



# Behind the Scenes

## Executive Director's Report

Although it is only the middle of 2023, transit and transportation planning for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic games has already begun.

To that end, Access staff recently met with the Metro staff responsible for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Mobility Concept plan. We were informed that funding for an Access Services facility and Electric Vehicle Fleet and Charging Infrastructure was one of 15 top priorities for the region as it seeks additional infrastructure funding from state and federal partners. We were asked to develop a facility and electric vehicle project that can be presented to funding partners by the end of the year.

In order to meet this timeline, we have asked our real estate broker to search for appropriate land parcels in the downtown area that could be the basis for a facility/electric vehicle project that would help Access serve the 2028 games and also benefit the Agency and its customers in the decades to come.

**Andre Colaiace**  
*Executive Director*

## West-Central Region technician keeps the wheels turning for Access riders

Ever since he was a child, West-Central region technician Alex Cortez Ramirez has been interested in fixing vehicles. His uncle showed him the ropes and set him on a path that would one day lead to Access' West-Central Region contractor, California Transit. Since 2007, Alex has been at the tip of the spear in the efforts to keep Access vehicles running well so they can deliver the service our riders depend on.

"I make sure that every vehicle is ready to go...which allows the drivers to provide service for our ADA passengers. We make sure that everyone can have the same opportunity to travel around the city," he shared.

Each Access vehicle is held to high standards, meeting numerous contractual requirements and build specifications before ever picking up the first rider. Technicians like Alex do the hard work of performing preventative maintenance inspections, fixing or replacing vehicle components and ensuring that the air conditioning system is functioning properly, among many other items.



There is also the challenge of learning the ins and outs of new vehicles in an industry that is always innovating. Each time a new vehicle type hits the streets, technicians at all six Access contractors must become familiar with the electronic systems in this increasingly computerized world. Then there is the lift or ramp, onboard camera systems and other equipment specific to the job of paratransit. The Access Dodge Caravans and Ram

ProMasters the public sees driving around Los Angeles County are not the same as the models you can buy at your local dealership. They have numerous modifications from stock to meet the demands of the task at hand.

Alex has many tools of the trade. Due to the complex nature of the

vehicles our contractors operate, the vehicle scanner is vital. He explains that “it gives me an idea of what a vehicle issue might be and gives me a starting point to start diagnosing the vehicle.”

Alex shared that he is grateful to work for California Transit and enjoys that he is able to make a difference for disabled people. When asked about his dream car, Alex chose the Toyota Supra, which he hopes one day to purchase. It is his work on Access’ vehicles, however, that make all the difference to those who rely on the service.

**Alex Chrisman**  
*Emergency Management Coordinator*

## The Great Intersection: 2023 WTS Annual Conference

I recently had the pleasure of attending the WTS Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. This year’s theme was ‘The Great Intersection – Transportation and Equity.’ Held at the Omni Hotel at the CNN Center in the heart of Downtown Atlanta, the conference had approximately 1,200 attendees.

The WTS conference highlighted the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion during all breakout sessions and workshops. During the opening reception, WTS International President and CEO, Sara Stickler, highlighted facts about Atlanta. The city is known for its strong commitment to voting rights and economic and educational opportunities for African Americans during the 1940s through the 1970s. Atlanta is also known as a global transportation hub that connects people and products from all around the world.

During the conference, attendees had the opportunity to learn more about the city with guided tours of the Kia Plant 360, Porsche Experience Center, MARTA’s Railcar Facility, Behind the Scenes of the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, and more.



Throughout the busy week, the conversations and connections were endless. Women from many diverse professional backgrounds shared their stories. The most fulfilling and inspirational story was told by the Keynote Speaker, Cassi Chandler. Ms. Chandler is a Motivational Leadership Expert and the FBI’s First African American Female Special Agent Assistant Director. Her story, her empathy, her insights truly touched each person in attendance. She said, “Know your power, extending your power, improve your personal brand and embrace the champion within yourself.”

The Awards Gala & Awards Dinner were held at the beautiful Georgia Aquarium, where the 2023 scholarship winners were honored and celebrated. The conference wrapped up with a plenary session and closing

reception. The plenary session consisted of male executive leaders taking part in an in-depth conversation about workplace culture, microaggressions, sexism, and racism. This all-male panel was a very first for WTS. The conversation was insightful, tough, relatable, and targeted the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion programs.

The conference provided me with more than I had ever imagined. I gained more knowledge, more insight, new connections and friends, and my power within. The conference was truly incredible.

**Onnika Payne**  
*Transportation Planner*

## Commendations

"My driver was such a nice gentleman. Please file a smile for his professionalism."

***Marvin Sieczkowski***  
***Rider since Jan 2017***

"I was impressed by my driver's knowledge of the area. He was pleasant, courteous, and such a good driver. Please file a smile for him."

***Johnnie Mae Cook***  
***Rider since Oct 2014***