is something that can be changed in that. Susanna Cadenas asked what she suggests they can do to improve the letters. Member Hudson didn't have a response and asked the members if they had any suggestions.

Member Lantz stated that she has served on subcommittees on this a while ago and these are the comments they heard from people. She knows that people will understand that they are short on drivers, or that a vehicle breaks down and people can forgive those things. What is difficult for the riders is that if their ride is 3-4 hours late and they just apologize without giving a reason, that is upsetting. She thinks an explanation can be helpful and riders would understand more.

Susanna Cadenas responded that this is a good suggestion as far as being a little bit more specific. The contractor does provide them with the findings and so when they do share those things, they let the customers know. There are some limits as to what they can share when it involves staff at the provider site.

Member Cardona stated that general replies are not ok.

Member Goeman stated that the letters are very unfeeling, and she understands that they have a lot of letters go out, but they should make them more personal. She suggests they put a bit more thought into it.

Susanna Cadenas responded that they have gone through different revisions of the letters. In the past couple of weeks, they have had staff working on developing new language because they want to make sure they stay updated with some information.

At the end of the day, there is a process as far as how they work on that.

Susanna Cadenas stated that if they do have more detail on a complaint, then they will include it in the letter. She stated that there is a lot of work that goes into investigating the issues presented to them by the riders. They are also making sure that they're responding to everyone as best as possible within those 14 days.

Vice Chair Matthews stated that in customer service responses in general, whether they are negative or positive, there is value in terms of when responding to customers. Often the way they are left feeling valued as an individual. While Access does have limited resources available to deal with these types of issues, the customer is paying for a service. Helping the individual understand that they couldn't do anything to avoid the circumstance, but the rider holds value as a customer of Access.

Member Johnson stated that in her case there are rides that are long distances and she realizes it's going to take longer, because of traffic or some other reason but she finds the response of, "well it's a rideshare" very disconcerting.

Susanna Cadenas stated that the language is there because typically if they complain about travel time or routing then, the response to the issue is that it is a shared ride service.

Member Johnson stated that she understands that it's a rideshare service but when it's five- or four-hour rides for pickups and drop-offs, they have a problem. Susanna Cadenas responded that she agrees with her and understands.

Member Lantz stated the letter reads in a way that the rider doesn't even know if the person that's writing the letter, knows what happened to them. The letters are all generic and she hasn't seen a letter that was actually addressing the issue. For example, if there was heavy traffic and that was the reason for the late ride, or it was pouring rain or just to acknowledge the circumstance that may have contributed to a no-show or a late ride.

Chair Hagen stated that the riders would like Access to take responsibility for messing up sometimes. It matters to the rider if the letters express some empathy. She suggested the customer service reps maybe take some additional training or some role playing on how to respond appropriately.

Member Almalel stated that when they call customer service, it sometimes sounds like they don't want to talk to them, and she agrees with them expressing more empathy. She herself missed someone's funeral and she will never get that moment back. It impacts more than just the rider, but the people that they're with and their loved ones and the public in general.

Matthew Avancena understands the concerns and it's this is something that they can certainly work on. He wanted to remind them that Susanna Cadenas has a limited staff, and the contractors to a certain extent also have a limited staff. It takes a lot of time to investigate these complaints and at the same time, they have an internal policy to make sure that these complaints are responded to within 14 days. You take this internal policy and have 400 complaints, plus or minus about 400 complaints that Susanna's staff needs to address and respond to. Susanna and her staff are trying to do their best given the limited resources that she has and the contractors. But nevertheless, they will endeavor to work on the tone of the language and hopefully can improve that in the future with your input and suggestions.

Chair Hagen asked if the 14-day internal policy is policy or if it would be better to extend the time longer to allow for a better and thoughtful response. Would this improve the system for not just the riders but staff as well. Susanna responded that they are able to maintain the 14-day response even if they are a bit short on staff.

Member Johnson made a comment by stating that many people are late and sometimes just answering kindly helps many situations.

OPERATIONS REPORT

Brian Lopez gave the Operations report and went through the statistics. The OSMs conduct audits on a daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly basis as shared at the last CAC meeting. Some of the audits that happen quarterly are the call taker and dispatcher file audits. During this process, the OSMs ensure that the call takers and dispatchers at the contractors are receiving the required continuous training each quarter. Last quarter, which was quarter three, there were over 260 files audited during this process by the OSM team. The next round of call taker and dispatcher file audits will be taking place after June when quarter four ends. Moreover, the OSM certified 93 new drivers in May across the board for the service regions. These drivers are documented in a new driver credential audit, which includes reviewing valid driver's licenses, medical cards, live scans, and of course the required training hours, just to name a few.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lisa Anderson made a public comment by asking what the safety booth meant and Brian Lopez responded that safety analyst, Luis Pacheco, went to three regions back in April and this safety booth gave Access and opportunity to visit the providers face to face. He was able to play Access safety videos, set up a wheelchair securement platform, as well as share other safety and operational information.

MEMBER DISCUSSION

Chair Hagen congratulated Sandra on her promotion because she has been working hard.

Member Lantz thanked Brian Lopez and she thinks that's a very creative way of taking that information to the providers so that they're not spending the time on the road away from where they need to be to work.

MEMBER COMMUNICATION

Member Almael thanked everyone for their hard work and the teamwork that they possess in the CAC committee that they are able to get a lot done. She wished everyone a happy 4th of July.

Gordon Cardona said thank you for the presentations to everyone.

Member Lantz thanked Access, especially Andre Colaiace and the Board for their continued support of riders and particularly on the two issues on the Brown Act and meeting remotely. She thanked them for their stance on the three-quarter mile issue. She thanked the staff who supported all the CAC members in the subcommittee meetings and at CAC, and also all the presenters. She told Susanna Cadenas that they do see a difference when they are meeting with her, and her leadership has been great.

Member Goeman thanked the presenters, and she sees a lot of improvement with things, and we just need to keep moving forward.

Member Johnson stated that she was impressed with the presentation and the letters. The biggest issue for her is that the letters lack empathy, but she has seen a lot of improvement even since she has been on the committee.

Member Hudson wished everyone an early happy 4th of July and thanked all of the presenters and Access staff. She feels honored to be a part of the group and happy to be making a difference. Her intention is never to criticize per se but figure out how they can make things better.

Vice Chair Matthews thanked everyone for the work that is currently being done to make the improvements for the ridership of Access. I know there's been a discussion about the limited resources that Access has, but he thinks given what they are trying to do and the goals that they have in mind, that direction and that passion towards making those changes is excellent.

Chair Hagen thanks the committee members for their hard work as well as the staff. She wished Matthew Avancena a happy birthday and Dina Garcia because their birthday was just a little while ago. She is really pleased every time she hears a member

of the community coming and sharing their experiences as well.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Karen Gilbert provided an update on our last eligibility subcommittee, which took place on May 24th, 2023. Metro has a website with information about the marking and tethering program. The subcommittee requested that Access add a link in the Access website to Metro's program. The link was added, but the subcommittee didn't agree with the location of the link because it was too difficult to find. This discussion was added to the CAC agenda for the July meeting. The subcommittee discussed some of the diagnoses that are invisible and how these conditions can be overturned during an appeal if the right questions are not asked at the initial interview. The group inquired about questions asked during the interview by the evaluator. Questions asked during the interview are the same as the Access application. Sometimes the application is completed by someone other than the customer, and these questions need to be asked again. Finally, the subcommittee members decided to share cases that they have advocated for during appeals and then Access can then utilize these cases for case studies with the eligibility contractor.

Susanna Cadenas gave an update on the first two customer service subcommittee meetings. The first one was on April the 20th, followed by May the 17th. They reviewed the requirements for local organizations to become a vendor of Access coupons, including benefits of participating to disperse those coupons. They talked about some suggestions reaching out to various organizations such as regional centers versus West Side as Eastern and North LA County Regional Centers, independently Living Centers, Cal Life, the Chamber of Commerce, senior centers, or just large trip generators. There was a brief discussion on eliciting help from some of the CAC members who may know of other resources to support these efforts. Some additional ideas included forming an email blast to send out to Access contacts for possible interest in selling coupons. She also asked if Access would consider selling coupons at the Abilities Expo or other large outreach events that Access participates in. They are updating the language on the website referring to coupon sales.

Rogelio Gomez gave the operations subcommittee update and stated they met last week on June 7th. The group discussed Access's efforts and challenges with excessively long trips. This discussion included FTA regulations regarding the trip length, Access standards and current performance and contractual penalties applied for not meeting the standard. The subcommittee discussed why some regions are better than others and what can be done in the future to reduce long rides. The subcommittee also prioritized its next two discussion items, transfer trips, and marketing for the upcoming TNC pilot program.

Matthew Avancena stated that in the communications subcommittee, the script is finished, and Josh and Peter are starting to film the video on how to make a reservation or how to reserve your ride. They've done the voiceovers already and they will be

reaching out to the subcommittee members on the filming process for volunteers. On the website subcommittee, they had a very productive discussion on some of the issues with the menus and sub menus that are currently on the website. They are currently picking apart each menu and sub menu to improve it. The goal is to finish all the menus at the next subcommittee meeting. Lastly, he mentioned the Goals retreat that will take place August 8th.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chair asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting in memory of Director Theresa DeVera's father. Member Lantz made the motion to end the meeting. There was a second by Member Johnson. The meeting was adjourned at 3:19 p.m.