Metro

Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

Thursday, November 12, 2026 – 1:00 PM

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AGENDA

Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

1	Member and Staff Introductions Housekeeping Items	1:00 – 1:05 pm Kathleen Barajas, Chair
2	**ACTION:** Approval of August 14, 2026 and September 12, 2026 Minutes	1:05 – 1:10 pm Kathleen Barajas, Chair
3	**INFORMATION:** TAP Tactile Stickers for TAP Cards	1:10 – 1:40 pm Allison Higgins and Kyle Holland, LA Metro
4	**INFORMATION:** Mental Health Presentation	1:40 – 2:35 pm Dr. Nicolas Beliz, LACDMH
5	**NEW BUSINESS:** Raised Subsequent to the Posting of the Agenda	2:35 – 2:45 pm Kathleen Barajas, Chair
6	**PUBLIC COMMENT**	2:45 – 2:55 pm Kathleen Barajas, Chair

7	**ADJOURNMENT**	2:55 – 3:00 pm Kathleen Barajas, Chair

TO REQUEST ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE AGENDAS IN ALTERNATIVE FORMATS, PLEASE CALL 213.922.4067. LIVE CAPTION IS PROVIDED AT EVERY COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes for September 12, 2026
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Accessibility Advisory Committee

Members in Attendance:

Kathleen Barajas (Chair)
Jared Rimer (Executive Member)
Deaka McClain
Arlene Descargar
Blanca Angulo
Daniel Garcia
Olga Parra
Karen Esquival-Mayes
Fran Sereseres

Excused:

Fernando Roldan
Greg Kuhl
Cynde Soto
Ellen Blackman
Antonio Mendez
Max Romero

Absent:
John Mavis
Mark Panitz
Raul Tafoya
Kevin Dixon

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kathleen Barajas called the meeting to order. Armando Roman welcomed members attending in person and virtually, introduced guests and prospective members, and reminded participants to treat fellow members, presenters, and members of the public with kindness as they worked toward improving accessibility at Metro.

Mr. Roman conducted roll call attendance and reported that eight of the committee's 18 members were present at roll call with one signing on later during the meeting, this did not constitute a quorum. Members identified as participating during the meeting included Kathleen Barajas, Jared Rimer,

Deaka McClain, Blanca Angulo, Olga Parra, Daniel Garcia, Arlene Descargar, Karen Esquival-Mayes, and Fran Sereseres. A quorum was not established, and no votes were taken.

2. ACTION: Approval of September 12, 2026 meeting Minutes

Approval of the previous meeting minutes was deferred because a quorum was not present. The minutes would return for approval at the next meeting with a quorum.

3. INFORMATION: Metro Youth Council

Tania Taylor, Senior Manager with Safety Education and Mobility Programs, presented an update on the Metro Youth Council and recruitment for the 2027 calendar year. Applications opened September 8 and would close September 29, 2026. Eligible applicants were high school students ages 14 through 17, in grades nine through 12, who lived and attended school in Los Angeles County. Ms. Taylor encouraged members to share recruitment information and explained that Metro would work with appropriate departments to provide reasonable accommodations based on individual needs. Recruitment information had also been shared with the Braille Institute through a connection provided by Cynde Soto.
Ms. Taylor explained that the Youth Council develops civic engagement, leadership, and advocacy skills

while providing Metro with young riders' perspectives on projects and programs. Participants receive opportunities to learn about Metro careers, network, participate in community events, and obtain letters of participation or recommendation. An end-of-year gift card stipend recognizes their participation. The council also organizes an annual Youth Summit. The September 12 summit would focus on equity and accessibility, with participation from Metro's Accessibility Team. Ms. Taylor also reminded participants that September was Rail Safety Month. Arlene Descargar recommended that future events account for religious and cultural observances, noting that the summit coincided with Rosh Hashanah. Ms. Taylor acknowledged the scheduling conflict and committed to considering these observances earlier in future planning. Ms. Descargar also asked whether the council should follow an academic or fiscal year rather than a calendar year. Ms. Taylor explained that graduating seniors could continue participating through December, including after entering college, because monthly meetings were held virtually.
Daniel Garcia asked about the council's influence and opportunities for college students. Ms. Taylor clarified that the Youth Council is an educational program and a source of feedback for Metro departments, rather than a voting advisory body reporting to the Board. She reported that its work with the Office of Management and Budget helped increase responses from youth under 18 by 800 percent during the fiscal year 2027 budget engagement process. She

explained that the council deliberately serves high school students, while college students have other opportunities through Metro's internship and career development programs.
Chair Barajas asked about outreach to high schools. Ms. Taylor described outreach through the Los Angeles County Office of Education, the county's 88 cities, school districts, GoPass partners, and schools outside the GoPass program. She welcomed additional contacts and reported that the program typically received more than 250 applications annually. Deaka McClain asked whether students with disabilities were represented. Ms. Taylor confirmed current and past participation by students with disabilities and described how their experiences helped shape the summit's accessibility focus.
A member of the public recommended youth-focused messaging about yielding priority seating to older adults and people with disabilities, including onboard announcements during school travel periods. Mr. Roman described the Accessibility Team's planned summit resource table, including information on neurodiversity, disability etiquette, American Sign Language, service animals, and Metro accessibility services.

4. **INFORMATION: FIFA World Cup 2026 Accessibility Summary**

Armando Roman presented a summary of Metro's accessibility and civil rights activities during the 2026

FIFA World Cup. He described an approach that addressed the full customer journey through volunteer training, accessibility specialists, language assistance, shuttle coordination, signage, and calming pods. Support was intended to serve both event attendees and regular Metro customers navigating increased crowds and unfamiliar travel patterns.

Mr. Roman reported that Metro MVP volunteers received enhanced disability awareness training, including respectful offers of assistance and sighted guidance for people who are blind or have low vision. Event-day huddles reinforced these practices. Language Line services provided spoken-language interpretation by telephone and American Sign Language assistance by video. Accessibility specialists were assigned to shuttle access locations throughout operations, and Civil Rights leadership provided support through the Emergency Operations Center.

Accessibility specialists recorded 2,580 assists across locations. Reported categories included 24 navigation assists, 754 sensory or neurodivergent support assists, 56 assists related to service outages, and 108 assists involving limited English proficiency or sign language support. Staff helped customers identify accessible routes and boarding areas, coordinated shuttle service, and assisted with alternate travel arrangements during disruptions. Mr. Roman emphasized the value of providing support before customers experienced significant distress.

Field preparations included reviews of parking areas,

pedestrian circulation, temporary equipment, and shuttle accessibility features. Staff inspected ramps and wheelchair securement areas on all shuttle buses and checked that temporary installations at boarding locations did not obstruct accessible paths. Additional signs identified calming pods, accessible entrances, and priority boarding locations. At 7th St/Metro Center, supplemental signs made elevator access easier to locate; signs initially installed temporarily were subsequently made permanent. Multilingual information and Braille were also incorporated.

Metro coordinated with Access Services and Circuit on accessible shuttle connections and adjusted vehicle availability in response to demand. Mr. Roman explained that repeated assignments at the same locations helped staff learn circulation patterns and improve operations over successive match days. He recommended retaining staffing continuity and sufficient customer assistance coverage for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Mr. Roman described Metro's partnership with KultureCity to provide five temporary calming pods at Union Station, 7th St/Metro Center, and the LAX/Metro Transit Center. The pods offered a quieter space with soft lighting, seating, and sensory tools. Customers could also receive sensory kits for continued travel. Survey responses were predominantly positive regarding helpfulness, quietness, and comfort. Customer comments supported permanent sensory spaces and described benefits for people with autism, adults with disabilities,

and caregivers. Staff responded to heat concerns at Union Station's East Portal by adding circulating fans during the deployment.

Mr. Roman stated that Metro was exploring permanent calming spaces, temporary sensory facilities for future events, and the possibility of converting a retired bus into mobile calming rooms. These concepts remained subject to further planning and available funding. He also described the continuing sound design project, which would study how announcements, trains, and crowd noise interact at Union Station and consider improvements to audible information and navigation.
Daniel Garcia raised concerns about the accessibility of Fan Zone activities. Mr. Roman agreed to follow up with organizers about more inclusive activities, including an adaptive climbing wall previously suggested for future events.

Jared Rimer recalled questions at other Metro meetings about whether calming pods would return. Mr. Roman explained that the pods were rentals and had been returned after the activation. He supported using sensory spaces at future major events and outreach activities, subject to funding and accessibility review. Arlene Descargar requested a similar World Cup presentation for an upcoming November CAC meeting and indicated that coordination would follow. Ms. Descargar asked about pod distribution, time limits, and the qualifications and composition of

assistance teams. Mr. Roman clarified that five pods had been deployed across three stations. He explained that there was no rigid time limit: most visits lasted approximately 10 minutes, and staff asked customers to be mindful of others waiting after approximately 10 to 15 minutes. Longer visits were accommodated when no one else was waiting. MVP volunteers were Metro employees; accessibility specialists were Civil Rights staff and colleagues who received disability awareness training and additional preparation. Volunteer staffing varied with station size and operational needs. Mr. Roman supported retaining adequate staffing for 2028.

A public participant identified as Julie asked how specifically assistance data were categorized, including whether information concerning service animals was available. Mr. Roman agreed to review the detailed data and provide a breakdown. Another public participant requested clarification about the elevator signage added at 7th St/Metro Center and recommended sharing World Cup lessons with LA28, venues, sponsors, and other agencies to coordinate sensory spaces and avoid gaps in coverage. Mr. Roman explained that Metro's ability to deploy facilities was generally limited to Metro property and discussed potential coordination and alternative sensory space options.

In response to Chair Barajas, Mr. Roman confirmed that the pods could accommodate mobility devices and had wide entrances with fabric at the entry secured to reduce tripping hazards. He stated that

additional statistics would be brought back to the committee when available.

5. INFORMATION: Committee Updates

Jared Rimer reported that he had no formal committee report. He announced a special Board meeting on September 16, 2026, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., an Operations meeting the following day at 1:00 p.m., and the regular Board meeting on September 24 at 10:00 a.m. He stated that agenda materials would be available through his Board information page. He had no additional report from PSAC or the San Fernando Valley service council.

6. NEW BUSINESS

Armando Roman provided an update on coordination with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. The department had committed to presenting at the November AAC meeting and requested approximately 30 to 40 minutes to discuss behavioral health, responding when someone nearby is in crisis, and connecting people with available resources.

Mr. Roman also reported that the department had offered an approximately four-hour behavioral health de-escalation training for AAC members during months of October or November. The exact date was

not confirmed. In-person participation at Union Station was preferred, with a virtual component discussed for those unable to attend. Mr. Roman reminded members that no regular AAC meeting would be held in October.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Barajas invited additional public comment. No additional comments were recorded. Public comments concerning the Youth Council and World Cup accessibility activities were addressed during those agenda items.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Barajas adjourned the meeting. Mr. Roman stated that the Steering Committee meeting would be postponed because the necessary members were not available. Approval of the corrected minutes remained deferred due to the lack of a quorum. Members were advised that the AAC would reconvene in November and that information about the October training would be circulated separately.