



October 30, 2002

*Oct 30 - ASI  
Complaint Report*

Metropolitan  
Transportation  
Authority

One Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, CA  
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**TO:** BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**THROUGH:** ROGER SNOBLE  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**FROM:** JOHN B. CATOE, JR.  
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**SUBJECT:** ACCESS SERVICES – JUNE 2002 COMPLAINT REPORT

**ISSUE**

At the May 23, 2002 meeting, the Board approved a motion requesting a monthly report regarding complaints on Access Services.

**DISCUSSION**

This is the second monthly report on complaints sent to the Board. This report covers the month of June 2002, in which Access Services customers registered 3.80 service complaints per 1,000 boardings. This figure is slightly higher than the stated objective of Access Services, which is to have less than 3.75 complaints. However, it should be noted that the average of the last six months is still 3.65 complaints per 1,000 boardings.

Multisystems, the national consulting firm that reviews Access Services and provides information regarding peer agencies, reports that typical ADA paratransit complaints range from two to five per 1,000 boardings around the country. Comparisons are difficult because most agencies only log in "chargeable" or "verified" complaints, while Access Services determines the complaint per 1,000 passenger ratio through Service Failure Complaints that are comprised of ADA Complaints, Service Animal Complaints, Booking (Reservations) Complaints and all Late Trip Complaints, whether verified or not. The Access Services Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Access Services Board of Directors approved this methodology for complaint analysis.

Attachment A shows the six-month trend for three categories of complaints. The top trend line shows Service Failure Complaints, then its subcomponents, Late Trip Complaints and Reservations (or Booking) Complaints. ADA Complaints and Service Animal Complaints are not shown as separate trend lines as they are too small in number to register on the chart. A downward trend indicates improved performance. While there is an upward trend in June for Service Failure Complaints and Late Trip complaints, there is a slight decrease in the Reservations Complaint ratio.

One of the largest increases in complaints from May to June occurred in the San Fernando Valley, or Northern Region as shown in Attachment B, where the ratio rose from 4.14 in May to 5.47 in June. Much of this increase is attributable to the change in service providers in the Northern Region. The service quality generally suffers when an incumbent service provider does not retain the contract, as the staff may leave for new opportunities and management does not replace staff that resigns. Access Services replaced United Independent Taxi Drivers with MV Transportation as of August 3, 2002. Other increases in the complaint ratio occurred in the Southern Region Ready service (from 4.06 in May to 4.76 in June), the West/Central Ready service (from 4.36 to 5.15), and in the Antelope Valley (from 2.53 to 5.09).

On the positive side, complaints decreased in the Eastern Region Ready service from 2.91 in May to 2.29 in June. Also, complaints against Steady service providers who provide subscription trips remain low compared to the complaint ratio for Ready service providers. Steady service providers generally measure less than 2.0 complaints per 1,000 boardings, and two of the three Steady providers registered less than 1.0 in June 2002. Steady service is generally easier to use because riders only call once to set up a recurring trip. Access Services is making efforts to increase the availability of Steady service so more ADA paratransit customers can use subscription service.

Attachment C is a glossary of paratransit terms, and includes definitions for the late trip and other complaint categories.

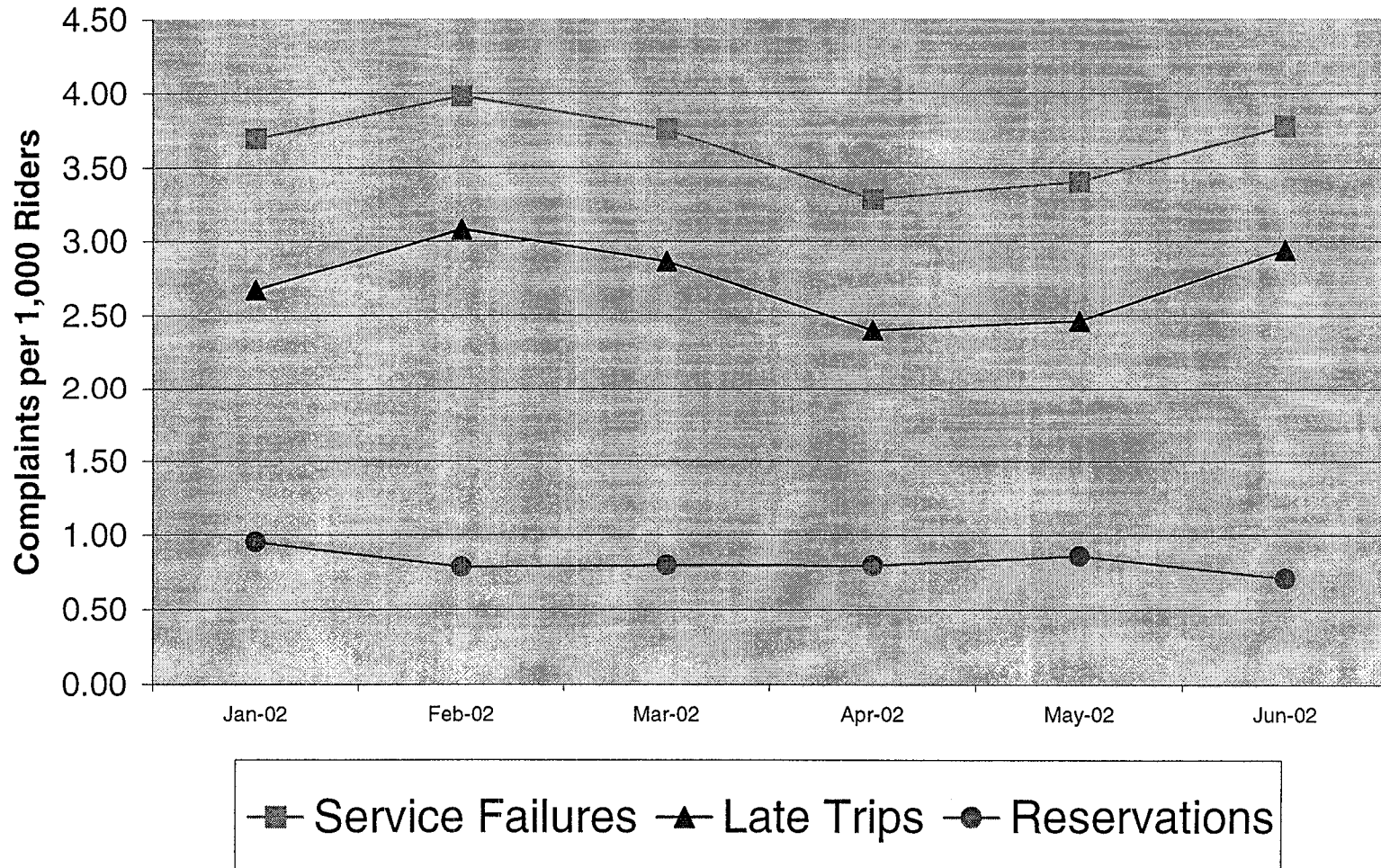
### **NEXT STEPS**

We will continue to monitor complaints regarding Access Services, and will forward monthly reports to the Board. The next report will cover the month of July 2002. We will continue to work with peers in Chicago and New York regarding establishing common methodology and working collaboratively on ADA paratransit issues. We hope to have data regarding complaints for these two cities incorporated into a future Board Box report with the accompanying information as to how each transit agency collects and reports their complaint information.

### **Attachments**

- A. Access Paratransit Complaints – Six-Month Trend
- B. Access Services Rider Complaints for June 2002
- C. Glossary of Paratransit Terms and Access Services Complaint Categories

## Access Paratransit Complaints - Six Month Trend



Trend Lines Not Intended to Add to Total

Rider Complaints  
June 2002

	Total Service Complaints	Late Complaints	Late 3 Complaints	Late 4 Complaints	Number of Passengers	Complaints per 1,000 passengers	ADA Complaints	Animal Complaints	Booking Complaints
Eastern Region Steady	11	5	1	3	6,797	1.62	0	0	2
Eastern Region Ready	121	39	15	44	52,797	2.29	2	0	21
Southern Region Steady	2	0	1	0	6,906	0.29	1	0	0
Southern Region Ready	165	45	18	59	34,691	4.76	9	1	33
West/Central Ready	219	56	21	92	42,512	5.15	3	0	47
West/Central Steady	4	3	0	0	7,124	0.56	0	0	1
Northern Region	162	47	27	57	29,625	5.47	6	0	25
Antelope Valley	6	0	0	4	1,178	5.09	0	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>181,630</b>	<b>3.80</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>130</b>

Comp Type	Eastern Region Steady		Eastern Region Ready		Southern Region Steady		Southern Region Ready		Antelope Valley	
<b>Service Failures</b>										
ADA	0	0%	2	1%	1	13%	9	3%	0	0%
Animal	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%	0	0%
Booking	2	13%	21	9%	0	0%	33	12%	1	0%
Late	5	33%	39	17%	0	0%	45	17%	0	0%
Late 3	1	7%	15	7%	1	13%	18	7%	0	0%
Late 4	3	20%	44	19%	0	0%	59	22%	4	2%
<b>Non-Service Failures</b>										
Certification	0	0%	1	0%	1	13%	1	0%	0	0%
Conduct	2	13%	54	24%	0	0%	54	20%	0	0%
Fare	0	0%	3	1%	0	0%	3	1%	0	0%
Other	1	7%	25	11%	2	25%	21	8%	0	0%
Policy	1	7%	1	0%	0	0%	2	1%	0	0%
Travelttime	0	0%	12	5%	0	0%	7	3%	0	0%
Urgent	0	0%	3	1%	0	0%	3	1%	0	0%
Vehicle	0	0%	2	1%	1	13%	4	2%	0	0%
<b>Comments/Inquiries</b>										
Lost/Found	0	0%	2	1%	2	25%	3	1%	0	0%
Phone	0	0%	4	2%	0	0%	2	1%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2%</b>

Comp Type	West/Central Ready		West/Central Steady		Northern Region		System Totals		
<b>Service Failures</b>									
ADA	3	1%	0	0%	6	2%	Service Failures	21	2%
Animal	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	Animal	1	0%
Booking	47	13%	1	8%	25	10%	Booking	130	11%
Late	56	16%	3	25%	47	18%	Late	195	17%
Late 3	21	6%	0	0%	27	10%	Late 3	83	7%
Late 4	92	26%	0	0%	57	22%	Late 4	259	22%
							<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Non-Service Failures</b>									
Certification	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	Certification	3	0%
Conduct	87	24%	3	25%	33	13%	Conduct	233	20%
Fare	3	1%	0	0%	1	0%	Fare	10	1%
Other	26	7%	3	25%	18	7%	Other	96	8%
Policy	4	1%	0	0%	2	1%	Policy	10	1%
Travelttime	5	1%	1	8%	1	0%	Travelttime	26	2%
Urgent	5	1%	0	0%	0	0%	Urgent	11	1%
Vehicle	3	1%	1	8%	2	1%	Vehicle	13	1%
							<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Comments/Inquiries</b>									
Lost/Found	1	0%	0	0%	3	1%	Lost/Found	11	1%
Phone	6	2%	0	0%	40	15%	Phone	52	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>5%</b>
							<b>Total</b>	<b>1154</b>	<b>100%</b>

Access Services		
Compliments	0	0%
*Suggestions	2	22%
Conduct	2	22%
**Free	0	0%
Policy	5	56%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100%</b>

Customer Service Center		
Compliments	0	0%
Conduct	1	100%
Policy	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>

Commendations: By Provider	
AVTA	0
Eastern Ready	10
Eastern Steady	1
Northern Region	3
Southern Ready	9
Southern Steady	0
West/Central Ready	15
West/Central Steady	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>

\* note: Temporary Complaint Type for Proposed Service Changes

\*\*note: Temporary Complaint Type for Free Fare Program

## ATTACHMENT C: GLOSSARY OF PARATRANSIT TERMS AND ACCESS SERVICES COMPLAINT CATEGORIES

Access Paratransit – The paratransit service provided by Access Services and divided into two types of service, Ready and Steady.

Access Services, Inc. – A non-profit public benefit organization established in 1994 to manage paratransit and to serve as the CTSA in Los Angeles County. Access Services is an administrative broker responsible for establishing the paratransit service delivery structure. Most services are competitively bid, including customer service, eligibility determination, reservations, scheduling, dispatching, and operations.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit – Public transportation provided to people with disabilities that are prevented from using fixed-route either due to their disability or due to an inaccessible fixed-route system. ADA paratransit is not a comprehensive service, but serves as a safety net for those who cannot use fixed-route.

ADA Complaint - Complaints alleging an infraction in violation of federal regulations.

Access Services Business Plan – The plan adopted by Access Services and MTA Boards in May 2000, also known as the Year 2000 Strategic and Short-Term Business Plan.

Booking Complaint – Complaints of problems or mistakes in placing a reservation.

Certification Complaint - Complaint regarding certification trips.

Commendation - Compliment regarding person or service.

Conduct Complaint – Complaints of inappropriate behavior of driver, reservationist, or other personnel.

CTSA – Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA), as described by State law, is the local agency charged with coordinating social service transportation for a variety of disadvantaged groups including people with disabilities. Each county must have a designated CTSA, and in L.A. County, it is Access Services.

Curb-to-Curb Service – A level of service in which driver assistance (if needed) is limited to assisting the passenger into or out of the vehicle, and does not extend beyond the curb (this is the minimum required by ADA) as opposed to door-to-door or door-through-door service. Access Paratransit provides curb-to-curb service.

Denial – A denied trip occurs at the reservations level, when a customer calls to book a trip but the provider cannot accommodate the trip request within one hour on either side of the requested time.

Door-to-Door – A level of service in which the driver escorts the passenger between the vehicle and the entrance to the building at both the origin and destination. Sometimes, this assistance is limited to a specific number of steps and/or carrying a specific number of packages. Access Paratransit provides curb-to-curb service.

Door-through-Door – A level of service in which the driver escorts the passenger between the vehicle and the entrance to the building at both the origin and destination and provides assistance beyond the threshold of the building (e.g. into the hall or lobby) if requested. Limits are often established regarding how far into a building a driver may go. Access Paratransit provides curb-to-curb service.

Fare Complaint – Complaint of an incorrect fare charged by the driver.

Fixed-Route – Public transit bus or rail service that runs on regular, predetermined routes, usually on a fixed schedule with designated, scheduled stops.

Free Complaint Complaint about Free Fare program with fixed route transit operators.

Late – For Access Paratransit, a late trip is one where the vehicle arrives 1 to 29 minutes after the end of the pick-up window.

Late 3 – For Access Paratransit, a Late 3trip is one where the vehicle arrives between 30 and 44 minutes after the end of the pick-up window.

Late 4 – For Access Paratransit, a Late 4trip is one where the vehicle arrives 45 minutes or more after the window, or has not performed at all. A Late 4 results in a \$100 penalty against the service provider.

Lost/Found Complaint – A complaint about items lost or left on the vehicle.

Next Day Service – Paratransit service provided to serve customer requests (reservations) made the previous day (this is the minimum ADA requirement, with same-day service allowed but not required).

Other Complaint – Complaint of unclassified non-service failure with system.

Paratransit – Non-fixed-route transit service that generally operates on demand. Paratransit includes many modes such as vanpools, dial-a-rides, flexible-destination shuttles, and taxicabs. Paratransit typically requires advance reservations, and is usually operated with smaller vehicles in either a curb-to-curb, door-to-door, or door-through-door service.

Phone Complaint – Complaint of problems with the phone lines, hold times, or disconnects.

Policy Complaint – Complaint of general service issues, repeated problems etc.

Ready Access– Refers to the Access Paratransit service that accepts reservations between 45 minutes and 24 hours in advance of the trip; customers must call the service provider to book a ride, and the ADA allows the provider to negotiate a pick-up time within one hour on either side of the requested time.

Same Day Service – Paratransit service provided to meet customer requests made the same day; Access Paratransit allows customers to reserve a ride between 45 minutes and 24 hours before the desired pick-up time, while USDOT regulations only require “next-day” reservations.

Service Animal Complaint – Complaint related to service animals, for example a visually impaired person may register a complaint against a driver who resists carrying a dog or other service animal.

Steady Service – Refers to the Access Paratransit subscription service available to customers who make repetitive trips from the same origin to the same destination at the same time at least one day a week; customers only need to call once to set-up a Steady ride.

Traveltime Complaint – Complaint of excessive travel time.

Urgent Complaint – Complaints that involve injury, vehicle damage, theft, sexual harrassment (*referred to Risk Management immediately upon receipt of complaint*).

Vehicle Complaint – Complaints regarding vehicle’s appearance, inside and outside, physical or mechanical defects.

Window – A period of time, usually 20 to 30 minutes used in paratransit scheduling to allow for ride sharing and unexpected delays caused by traffic congestion, mechanical breakdowns, or other unforeseen events; a paratransit pick-up is considered on time if made within the window. Access Paratransit uses a 20-minute window.