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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MAY 22, 2008**

**SUBJECT: PROGRESS REPORT OF ACCESS SERVICES, INC. (ASI)
 IMPLEMENTATION OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS AND TIMELINE**

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file this report on Access Services Incorporated's (ASI) implementation of audit recommendations and timeline.

ISSUE

On March 15, 2007, the Board approved a motion by Director Villaraigosa that directed the Office of Inspector General (OIG) to conduct a performance and compliance audit as a result of complaints received from the disabled community about ASI. On August 28, 2007, OIG engaged Thompson, Cobb, Bazilio & Associates to perform this audit. The audit was completed on January 22, 2008 and included 16 recommendations to improve American with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service. We received a letter dated April 15, 2008 from Director Villaraigosa requesting an update on ASI's plan and timeline for addressing the audit recommendations, especially recommendations 1-4, 6-7, 10 and 12. This report is in response to that letter.

DISCUSSION

On March 20, 2008, the OIG made a presentation to the Executive Management and Audit Committee regarding the ASI audit. Contract Services staff also made a presentation on this date regarding ASI's Business Plan, which included the timeline for implementation of the audit recommendations.

Attachment A details all 16 OIG recommendations and an updated status/timeline for implementation of the recommendations. ASI has implemented five of the 16 recommendations; four are ongoing and most of the remaining recommendations will be implemented in 2008. Two recommendations involve capital projects and/or contract changes; these will be phased in and completed by 2010.

Recommendation No. 1 - ASI should reassess its recertification policy to determine criteria for renewal without an in-person reevaluation, review recertification period by adopting a tiered approach to recertifying riders.

ASI Response: ASI will work with their Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and Board of Directors to revise the certification process to allow for a tiered approach to recertification. The duration of eligibility will also be re-evaluated.

Updated response and timeline: A Public Hearing was held on April 22, 2008. Six Community Meetings were held in April 2008 throughout Los Angeles County. Next steps include presenting to ASI's CAC, Transportation Professionals Advisory Committee (TPAC) and the Quality Services Subcommittee (QSS) and the ASI Board of Directors in May 2008. This will be implemented in July 2008.

Recommendation No. 2 - ASI should review narrative comments included on the Eligibility Survey to initiate appropriate actions or changes; take the comments into consideration when making future changes or improvements and evaluate whether ASI can offer more evaluation locations (i.e. mobile evaluation units).

ASI Response: In the future ASI will continue to balance the needs and wishes of riders with the funding levels allocated to provide ADA paratransit in Los Angeles County. ASI staff continues to work with the community to identify areas where efficiencies can be realized in order to lower the cost of providing services, including the role of the mobile evaluation unit and other approaches that may improve the functional evaluation.

Updated response and timeline: Customer narrative comments will be considered in future changes or improvements. Any proposed changes or improvements to the eligibility process will be presented to ASI's advisory committees as well as the ASI Board for approval. ASI has provided the customer narrative comments to CARE Evaluators in April 2008. Implementation of this recommendation is ongoing.

Recommendation No. 3 - ASI should evaluate the process for informing applicants of their right to appeal and how to appeal. The appeal process is included in the eligibility application packet sent to applicants and in the ASI Rider's Guide.

ASI Response: ASI will re-evaluate the eligibility determination packet with the help of communication professionals and small focus groups to ensure that appeals information is presented in a manner most likely understood by applicants.

Updated response and timeline: ASI will work with communication professionals and small focus groups to re-evaluate the eligibility determination packet. This will be implemented in July 2008.

Recommendation No. 4 - ASI should continue to critically evaluate its eligibility determination policies and processes to ensure that reasonable eligibility determinations are being made.

ASI Response: As stated in the audit, Complementary ADA paratransit was designed to fulfill the promise of equal access to public transit for a limited number of persons with disabilities who cannot ride the accessible fixed-route—that is, those without other public transit choices. ASI and Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) staff will continue to evaluate the current policies as they relate to the available funding for providing ADA paratransit services taking into account best practices discovered through American Public Transportation Association, Project Action, Transit Cooperative Research Program, National Transit Institute and other research groups.

Updated response and timeline: The proposed changes are to eliminate the requirement for 100% re-certification of all riders to a tiered re-certification process. A Public Hearing was held on April 22, 2008. The majority of the comments received were in support of the proposed changes to the recertification process. Six community meetings were held in April 2008 throughout Los Angeles County. Next steps include presenting to ASI's Community Advisory Committee (CAC), Transportation Professionals Advisory Committee (TPAC) and the Quality Services Subcommittee (QSS) and the ASI Board of Directors in May 2008. This will be implemented in July 2008.

Recommendation No. 6 - ASI should evaluate whether the service providers are using the most efficient methodology for scheduling vehicles and drivers.

ASI Response: ASI retained the services of the IBI Group to perform a needs analysis on Access Paratransit. IBI recommended a centralized reservation/scheduling platform to migrate all of the ASI providers.

Updated response and timeline: This is being implemented within the first service region in September 2008 and will be phased in by region as contracts are renewed. Estimated completion is in calendar year 2010.

Recommendation No. 7 - ASI should reinforce to contractor call takers the goal of providing courteous and helpful service to clients.

ASI Response: ASI will develop a supplemental process to the required training to document policies, procedures and ASI's commitment to providing quality service.

Updated response and timeline: The implementation of the Code of Conduct for Call Takers will be completed in June 2008.

Recommendation No. 10 - ASI should reinforce to contractor driver staff the goal of providing courteous and helpful service to clients.

ASI Response: ASI staff agrees with this recommendation and will be developing a document reinforcing the policies and procedures to reinforce ASI's commitment to providing quality service.

Updated response and timeline: The Code of Conduct for Drivers was implemented in April 2008. The Code of Conduct for Drivers is on ASI's website at www.asila.org.

Recommendation No. 12 - ASI should develop a written manual of procedures of processing and inputting complaints. Institute a formal training program and conduct periodic trend analysis.

ASI Response: ASI is in the final stages of developing a complaint procedures manual and training for customer service representatives.

Updated response and timeline: This was completed in February 2008. ASI's Complaints per 1,000 Trips report has been expanded from six categories to nine categories: Animal, Booking, Conduct, Discourtesy, Routing, Service, Travel Time, Urgent and Vehicle. The Operations Report for March 2008 will begin tracking service related complaint trends with a monthly comparison.

During the last five years, ASI has made policy and structural changes designed to better manage ADA Paratransit service in accordance with federal regulations. These changes have included the following:

- Reservation procedures were changed from a same day process to a next day service advance reservation model, which allowed for efficiencies in scheduling and routing of shared trips.
- In mid-2004, ASI's in-person eligibility evaluation was changed to include a functional assessment to determine if an applicant's functional abilities prevented them from utilizing fixed-route independently as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This new system replaced a paper application and review process.
- ASI's recertification policy which required that only 1/3 of all ASI eligible riders would have to go through the in-person recertification process was changed to 100% in-person/functional assessment of all ASI eligible riders. This change was done to ensure that eligibility determinations were made in accordance with ADA regulations.

At the same time that these policy and structural changes were being made, ASI was working on improving service quality as illustrated in Attachment B. The total number of completed trips has continued to increase since FY 2004. System-wide on-time performance increased from Fiscal Years 2005 and 2006 to approximately 90% in FY 2008. System-wide telephone hold times have gone from a high of 3.94 minutes in FY 2006 to a projected 0.74 minutes in FY 2008. The number of calls being answered by providers has consistently increased from FY 2004 through FY 2008, at the same time hold times were being reduced. System-wide Late "4" Trips, defined as pickups that are 46 minutes or more past the scheduled pickup window, decreased from FY 2004 through FY 2007. ASI has also been working to increase the number of free fare partners to further enhance ASI eligible riders travel options for trips. In FY 2007, 1.38 million free fare trips were reported to ASI by participating agencies resulting in an estimated savings for the County of \$26 million.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue to monitor ASI's progress in implementation of the OIG's audit recommendations and monitor efforts to improve service quality and customer satisfaction.

ATTACHMENT

- A. ASI's Implementation Timeline/Status of OIG Recommendations
- B. ASI FY 2004 – FY 2008 Performance Indicators

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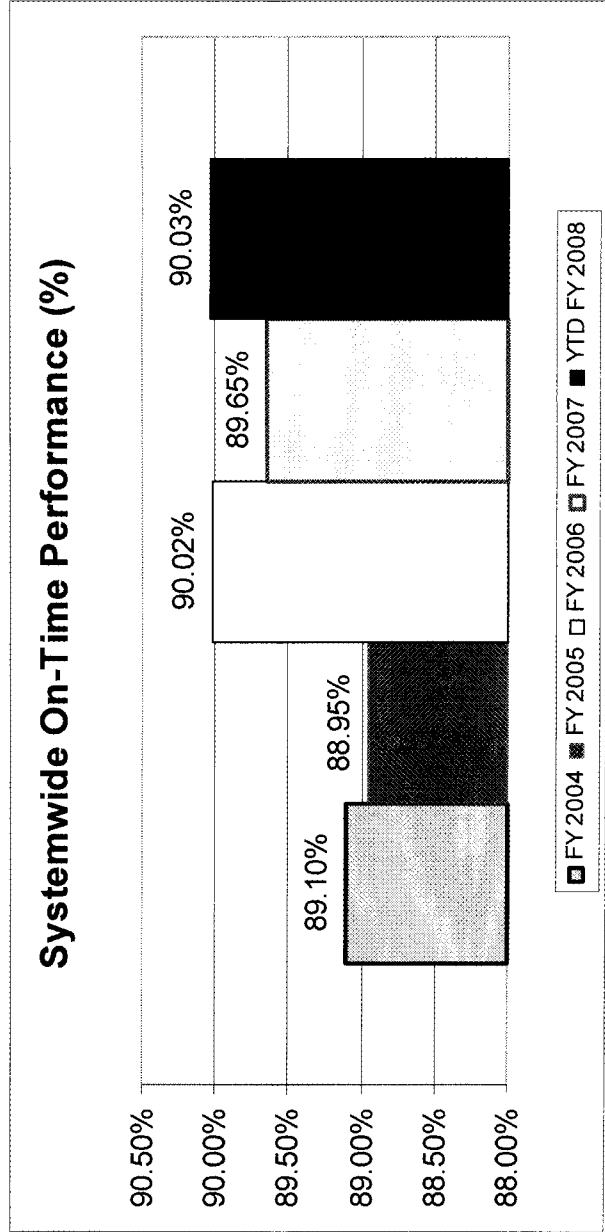
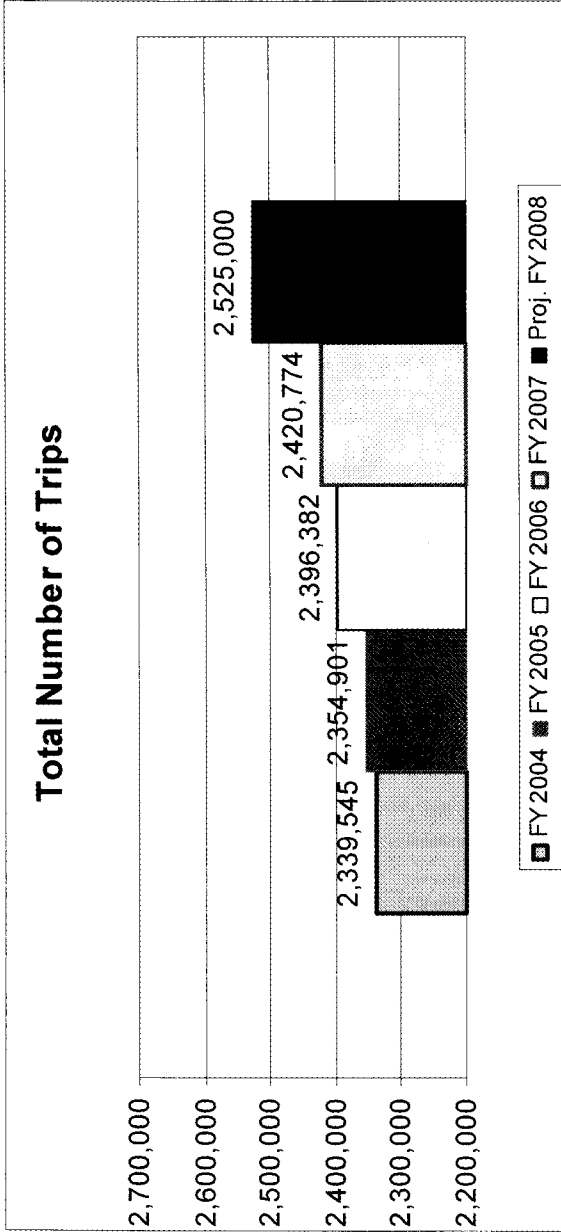
OIG Recommendations	ASI Response to Audit Recommendations	Status/Timeline
<p>1. ASI should reassess its recertification policy to determine criteria for renewal without an in-person reevaluation, review recertification period by adopting a tiered approach to recertifying riders.</p>	<p>ASI will work with their CAC and Board of Directors to revise the certification process to allow for a tiered approach to recertification. The duration of eligibility will also be re-evaluated.</p>	<p>A Public Hearing was held on April 22, 2008. Six Community Meetings were held in April 2008 throughout LA County. Next steps include presenting to ASI's Community Advisory Committee (CAC)/Transportation Professionals Advisory Committee (TPAC) and the Quality Services Subcommittee (QSS) and the ASI Board of Directors in May 2008. Implement July 2008</p>
<p>2. ASI should review narrative comments included on the Eligibility Survey to initiate appropriate actions or changes; take the comments into consideration when making future changes or improvements and evaluate whether ASI can offer more evaluation locations (i.e. mobile evaluation units).</p>	<p>In the future ASI will continue to balance the needs and wishes of riders with the funding levels allocated to provide ADA paratransit in Los Angeles County. ASI staff continues to work with the community to identify areas where efficiencies can be realized in order to lower the cost of providing services, including the role of the mobile evaluation unit and other approaches that may improve the functional evaluation.</p>	<p>Ongoing – Customer narrative comments will be considered in future changes or improvements. Any proposed changes or improvements to the eligibility process will be presented to ASI's advisory committees as well as the ASI Board for approval. ASI provided the customer narrative comments to CARE Evaluators in April 2008.</p>
<p>3. ASI should evaluate the process for informing applicants of their right to appeal and how to appeal.</p>	<p>ASI will re-evaluate the eligibility determination packet with the help of communication professionals and small focus groups to ensure that appeals information is presented in a manner most likely understood by applicants.</p>	<p>ASI will work with communication professionals and small focus groups to re-evaluate the eligibility determination packet. Implement July 2008</p>
<p>4. ASI should continue to critically evaluate its eligibility determination policies and processes to ensure that reasonable eligibility determinations are being made.</p>	<p>As stated in the audit Complementary ADA paratransit was designed to fulfill the promise of equal access to public transit for a limited number of persons with disabilities who cannot ride the accessible fixed-route—that is, those without other public transit choices. ASI & LACMTA staff will continue to evaluate the current policies as they relate to the available funding for providing ADA paratransit services taking into account best practices discovered through American Public Transportation Association, Project Action, Transit Cooperative Research Program, National Transit Institute and other research groups.</p>	<p>The proposed changes are to eliminate the requirement for 100% re-certification of all riders to a tiered re-certification process. A Public Hearing was held on April 22, 2008. Six Community Meetings were held in April 2008 throughout Los Angeles County. Next steps include presenting to ASI's Community Advisory Committee (CAC)/Transportation Professionals Advisory Committee (TPAC) and the Quality Services Subcommittee (QSS) and the ASI Board of Directors in May 2008. Implement July 2008</p>

<p>5. ASI should review the narrative comments on the Rider Survey and initiate any appropriate actions or changes.</p>	<p>ASI agrees that the survey results, including the narrative comments, are a valuable tool to use in identifying trends and areas needing improvement. It is important to note that many of the rider comments mention the desire for premium services, which are above the minimum services required by ADA. ASI will explore the option of offering premium services at cost to the rider if the cost is found to be reasonable.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>A review of the customer narrative comments will be done in May 2008 with the Quality Services Subcommittee.</p> <p>Customer narrative comments will be considered in future changes or improvements.</p>
<p>6. ASI should evaluate whether the service providers are using the most efficient methodology for scheduling vehicles and drivers.</p>	<p>ASI retained the services of the IBI Group to perform a needs analysis on Access Paratransit. IBI recommended a centralized reservation/scheduling platform to migrate all of ASI providers.</p>	<p>This is being implemented within the first service region in September 2008 and will be phased in by region as contracts are renewed.</p> <p>Estimated completion in calendar year 2010.</p>
<p>7. ASI should reinforce to contractor call takers the goal of providing courteous and helpful service to clients.</p>	<p>ASI will look to develop a supplemental process to the required training to document policies, procedures and ASI's commitment to providing quality service.</p>	<p>The implementation of the Code of Conduct for Call Takers will be completed in June 2008.</p>
<p>8. ASI should evaluate the scheduling system to minimize or eliminate circuitous routing of share rides and to minimize wait time and trip times.</p>	<p>ASI retained the services of the IBI Group to perform a needs analysis on Access Paratransit. IBI recommended a centralized reservation/scheduling platform to migrate all of ASI providers.</p>	<p>This is being implemented within the first service region in September 2008 and will be phased in by region as contracts are renewed.</p> <p>Estimated completion in calendar year 2010.</p>
<p>9. ASI should reinforce to contract staff ASI's policy on call outs and the importance of making all call outs that are requested.</p>	<p>The ASI call out policy has been an ongoing issue with riders and contractors alike for many years. ASI will continue to work with both contractors and riders on understanding the policy and the limits of available technology along with stressing the importance of call outs to all parties.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>10. ASI should reinforce to contractor driver staff the goal of providing courteous and helpful service to clients.</p>	<p>ASI staff agrees with this recommendation and will be developing a document reinforcing the policies and procedures to reinforce ASI's commitment to providing quality service.</p>	<p>The Code of Conduct for Drivers was implemented in April 2008.</p> <p>The Code of Conduct for Drivers is on ASI's website at www.asiia.org.</p>

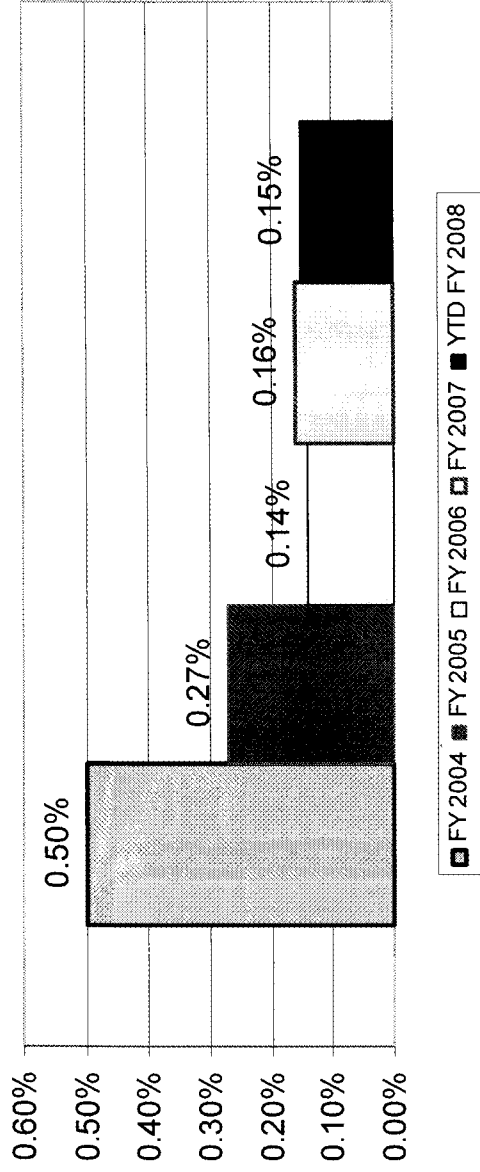
<p>11. ASI should reinforce to paratransit applicants and riders that the primary purpose of using Access Paratransit services is that the individual is unable to use the regular bus and rail service.</p>	<p>ASI has made a substantial effort to educate applicants and riders of the primary purpose of Access Paratransit through rider guides, workshops, Advisory Committees, public forums and periodic communications with our riders.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>12. ASI should develop a written manual of procedures of processing & inputting complaints. Institute a formal training program and conduct periodic trend analysis.</p>	<p>ASI is in the final stages of developing a complaint procedures manual and training for customer service representatives.</p>	<p>This was completed in February 2008.</p> <p>ASI's Complaints per 1,000 Trips report has been expanded from six (6) categories to nine (9) categories: Animal, Booking, Conduct, Discourtesy, Routing, Service, Travel Time, Urgent and Vehicle.</p> <p>The Operations Report for March 2008 will begin tracking service related complaint trends with a monthly comparison.</p>
<p>13. To improve its oversight of paratransit service providers, ASI should require all paratransit providers to perform driver performance evaluations annually and place them in the drivers' personnel file for periodic review and develop a standard driver code of conduct and require each driver to sign and agree to such conduct.</p>	<p>ASI will work with our transportation service providers to implement an annual performance evaluation for all drivers that will be maintained in their personnel file.</p>	<p>The Code of Conduct for Drivers was implemented in April 2008.</p> <p>Annual driver performance evaluations will be implemented with service providers by July 2008.</p>
<p>14. ASI should increase its monitoring of average daily phone hold times to ensure compliance with the contractual performance requirement to identify the reasons hold times per hour exceed 4 minutes.</p>	<p>ASI's Board of Director's approved an amendment to the telephone hold time for service providers in June of 2007. The new standard states that the average initial hold time for the reservation queue shall be no more than 2 minutes and that minimal calls not exceed an average initial hold time of 5 minutes. The average initial hold time was an issue that came from the FTA Compliance Review of LACMTA. FTA closed this finding in October of 2007.</p>	<p>Completed – ASI staff has been monitoring daily telephone hold times since July 2007 to ensure that the providers are in compliance with the new telephone hold time standard approved by the ASI Board in June 2007 and implemented in July 2007.</p>

<p>15. ASI should consider requesting that back-up providers submit their invoices semi-monthly to be consistent with the other paratransit providers.</p>	<p>ASI will request that our back up providers submit invoices semi-monthly to be coincide with the transportation service providers.</p>	<p>In February 2008 ASI requested that backup providers submit invoices semi-monthly. The majority of providers cannot comply with the request. This recommendation is considered closed.</p>
<p>16. ASI's Accounting Manual, General Accounting Desk Manuals and other accounting policies and procedures should be approved by ASI Senior Management. The pages of these accounting documents should be properly numbered and cross-referenced.</p>	<p>ASI agrees with this recommendation and anticipates finalizing the relevant accounting manuals and documents by February 15, 2008.</p>	<p>This was completed in February 2008.</p>

FY2008 ASI FINANCIAL INDICATORS



Systemwide Late 4 Trips (>46 mins.)



Systemwide Telephone Hold Time (mins.)

