



Metro

Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 19, 2004**

SUBJECT: ACCESS SERVICES INCORPORATED UPDATE

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file status report on Access Services Incorporated (ASI) covering the period July 2003 through December 2003.

ISSUE

At the January 15, 2004 Operations Committee meeting, the Committee directed staff to provide regular updates on ASI, addressing issues such as service levels, customer service, and ASI's budget. The motion also requested staff to report back in February on the possibility of implementing an 800 customer service number for people to directly contact the MTA with ASI complaints and recommendations for improving service.

BACKGROUND

ASI is the provider of Access Paratransit, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service in Los Angeles County, meeting the ADA Paratransit service requirement for all 44-transit providers. ASI has a nine-member board of directors, including one representative from MTA, the Director of Transportation Contracts (Attachment A).

In December 2002, the MTA Board approved a \$61.8 million budget for ASI in FY04 and approved the FY04 Paratransit Plan principles. The budget is \$1.8 million less than FY03, anticipating efficiencies from the new service model in the FY04 Paratransit Plan. The plan includes a number of policy and financial assumptions targeted towards maintaining mobility options for persons with disabilities in a manner that also improves service efficiency. It includes changes in reservations and service delivery, shifting the emphasis from the current "same day" service plan to a "next day" service delivery model. Reservations are taken on a next day basis between 6 am and 10 pm, with a very limited number of same day trips available. The FY04 plan envisions that 85% or more of the riders will book their trips the day before.

DISCUSSION

FY04 Paratransit Plan Update

Plan implementation is progressing towards meeting the stated goals. As the riders and contractors get more familiar with the service structure, efficiencies are increasing. Except for the months that the MTA was on strike, ASI has shown improvement in efficiencies and is on target to meet its goals by the end of the fiscal year.

- Budget

The draft of the financial transactions (not including the capital budget) for the six month period ending December 31, 2003 resulted in a slightly over-budget position, less than 1%, approximately \$250,000. ASI has aggressively managed the budget, taking preventive measures to control costs for the fiscal year. These measures have reduced the previous over-budget condition approximately 2%, and staff will continue to make every effort to finish the fiscal year within budget. The capital budget has also been strategically managed. ASI ordered less than half the number of vehicles scheduled for replacement this fiscal year. The decision for the remaining vehicles will be determined in the third quarter of the fiscal year. If the new service delivery method that was implemented on July 1, 2003 does not address the over budget situation by the end of the fiscal year, a reduced amount of capital (replacement vans) will be purchased to ensure ASI meets its budget.

- Service Levels

The number of actual passengers carried this fiscal year compared to the same period last fiscal year is approximately .8% higher. ASI has averaged a 20% increase in ridership per year over the past 5 years. The less than 1% ridership growth is primarily new riders due to the increase in eligibility interviews of 36.8% over the same period last year. The cost per passenger is favorably comparable, representing a 3% reduction over last fiscal year. The cost per trip has also resulted in a reduction of approximately 2% compared to the same period last fiscal year.

- Customer Service/Complaints

Attachment B shows the six-month complaint comparison from FY03 to FY04. The attachment shows the results against ASI's goal of 3.75 complaints per 1,000 passengers, as well as the same-day complaints for FY04 since the reduction of same-day service in July 2004. Except for August 2003, complaints have been higher in FY04. Complaints started to rise in September and peaked in October and November. This was primarily due to the MTA strike and the start-up of a new contract service provider, Administrative Services Co-op (ASC), in the West Central Region (City of Los Angeles, Malibu, Santa Monica, Marina Del Rey, Beverly Hills, West Hollywood, and Culver City).

ASC began providing paratransit service on November 1, 2003 and experienced several service difficulties including an unexpected increase in ridership demand due to the MTA strike that led to multiple complaints. As a result, the system-wide complaint ratio rose significantly to 12.16

per 1,000 passengers in November 2003. However, once the strike ended the trend reversed and complaints decreased by nearly half to 6.42.

800 MTA Complaints Number

The Board requested that staff research an 800 number for MTA to directly receive complaints from ASI customers. Staff believes this motion is in response to concerns about the sharp spike in complaints mentioned above and that ASI is not responding adequately to service problems. Staff is currently researching the establishment of an 800 number, as well as other options, and will report its findings to the Board in March 2004.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will report to the Board on a quarterly basis on ASI's progress in meeting its FY04 Plan goals. Staff will also provide the Board an update in March 2004 on its research relating to the establishing an 800 ASI number, as well as other options.

ASI has hired the firm HLB Decision Economics, Inc. to provide an ADA paratransit demand five year forecast. HLB Decision Economics, Inc. has conducted ADA demand projections in the cities of Philadelphia, Washington D.C., and New York with very good accuracy. The results of the demand forecast will be the basis of the ASI five-year Business Plan, which in turn provides the basis for a five-year paratransit funding plan. The ASI Business Plan will be presented to the ASI Board of Directors for their review and approval in February prior to coming before the MTA Board for approval in March.

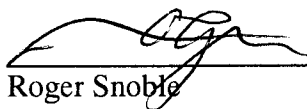
ATTACHMENTS

- A. ASI Board Composition
- B. Complaint Ratio Trend

Prepared by: Mark P. Maloney, Director of Transportation Contract Services



John B. Catoe, Jr.
Deputy Chief Executive Officer



Roger Snoble
Chief Executive Officer

ASI BOARD COMPOSITION

ASI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Teddi-Joy Remhild, Chair
Community Liaison Coordinator
Personal Assistance Service Council

Andre Coaliace, Vice Chair
Senior Management Analyst
Culver City Bus Lines

Rosalyn Esposito, Secretary
Community Advocate
Mayor's Office, City of Los Angeles

Janice Heidt, Treasurer
Retired Council Member
City of Santa Clarita

Gordon Anthony
Senior Deputy, Compliance Office of
Affirmative Action, County of Los Angeles

Kurt Baldwin
Advocacy Coordinator
Independent Living Centers

Mark P. Maloney
Director of Transportation Contracts
MTA

Manuel Palmarin
Transportation Superintendent
City of Glendora

Terri Slimmer
Transportation Manager
City of West Hollywood

Alan Cantrell, Access Services Executive Director

In August 2003, the new Executive Director, Alan Cantrell, assumed his duties. Alan has over 30 years of transit experience, from driving a bus in Sacramento, to being a cost control engineer for the Sacramento Light Rail start-up, to being the first Regional Transit Manager for the County of San Luis Obispo. His most recent post prior to ASI was the Deputy Director of Transit and Parking for the City of Santa Rosa in the California wine country.

APPOINTING AUTHORITY

LA County Commission on Disability

LA Municipal Transit Operators

Mayor's Office,
City of Los Angeles

City Selection Committee
Corridor Transportation Representatives

County of Los Angeles
Board of Supervisors

LA County Independent Living
Centers

Metropolitan Transportation
Authority

Los Angeles Local/Municipal
Operators

Los Angeles Local Transit
Operators

ATTACHMENT B: COMPLAINT RATIOS

