

access

AGENDA

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) MEETING

Tuesday, September 12, 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/83016563909>

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

Meeting Number - is 830 1656 3909

*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 July 11, 2023	Action	5-15
10	3.	General Public Comments	Information	
8	4.	Board Member Report	Information	
10	5.	Executive Director's Report - Andre Colaiace	Information	
25	6.	CAC Officer Elections- Rycharde Martindale	Action	
11	7.	Operations Report - Gina Breceda	Presentation	

15	8.	Access Flex Program - Garrett Rodriguez	Information
10	9.	Member Communications	Information
8	10.	Subcommittee Updates - Karen Gilbert, Susanna Cadenas, Mike Greenwood, Matthew Avancena	Information
1	11.	Adjournment	Action

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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.
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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.

<p style="text-align: center;">MINUTES Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting July 11, 2023 1:00 pm - 3:15 pm</p>
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CALL TO ORDER

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

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, Eric Haack, Anthony Santiago, Garrette Rodriguez, Mike Greenwood, Andre Colaiace, Art Chacon, Karen Gilbert, Colin Obeso

Guests Present: None

REVIEW & APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 13, 2023

Chair Hagen asked for a motion to approve the June 13, 2023 minutes.

Motion: Member Johnson
Seconded: Member Hudson
Abstained: Member Padilla, Member Cardona
Motion: Passed

MEMBER DISCUSSION

Chair Hagen stated that there was an error when they stated that the Board of Directors passed the NextGen item, but it was only passed by the subcommittee not at the actual full Board meeting.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

BOARD MEMBER REPORT

Director Martin Gombert gave a brief overview of the June 26th Board meeting. The Board approved the FY 23-24 budget, which totaled \$272 million dollars and \$36 million of that was capital expenditures. That makes Access the second largest transit agency in Southern California behind Metro. The Board also approved architectural and engineering service contract for the Antelope Valley facility so they can get started on designing that facility, preparing bid specifications to put out the construction bid. The third item was the consideration to approve the service area policy map. Metro's Next Gen bus system eliminated some bus routes from areas that contained Access passengers, specifically the Porter Ranch area by the 118 freeway. The Board action which was approved was the ADA paratransit service will be based on the 2019 ADA service area map and will be expanded based on subsequent fixed route service changes. He stated that no service area reduction shall occur without Board approval.

MEMBER DISCUSSION

Member Lantz thanked Director Gombert for his report and his continued interest in the CAC. She appreciates the Board and having his presence at their meetings.

Chair Hagen stated that as a person who would have been affected by the service area change, the Board's and staff support is very important. She appreciates their support on this issue.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Andre Colaiace stated that Director Gombert did a great job of giving them an overview of the Board meeting. He stated that the FY 24 budget is exciting because it's the first budget in Access history to have funding for their own operations and maintenance facility in Lancaster, California. They are looking for other sites around the county in each of the regions where they can have control of their own operations and maintenance facilities. They think it is very important to the future of the agency. He also added that when talking about funding for capital for facilities, they have to talk about funding, and the regional transit budget is always competitive. There are always a lot of worthy projects that are looking for funding. When Access comes up with a project, he always thinks it's worthy but understands that there are part of a larger regional funding pot and there are a lot of worthy projects competing for those transit funds. They are looking at the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic games as a potential funding source. They did meet with the Metro staff responsible for what's called the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic mobility concept plan. They were informed that a project for Access, which is still not defined, is a facility and also has to do with electric vehicles and charging infrastructure. It's one of the top 15 priorities for the region as it seeks additional infrastructure funding from state and federal partners. They were asked to develop a facility and electric vehicle project that can be presented to funding partners by the end of the year.

They are continuing their search for appropriate land parcels in the downtown area that could be the basis for their facilities project that would help them serve the 2028 games and benefit Access and the customers in the decades to come again. They are looking for a facility that they could sell to help them serve the games in terms of the geography. It is a tight market in Los Angeles County, but they have some prospects they are looking at. They were recently invited by Nuria Fernandez, who is the administrator of the Federal Transit Administration to an in-person meeting in Washington DC that was related to issues of transit bus automation technology. Randy Johnson and Bill Tsuei represented Access at this event and participants shared their automation visions, including the use of novel design, automated vehicles, and concerns for discussion. They also discussed key federal regulatory and policy challenges related to the deployment of automated vehicles and explored scenarios for operating AVs on public roadways or transit service. Access presented lessons learned from our accessible autonomous vehicle project, which was funded by a federal grant. They made sure that the concept of accessibility was part of the meeting in Washington DC.

MEMBER DISCUSSION

Member Lantz thanked Andre Colaiace for coming to their meetings and giving them a broader view of what's going on with Access.

Chair Hagen stated that concerns have been raised in the past about electrical vehicles and their ability to serve a paratransit type of system because of their limitations. They don't even know what their limitations are, and they could potentially present some serious issues if their capacity isn't their capacity to travel for long distances. Considering LA County and its traffic issues. She can think of projects that might be more useful during the Olympics for the population that will be using it while they're attending the Olympiads or especially the Paralympics, and that is same-day service. Same-day service might be something that might be better than electric vehicles as they might be problematic.

Andre Colaiace stated that they obviously won't purchase vehicles that are not useful in their service. In the budget there's funding for an additional couple electric vehicles that they can test in the different regions to see how they perform in paratransit service. The most important thing is to have an operating facility to operate out of no matter what types of vehicles there are. They just need vehicles that will pick people up on time and the type of propulsion system is important, but obviously not of primary importance. They will be testing out the electric vehicles and see if they can find one that's helpful in their service and if they will pitch it to the Olympics.

Chair Hagen stated that she agrees with the operating facility. Just getting more vehicles that are tried and true might be a little more helpful than ones that they are not quite sure about.

Member Hudson stated that her husband drives a hybrid with a lift and sometimes deploying the lift can drain the specialized batteries. The added equipment can overwhelm it so there are some limitations with hybrids. She encourages them to look into it first before purchasing.

Andre Colaiace stated that they have additional funding in the budget and will be testing three vehicles in different regions to see how they operate.

Member Hudson stated that she is excited for the new programs based on the added amount of people that are going to be there for the Olympics. She has concerns about getting funding and then after the Olympics are over, they might get spoiled by some specialized programs that they don't have the money for afterwards.

Andre Colaiace stated that Metro is in the beginning stages of putting together a transit and transportation plan. He used to work for a company and that company had been involved in various Olympics and apparently for the 1984 Olympics, they told everyone to stay home and the freeways in Los Angeles were pretty open. He assumes the region is going to do something similar with a focus on people working from home. They did request to be a part of the planning team to give input.

TRANSFER TRIP UPDATE

Garrett Rodriguez presented the transfer trips update. He stated that it is an extended service connecting the Antelope Valley and Santa Clarita region with the West Central, Northern, Southern, and Eastern service regions. They have also included transfers between the Antelope Valley and Santa Clarita region. These services go beyond what the Americans with Disabilities Act requires because there's no local fixed route service connecting the Antelope Valley and Santa Clarita region with the rest of the regions or the Antelope Valley to the Santa Clarita region. Transfer trip fares are \$2.75 cents for 19.9 miles or less, and \$3.50 for 20 miles or more. Mileage is based on the total distance of both legs from start to finish. Fare is collected by the originating contractor and PCA's ride for free. In July 2019, prior to the expansion, there were four times going to Santa Clarita and three times going to Antelope Valley during the weekdays. As of July 2019, the service was expanded to eight trips on weekdays. Lastly, with tremendous collaboration with the Op's subcommittee CAC members, they are creating and going to conduct a rider survey for frequent transfer trip riders with three to five questions to better assist them in performing transfer trips at a high level.

MEMBER DISCUSSION

Member Lantz made a comment by thanking him and asking if they have the same riders riding multiple times. She asked how many riders are involved in these trips. Garrett Rodriguez responded that it includes the legs of the trips. To get the riders per trip, they need to get more of that information.

Member Padilla asked concerning the funding of this and asked if they wanted to transfer into another county. He sees Santa Clarita and Antelope Valley but doesn't see San Bernardino or Orange County. He asked if it was the same process to transfer to those counties. Garrett Rodriguez responded those are not their areas and doesn't have data on that.

Member Almalel asked that regarding locations do they have an actual list of addresses that people utilize for transfer points. She knows people that transfer to other regions. If someone was to ask her to make a transfer trip, she doesn't have an address to give them or to utilize for them to feel confident enough to make a trip. They just have a list of these addresses to go down to Orange County. She knows a lot of people use Disneyland or a McDonald's but it's always word of mouth. It isn't a set of addresses that are safe to use if they need to transfer to a different region. Garrett Rodriguez stated they were only talking about LA County transfer trips. No other counties as far as going to Orange or San Bernardino Counties at the moment.

Member Almalel asked if someone could reach out to her and let her know if there is an actual list somewhere of addresses that people can utilize.

Chair Hagen asked Mike Greenwood if he knew if customer service had some ideas for transfers to other outside counties. Mike Greenwood stated that there is no list of addresses because there are only two. All transfer trips occur at Olive View Medical Center in Sylmar, except if you are transferring between Antelope Valley and Santa Clarita, you can transfer at McDonald's on Golden Valley Road. Mike added that if they want to transfer to Orange County or Omnitrans, they can book any address that is served by those two agencies and is within both of those agency service areas. Customer service will recommend some for them, there might be common areas with lighting and restrooms and places like that.

Chair Hagen stated that if she is visiting her family in Santa Clarita she uses her address as the pick-up address, and the drop-off address would be either my parents' house or my brother's house in that area. This is only for trips from LA that are going to Santa Clarita or Antelope Valley and use their destination as the address. She stated that part of the issue of these transfers is that it takes a very long time to complete a trip like that. They would have to leave their house an hour and a half prior to that transfer time. Even if you live 10 minutes away from the transfer point in Olive View, they will still have to leave your house an hour and a half early. She asked if they could make that time a little bit more feasible and not have to leave their home too early in the morning.

Member Padilla asked what the difference with the transfer trips are and if they could just make a reservation for any other regular trip, but to transfer to another county. He stated that they could take a trip to any of those addresses at that agency's services, but then wouldn't there be a paperwork process for that to get your information. Garrett Rodriguez responded that this information is for LA County, not the other counties.

Member Hudson asked if the appointment was early, and they have to fit their appointments within the set schedule at the transfer points. Mike Greenwood responded they have already expanded the transfers from four to eight so there is no change they are planning to make now.

Member Lantz asked if there was a video or information on how to complete a transfer trip. It sounds so complicated and intimidating for riders. She would love to see this as a future topic for the CAC, to have somebody go through this with them so that they understand it, those of them who haven't taken the trips, could better explain it to somebody.

Chair Hagen responded that there is nothing confusing about the transfer trips because everything that happens about the transfer happens behind the scenes. As a rider, they call the region in which you are originating the trip and book their ride as normal. The rest of the information will come from the reservationist. They will guide every rider who is doing that, and everything is done in the background in terms of that transfer. There is very little chance of getting stranded because there is a starter at the transfer point. The only time that it becomes an issue is if you don't make it to the transfer on time.

Member Johnson stated that all it takes is for one of the groups to have some shared rides or they are stuck in a traffic jam, and they will miss the other rides. If they are somewhere in Santa Clarita, they are way past the transfer point and stuck there. Mike Greenwood asked if she was talking about transfer trips within LA County or about inter-agency transfer trips.

Chair Hagen asked if she was transferring to Santa Clarita or to Antelope Valley, which is still part of LA County, where there is no chance of getting stranded because there is a starter there waiting to help them. When they are going from LA County to another county, that's not the same kind of transfer and that's a totally different scenario, because they are going between two different systems.

Member Johnson asked about the County-to-County transfers. Chair Hagen stated that they would bring this back as a future agenda item.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Cesar Mendez made a public comment by stating that he is an employee with Access Services. He is there to take down notes for any public comments for the CAC meetings, but he wanted to reassure everybody who uses Access Services. He came to work for Access from a provider since last December of last year. He stated that anyone who takes transit trips, they try their very best to make it as simple as possible. They always try to use the best transfer times to book their trip the best way. If there is a trip that surpasses 30 miles from point A to the halfway point, then they would disclose that with the supervisor. The representative and the supervisor would come to a conclusion

to see if they need to make this trip earlier or not. He wanted to reassure them that they try their best to accommodate the riders and make it as short as possible.

VEHICLE CLEANLINESS

Colin Obeso presented on the road safety inspectors' Vehicle Cleanliness Inspection program. Staying on top of the vehicles requires multiple layers of maintenance. Mechanics, IT, and other departments conduct a variety of vehicle inspections for proper upkeep. An inspection is conducted by the road safety inspectors, or the RSI team. Vehicle Cleanliness Inspection was created from comments received at meetings like community outreach and CAC.

MEMBER DISCUSSION

Member Padilla stated that he is glad this is on the agenda, especially with all the germs out there after COVID. A lot of people are still getting sick, especially with the bad weather, it makes a lot more people sick. He is glad to see that there's a cleanliness protocol in place.

Member Cardona stated that sometimes he notices the area under the driver's seat is very dirty.

Chair Hagen stated that it has happened before, and she has reported this. She could not see the dirt but could feel it. Drivers must sit in the vehicles all day and she feels like they should keep them clean for both them and the rider. If a vehicle is pulled to get cleaned then it hopefully, doesn't sit out for a long time to get cleaned. Colin Obeso responded that is correct and the vehicles are cleaned quickly.

Member Johnson stated that she often finds junk and trash in the cup holders. She said it's the driver's responsibility to remove this trash. If there happens to be a service animal that has to sit on a sticky or dirty floor, it's not cheap to take them to get groomed.

Member Almalel stated that the ramps are hard to keep clean but it's necessary to do it. The drivers throw the seatbelts on the floor, and they get dirty, or the seatbelts are also smelly from spit or other liquids and should be cleaned. There are people who eat or vomit and spill in the vehicles, so they really need to keep them clean.

Chair Hagen asked if there could be some sort of system to keep the seatbelt straps stored in place where they don't sit on the floor and get dirty. She was happy to see wipes available in the vehicles during COVID and maybe they should bring that back.

ACCESS TO WORK PROGRAM UPDATE

Eric Haack gave an update on the program. The Access to Work program started from the awarding of a federal grant that was under the Job Access Reverse Commute program. The program permitted Access to do was to modify traditional Access trips for work-based paratransit. The trips going to work, and the trips were designed so that a person could get to their place of employment or job training by their work start time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mel Bailey made a public comment by stating that he didn't receive the survey and wondered if they only went out to those who are registered as using Access to Work. A couple of years ago he asked operations about the Access to Work program, because he travels all the way from the borders of Compton to east San Fernando Valley every day. He was told that because of the low income, he wouldn't qualify and found it discriminatory. He would be able to afford it and said he would even pay the regular fare just so that he doesn't have to leave home three hours earlier just to get to work. He was told that that was not something that would even be considered because of the grant. Will Access continue without the grant, and if so, it would benefit those who are not on a low income as shown by the survey findings.

MEMBER DISCUSSION

Member Cardona stated that it is a wonderful service but thankfully he is only five minutes from work.

Member Johnson stated that when they did the survey on the ones they took the rides regardless of the fare, no matter whether there are hardships, and they want to keep their job, they had no choice. If that was the only way to get there, they did it regardless.

Chair Hagen stated that they should keep the fare at \$2 dollars because these trips are considered a financial burden to many.

Member Almalel asked if the same restrictions will stay in place. If they have to have the same pickup and drop off address. Eric Haack responded that this program operates similar to a standing time order, and it works best is if you are going to a same employment place one time a week, three times a week, five times a week, but you're starting from one location and going to that same location on a repeating time.

Member Almalel stated that she had issues with physical therapy at different times of the day. Chair Hagen stated that this was the time to make any suggestions for modifications or ways of getting around that.

Eric Haack stated that she could change the standing order so that it is updated to the new schedule. If they are just changing times, he recommends they do it as soon as they know the change is coming. They need to tell the contractor as soon as possible to work with them. It can take as long as four weeks to make changes.

Chair Hagen stated that some flexibility is needed, and she would be remiss to not include a couple of things since she represents the Personal Assistance Services Council. They work with people who are home care workers and those who need home care workers. They have workers that use Access services to go to work. Some job sites need there to be flexibility within the program and perhaps maybe there are three or four trips per month that have flexibility. There are those who may need to either go to an ongoing meeting during the work week or also need to take lunch offsite. Those are the recommendations that she would give, including keeping the fare at \$2.

OPERATIONS REPORT

Anthony Santiago gave the Operations report and went through the statistics. He stated that on June 27, Access staff participated in an emergency operations center tabletop exercise. This event allowed Access staff to participate in a two-hour exercise to be prepared for an emergency that could affect the operation. The emergency scenario included a 6.5 earthquake occurring, which caused hypothetical operational delays and internet issues. The tabletop was successful as the Access staff that were involved were fully engaged throughout the exercise. Lastly, Access staff distributed incentives in late June to drivers at the contractors. This incentive distribution is based on quarter three, which is January through March for driving safe without a preventable accident or safety violation as part of the Driver Safety Incentive program. There were 146 drivers who earned backpacks, hats, jackets, and gift cards during this distribution. In this slide, we can see three photos of moments during the distribution.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mel Bailey made a public comment by stating that he would like to congratulate two regions Global under the leadership of Luis and Gabby. They have two drivers, Laura and Gloria, who have been doing an amazing job. MV transportation is doing great now under the new leadership of Sean. He just wanted to acknowledge them.

MEMBER DISCUSSION

Chair Hagen stated that when they had the meeting minutes, that there was one other thing I wanted to correct, and she now remembers she wanted to add that she was congratulating Cassandra. It was under member communication, and it said Sandra, but it should be Cassandra and it should be with her last name on her promotion. Please correct this in the previous meeting minutes.

MEMBER COMMUNICATION

Member Hudson thanked everyone and is happy all is going well.

Member Cabil stated that she wasn't able to connect earlier and apologized. She encouraged everyone to stay hydrated with the hot weather.

Member Lantz thanked everyone that participated in the subcommittee meetings and the continued work that those members are doing. She thanked the Access staff who help facilitate those meetings, including Matthew. They appreciate his help and Mike Greenwood as well.

Member Aroch stated that everybody is working very hard to make a quality service. She appreciates that and doesn't hear any complaints. People that use Access approach her to say it is a nice service.

Member Cardona thanked everyone for their great presentations today.

Member Barron thanked everyone for their extraordinary presentations. He also wanted to comment on the cleanliness of the vehicles. He recently took Access for the first time since 2018, and the vehicle was immaculate. He happened to get the same driver on the way there and the way back.

Member Almalel thanked everyone and was hesitating when asked if she wanted to join a subcommittee, and now she feels like it's a privilege to serve on this committee. She is grateful that they've been so welcoming and open in discussions. She is really excited for the Paralympics and is excited to see how they ramp up for that.

Vice Chair Liam appreciated the improvements in the Access to Work program. He thinks that's going to be beneficial for a lot of people, including himself.

Chair Hagen stated that she is proud of the group that she is a part of. Together they make a difference, and it's not just the members of the committee but the staff, and those who come and make public comments. It is very important to get feedback from the community.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Karen Gilbert provided an update on our last eligibility subcommittee; The eligibility subcommittee began the review of the Access applications. The group suggested that the section on other transportation options should be moved to the end of the application. The information on D-R-E-D-F draft on how to make your case should be inside a box to bring attention to it, and the customer service contractor should be aware of draft. The subcommittee also discussed that Medi-Cal numbers on page four should not be a question for eligibility. They also need to add that information

regarding Medi-Cal that will not impact eligibility, which she is working on. The meeting ended with review of the functional questions on page five, which will resume at the next meeting in August.

Susanna Cadenas gave an update on the last CAC customer service subcommittee that met on June the 22nd. They are working on expanding sale locations for Access coupons. At the meeting, they discussed feedback they were receiving from different agencies that they have reached out to. They have agencies entertaining the idea of selling coupons and are waiting for follow up on that end. On the other hand, they had some agencies share that they do not have the administrative resources needed to support this process. However, the CAC found that there is some interest in distributing coupons, but only if there's no exchange of money going on. Access is reviewing the possibility of adding a pickup option to the sales portal on the website, so that agencies who may be interested in distributing the coupons can solely distribute coupons and eliminate the need of handling direct sales with customers. In addition, they are still updating the website language.

Mike Greenwood stated that the operations subcommittee was on July 5th, and they had five CAC members present in that meeting. Most of the discussion revolved around transfer trips, which being transfer trips within Los Angeles County. A lot of the conversation influenced the presentation that Garrett made today to this committee. One of the main topics they talked about was the survey that's pending to get feedback from our writers that use transfer trips. They received feedback from CAC members on a rare but important issue that occasionally happens with riders that use wheelchairs and start slipping on their wheelchair.

Matthew Avancena stated that at the communication/video subcommittee, they started working on the next script. The next script/video will be on how to avoid no-shows, late cancellations and missed trips. They are in the preliminary stage of drafting the wording and hopefully in the next two to three months should be able to have a draft script ready to go. The CAC goals retreat has just happened and once they finalize the goals list, they will start the subcommittee meetings. The next meeting would be to finalize their presentations and go over the goals to make sure that they are indeed accurately reflected by the work done by the subcommittee. Lastly, on the website subcommittee, they had a consultant participate in the meeting to provide some website analytics based on how folks are viewing the website and which links or menus they are actually clicking.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mel Bailey made a public comment by stating that Mike Greenwood gave a report that customer service was doing better statistically. His question is that nobody contacted him offline. He asked if there were any parameters set in that survey to identify whether people were not satisfied with customer service and operations. He has filed complaints, and compliments but nothing ever would come of it.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chair asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member Cabil made the motion to end the meeting. There was a second by Member Almalel. The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.