



# HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN

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WHAT TRANSPORTATION CAN BE. 1

# OVERALL PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1

An assessment of available **services** that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and nonprofit).

2

An assessment of transportation **needs** for individuals with disabilities and seniors, based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners, data collection and modeling efforts, and gaps in service.

3

**Strategies**, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery.

4

**Priorities** for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, available funding sources, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified.



# OVERVIEW

# COORDINATED PLANNING PROCESS

## Data Collection & Analysis



- Demographic characteristics
- Human services transportation inventory
- Ridership forecasting

## Public Information & Outreach



- Agency survey & interviews
- Public survey
- Draft plan public comment period & ATAC meeting

## Needs & Gaps Assessment



- Synthesize data & public outreach
- Document existing needs
- Identify gaps

## Project List, Evaluation, & Plan



- Develop project list to address needs & gaps
- Evaluate criteria for project prioritization



### **Stabilization and Sustainability of Existing Services**

*Funding, staffing, and capacity constraints limit the ability of existing service providers to meet demand in an effective and sustainable way.*

- Contracted rates for human services providers have not kept pace with the increasing cost of service provision.
- Training and compliance requirements may be overly burdensome to service providers.

### **Enhanced Existing Service Coverage, Operating Hours, and Capacity**

*Existing services have limited capacity, operating hours, and geographic coverage.*

- Some areas of the county are unserved or underserved by existing programs.
- There is limited availability of service on weekends and weekday evenings. Riders identified weekend service as a higher priority than weekday evenings.
- There are too few wheelchair accessible vehicles available to meet demand.
- Planning for low-/no-emissions vehicle transitions will benefit the agencies and the communities by expanding funding opportunities and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Improved Rider-Facing Information and Communication**

*Not all riders are able to access important transportation information, including about the status of current trips.*

- Riders are not receiving sufficient communication about trip status.
- Rider-facing information is not sufficiently accessible for people with vision, hearing, and developmental disabilities, people with mental illness, and for people who have limited English proficiency.



### **Improved Service Quality and Rider Experience**

*Some riders, especially those with disabilities and/or who have limited English proficiency, experience safety, comfort, and customer service challenges.*

- Some riders experience poor service due to language barriers and/or a lack of understanding about how to support and communicate with people with disabilities.
- OC ACCESS riders complain about spending too much time on the vehicle and/or traveling out of direction.
- Riders may need to change vehicles and drivers between same-day taxi and OC ACCESS even when both services are being provided by the same contracted provider.
- Some riders do not feel safe waiting for a bus in a public, open space.

### **Improved Service Quality and Rider Experience**

*Some riders, especially those with disabilities and/or who have limited English proficiency, experience safety, comfort, and customer service challenges.*

- Having only one option for fare payment is limiting and can be difficult to keep track of.
- Reliance on phone calls for OC ACCESS and other program booking can be onerous and inefficient.
- Rider program eligibility is conducted across multiple organizations through different process that can be challenging to navigate and coordinate

### Increased Number of Service Options

*Gaps in existing service limit the ability of older adults, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes to fully meet their travel needs.*

- Scheduling limitations make it difficult for riders to meet their transportation needs when more flexibility is required.
- Destinations outside of Orange County are difficult to access due to trip restrictions and limited coordination between providers.
- Areas not served by OC Bus and OC ACCESS have comparably limited options, making it difficult and/or expensive for riders in those areas to access transportation.

### **Increased Number of Service Options**

*Gaps in existing service limit the ability of older adults, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes to fully meet their travel needs.*

- More flexible service options, especially same-day and on-demand services.
- Better connections across the county lines, especially to medical facilities.



# GOALS & PRIORITIES

### **Stabilize and Sustain Existing Services**

- Prioritize FTA Section 5310 funds to support OC ACCESS.
- Increase or prioritize funding available for capital and operations, first to make existing programs whole and then to enhance services.
- Establish a mobility coordination committee (or subset of ATAC members) where all agencies with shared human services clients meet regularly to identify challenges and develop solutions.
- Promote/encourage interagency partnerships through ATAC or new mobility coordination committee.
- Support transportation providers by providing joint trainings and establishing contracting mechanisms for service providers to procure scheduling and dispatch software.

### **Enhance Existing Service Coverage, Operating Hours, and Capacity**

- Increase funding available for capital and operations to enhance services.
- Expand the OCTA retired vehicle donation program to increase the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles available to external human service transportation service providers.
- Prioritize areas that require new or enhanced service for high demand or underserved populations.
- Develop an understanding of transportation provider capacity for and interest in low-/no-emission fleet transition and community infrastructure and other resources to support transition.

### **Improve Rider-Facing Information and Communication**

- Improve day-of-trip communication with riders.
- Provide more comprehensive, up-to-date, and easily understandable rider-facing information online and in print.
- Provide more accessible services information.



### **Improve Service Quality and Rider Experience**

- Improve training to better support riders.
- Incorporate rider feedback mechanisms into daily service delivery.
- Explore re-introducing more payment options.
- Provide riders with the option to book and check the status of trips online.
- Improve transportation provider access to advanced scheduling and dispatch software.
- Explore opportunities to coordinate program eligibility.
- Improve the safety and security of fixed route bus stops and designated OC ACCESS stops.

### **Increase Number of Service Options**

- Provide flexible service options, especially same-day and on-demand services.
- Improve coordination of services across the county lines, especially to medical facilities.
- Provide more service coverage and options in remote areas of the county, especially those not served or underserved by OC Bus and OC ACCESS.
- Provide more flexible service options to ADA-eligible customers traveling in the areas with the highest origin-destination pairs.
- Increase service options for individuals who have disabilities but may not qualify for OC ACCESS or other age- and trip-limited transit services.



# PRIORITIZATION

# GOAL #1

STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE	COST	PRIORITY
<b>Goal #1 – Stabilize and Sustain Existing Services</b>			
1.1 Prioritize FTA Section 5310 funds to support OC ACCESS.	Short (6-12 months) and ongoing	Low	High
1.2 Establish a mobility coordination committee (or subset of ATAC members) where all agencies with shared human services clients meet regularly to identify challenges and develop solutions.	Short (6-12 months)	Low	High
1.3 Promote/encourage interagency partnerships through ATAC or new mobility coordination committee.	Short (6-12 months) and ongoing	Low	High
1.4 Support transportation providers by providing joint trainings, especially driver trainings and those related to compliance and administration and establishing contracting mechanisms for service providers to procure scheduling and dispatch software.	Medium (12-24 months)	Low	High
1.5 Increase or prioritize funding available for capital and operations, first to make existing programs whole and then to enhance services.	Medium (12-24 months)	Medium	Medium

## GOAL #2

STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE	COST	PRIORITY
<b>Goal #2 – Enhance Existing Service Coverage, Operating Hours, and Capacity</b>			
2.1 Expand the OCTA retired vehicle donation program to increase the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles available to external human service transportation service providers.	Medium (12-24 months)	Low	High
2.2 Prioritize areas that require new or enhanced service for high demand or underserved populations.	Medium (12-24 months)	Low	High
2.3 Develop understanding of factors related to community transportation fleet transition to low-/no-emissions vehicles.	Medium (12-24 months)	Medium	Medium
2.4 Increase funding available for capital and operations to enhance services.	Long (24-48 months)	Medium	Medium



# IMPLEMENTATION

# HIGH-PRIORITY STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION STEPS
<b>High Priority Strategies</b>	
1.1 Prioritize FTA Section 5310 funds to support OC ACCESS.	Continue OCTA's practice of prioritizing 5310 funds for OC ACCESS and supporting other human services transportation through other funding sources.
1.2 Establish a mobility coordination committee (or subset of ATAC members) where all agencies with shared human services clients meet regularly to identify challenges and develop solutions.	<p>Identify the likely roles and responsibilities of a Mobility Coordination Committee (MCC) in comparison to the role of ATAC.</p> <p>Identify the individuals, organizations, and groups that should be represented at the MCC.</p> <p>Facilitate a conversation with ATAC about interest in and capacity to participate in the MCC as a subset of ATAC and the benefits and challenges of creating a separate structure.</p> <p>After ATAC discussion, determine appropriate structure for MCC, including the person or agency with responsibility for the development and facilitation of the MCC.</p> <p>Early convenings of the MCC should include topics to set the foundation for future work, including a charter, committee member roles and responsibilities, expected staff support from related organizations, processes around planning for and facilitating meetings, and a clear description of how MCC work and recommendations will be used by ATAC, OCTA, and others, as relevant.</p>

# HIGH-PRIORITY STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION STEPS
<b>High Priority Strategies</b>	
<p>1.3 Promote/encourage interagency partnerships through ATAC or new mobility coordination committee.</p>	<p>The development of the MCC will allow for regular coordination across all human service transportation providers and related organizations. One of the first steps of the MCC after establishing foundational documents will be to identify opportunities to improve coordination across the County in support of meeting the needs identified in the Plan.</p> <p>Steps may include the creation of sub-committees or ad-hoc groups to address specific needs, the development of research or planning proposals (such as those needed to make progress on the Medium and Low priority strategies that require deeper understanding before action), or internal agency process changes that incentivize collaboration (such as improved scoring on competitive grant funding or staff acknowledgement for collaborative efforts).</p>
<p>1.4 Support transportation providers by providing joint trainings, especially driver trainings and those related to compliance and administration and establishing contracting mechanisms for service providers to procure scheduling and dispatch software.</p>	<p>The first step in this strategy will be to determine, in greater detail than reflected in this plan, the specific challenges that human transportation providers of all sizes are facing in Orange County to understand the full extent of support needed and the full set of community resources available to provide solutions. The MCC could facilitate this research and create a workplan for developing, funding, and implementing the solutions identified.</p>



# HIGH-PRIORITY STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION STEPS
<b>High Priority Strategies</b>	
<p>2.1 Expand the OCTA retired vehicle donation program to increase the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles available to external human service transportation service providers.</p>	<p>The first step in this strategy will be to identify OCTA's capacity to increase the number of vehicle donations. After understanding the resources needed to enhance the program, OCTA will need to communicate with potential recipients to promote the program and to better understand if organizations are facing barriers to participation.</p>
<p>2.2 Prioritize areas that require new or enhanced service for high demand or underserved populations.</p>	<p>In evaluating proposals for competitive grant funding, OCTA should prioritize projects that meet the identified needs of the communities and areas of focus in the Plan. For all human services transportation partners, projects and programs should consider elevating the needs of communities and areas of focus in the Plan.</p>
<p>4.1 To provide more timely feedback than is available through the bi-annual OC ACCESS service evaluation, incorporate rider satisfaction surveys and/or feedback mechanisms into daily service delivery to identify improvement areas.</p>	<p>With the transition to new scheduling software and a rider-facing application, OCTA should explore providing more real-time opportunities for rider feedback. For all human transportation services providers, providing regular rider feedback opportunities through in-vehicle surveys, phone surveys, mailed surveys, and online surveys will ensure timely recognition of issues and successes and a strong foundation for subsequent Plan updates.</p>



# NEXT STEPS

## NEXT STEPS

- Revise Plan based on ATAC feedback
- Provide revised draft Plan for public comment (August)
- Update plan and finalize for adoption by OCTA Board of Directors (September/October)
- Provide final Coordinated Plan to Human Service Transportation providers and clients (October)



# Q&A

