

Accessible Transit Advisory Committee Teleconference Notice

550 S. Main Street Orange, CA

Committee Members:

Sandra Albear John Peat **Bhumit Shah** Mike Gonzalez Arturo Cazares Wayne Heidle Raymond Bueche Ericka Danczak Mallory Vega Gloria Reves Sue Lau Pam Thompson Cesar Hernandez Caroline Wahlstrom Sandra Stang Scott Quinlan Richard King John Ulrich Mary Lou Shattuck Ellen Schenk Tom Krogstad Henry Michaels Tracy Bryars Isaac López

Jon Ott Paul Miller Brandi Kelly Contreras

Morris "Jake" Schwartzberg Giovanna Lara Sandy Rains

Guidance for Public Access to this Accessible Transit Advisory Committee (A-TAC) Meeting:

Any person with a disability who requires a modification or accommodation to participate in this meeting should contact the Orange County Transportation (OCTA) Public Outreach Department, telephone (714) 560-5650, no less than two business days prior to this meeting to enable OCTA to make reasonable arrangements to assure accessibility to this meeting.

Agenda Descriptions

The agenda descriptions are intended to give members of the public a general summary of items of business to be transacted or discussed. The posting of the recommended actions does not indicate what action will be taken. The Committee may take any action which it deems to be appropriate on the agenda item and is not limited in any way by the notice of the recommended action.

Public Availability of Agenda Materials

All documents relative to the items referenced in this agenda are available for public inspection at www.octa.net or through the Clerk of the Board's office at: OCTA Headquarters, 600 South Main Street, Orange, California.

Guidance for Public Access to the Board of Directors/Committee Meeting

On September 16, 2021, Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law AB 361 authorizing a local legislative body to hold public meetings via teleconferencing and make public meetings accessible telephonically or electronically to all members of the public due to the state and local State of Emergency resulting from the threat of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Guidance for Public Access to the Board of Directors/Committee Meeting (Cont.)

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https://www.youtube.com/user/goOCTA

Members of the public may address the Committee regarding any item two ways:

Real-Time Comment

To provide a real-time public comment during the meeting, please access the Zoom at:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89970442574

Meeting ID: 899 7044 2574

Dial-In Info:

(669)900-6833 (253)215-8782

Speakers will be recognized by the Chair at the time the agenda item is to be considered. A speaker's comments shall be limited to three minutes. Anyone causing disruption can be removed from the meeting at the discretion of the Chair.

Written Comment

Written public comments may also be submitted by emailing them to publiccomments@octa.net, and must be sent 90 minutes prior to the start time of the meeting. If you wish to comment on a specific agenda Item, please identify the Item number in your email. All public comments that are timely received will be part of the public record and distributed to the Board. Public comments will be made available to the public upon request.



Accessible Transit Advisory Committee October 26, 2021

1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Teleconference Meeting

Agenda

1. Call to Order/Welcome (5 min.) Wayne Heidle, Chair Cesar Hernandez, Vice Chair Pledge of Allegiance Approval of Minutes Chair's Report 2. OC ACCESS Driver "Exceptional Service Awards" Postponed due to Coronavirus Impacts 3. CEO Welcome Darrell Johnson, CEO 4. Public Comments 5. Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Disabled Grant Jennifer Farinas, Planning **Program Update** 6. Long Range Transportation Plan Greg Nord, Planning Marissa Espino, Public Outreach 7. Mobility Hub Study Update Warren Whiteaker, *Planning* Christina Pirruccello, Public Outreach 8. Trapeze EZ Wallet Jack Garate, Paratransit Services 9. Face Covering Exemptions Update Melissa Mungia, Paratransit Services 10. Reports (5 min. each) Johnny Dunning, Operations OC Bus Update Melissa Mungia, Paratransit Services **OC ACCESS Operations** Gracie Davis, Paratransit Services OC ACCESS Eligibility / **Mobility Management Service** John Paul Gonzalez, Paratransit Services Senior Mobility Program (SMP) Ryan Maloney, External Affairs **Marketing & Customer Engagement** Jared Hill. External Affairs

January 26, 2022

12. Adjournment / Next Meeting:

11. Committee Member Comments

Committee Liaison Update



Accessible Transit Advisory Committee July 27, 2021 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Orange County Transportation Authority 550 S. Main Street, Orange, CA Online Public Meeting

Committee Members Present

Arturo Cazares, Regional Center of OC
Brandi Kelly Contreras, City of Huntington Bch.
Cesar Hernandez, Express Transp. Solutions
Henry Michaels, Elwyn California
Isaac López, Special Needs Advocate
John Ott, Surf City Seniors on the Go
John Peat, City of Cypress Councilmember
Mary Lou Shattuck, Alzheimer's Family Services
Mike Gonzalez, SA Envro/Transp Adv Comm
Pam Thompson, Saddleback Valley USD

Committee Members Absent

Bhumit Shah, Dayle MacIntosh Center Carolyn Wahlstrom, Placentia/Yorba Linda SD Ellen Schenk, State of Calif. Dept. of Rehab Erica Danzak, County of Orange Office on Aging Giovanna Lara, St. Jude's Senior Services Paul K. Miller, Cal State Fullerton
Raymond Bueche, Saddleback Valley USD
Richard King, OC Guide Dogs Alumni
Sandra Stang, Housing & Transportation Committee
Sandy Rains, City of Laguna Niguel
Scott Quinlan, Lions Sight & Hearing Foundation
Sue Lau, Polio Survivors Plus AARP
Tom Krogstad, Senior and Special Needs Advocate
Tracy Bryars, St. Jude's Medical Center
Wayne Heidle, Marshall B. Ketchum University

Gloria Reyes, ABRAZAR, Inc.
John Ulrich, Laguna Niguel Senior Committee
Mallory Vega, Acacia Adult Day Services
Morris Schwartzberg, Spc Needs at Dana Hills HS
Sandra Albear, Braille Institute of America

1. Call to Order/Welcome

Chair Sue Lau called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the Special Needs Advisory Committee (SNAC) meeting. After years of operating with vacancies on the committee we now have a full roster of members. Chair Lau thanked the individual OCTA Board of Directors who formally selected the seven new committee members. These members are appointed to three-year terms. She asked the new members to introduce themselves.

Chair Lau said this meeting is being held virtually and being recorded.

Jared Hill said there was one public comment submitted on July 27, 2021 at 9:49 a.m. to OCTA's Public Outreach Department from Alan Shuman. The comment was emailed to the committee on July 27, 2021 at 11:19 a.m. and will be retained as part of the record for today's committee meeting.

Jared Hill provided information on the meeting and protocols. Jared took the roll call and established quorum.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Sue Lau asked Vice Chair Paul Miller to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Sue Lau asked if there are any corrections to the April 27, 2021 Minutes and Attendance Report.

A motion was made by Wayne Heidle, seconded by Raymond Bueche and carried unanimously to approve the April 27, 2021 Minutes and Attendance Report with two abstentions by absent members.

• Chair's Report

Chair Sue Lau provided her report as part of the Welcome.

2. OC ACCESS Driver "Exceptional Service Awards"

This item was cancelled due to Coronavirus impacts.

3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Chair Sue Lau thanked the committee for allowing Paul Miller and her to serve in this capacity for the last couple of years. She said it has been an honor.

Vice Chair Paul Miller said he appreciates everyone's involvement, suggestions, and ideas. He thanked everyone for very robust meetings.

Jared Hill suggested for continuity and since today's meeting is being held virtually Chair Sue Lau continue chairing today's meeting. He said staff contacted committee members twice to see if anyone had interest in the positions of chair and vice chair. The names of the committee members that self-nominated themselves to serve as chair were displayed for the committee members to review. Jared asked if anyone else would like to self-nominate. There were no additions. Jared asked if any the self-nominees would like to say anything.

Chair Sue Lau thanked everyone. She said as a rider of OCTA's ACCESS and a rider of the big bus, it has been a pleasure serving as the chair of this committee. She has been on the committee for more than a decade. She said she is always willing to help.

<u>Isaac López</u> thanked Chair Sue Lau for her service and said she has been a great chair. Isaac said he has been serving on the committee for one-year and would like to contribute his skills to the committee.

<u>Cesar Hernandez</u> said he has been in transportation for more than 30 years. He joined this committee to be a voice for the senior, disabled and frail. Since he joined the committee, there has been a change in his life and he is now permanently disabled.

He said he now has a whole new perspective on what it feels like to be on the other end. He said he's tried all his life to make a difference and improve the needs of the elderly and frail. Cesar said he would like to make a bigger difference.

<u>Wayne Heidle</u> said he has been on the committee for several years. He is visually impaired and has a guide dog named Poncho. He recently retired as a professor for the Southern California College of Optometry and as a University Director for Marshall B. Ketchum University.

Raymond Bueche thanked Chair Sue Lau and Vice Chair Paul Miller. He spent his career transitioning and supporting students with disabilities so that they could access the community. He would like to continue giving back to the community and see if he can help this committee. Raymond would like to handout the OC ACCESS Driver Awards for Exceptional Service. He would like to continue lending a voice to the disabled students of South Orange County on mobility needs. It would be an honor to serve as the Chair or Vice Chair.

Jared Hill said the names of the members interested in serving as vice chair are displayed for the committee members to make a selection by anonymous ballot. Wayne Heidle received the most votes.

A motion was made by Chair Sue Lau, seconded by Tracy Bryars and carried unanimously to approve the nomination of Wayne Heidle to the position of Chair.

Chair-Elect Wayne Heidle thanked Sue Lau and Paul Miller for their many years of service. He said he is very excited to take the reins of the committee.

Jared Hill displayed the committee members names that self-nominated themselves to serve as vice chair. Jared asked if anyone else would like to self-nominate. There were no additions. Jared asked if any the self-nominees would like to say anything.

<u>Scott Quinlan</u> said it is great to serve on this committee. He knows that he is new to the committee, but he has been working behind the scenes with Gracie Davis and other staff members at OCTA for the last 15 years. He also has a guide dog Irish and they have been together since 2016. Prior to that he used a cane for 10 years. He said he really enjoyed working behind the scenes and looks forward to working in the front as well.

Jared Hill asked committee members to make a selection by anonymous ballot for the position of Vice Chair. Cesar Hernandez received the most votes.

A motion was made by Paul Miller, seconded by Sandy Rains and carried unanimously to approve the nomination of Cesar Hernandez to the position of Vice Chair.

4. Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Disabled (EMSD) Grants Program Update

Jennifer Farinas provided an update on the EMSD Call for Projects which is intended to enhance the mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities on public transportation. The Call for Projects goes out to non-profit organizations and local public agencies. At the July 12, 2021, OCTA Board of Directors meeting the Call for Projects was released. An application development workshop was held on July 26, 2021, via Zoom. Applicants have until September 9, 2021, to submit applications. More information can be found on the program webpage at www.octa.net/EMSD. The application, guidelines, fact sheet and associated documents can be found on this website. She said if there are any questions staff can be contacted by email or phone.

Jennifer said the award for this Call will be at the November 22, 2021, OCTA Board of Directors meeting. Projects can begin in the winter of 2022 after the cooperative agreements have been executed. She said this call is a two-year program and applicants can request funding in FY 2021-22 or FY 2022-23.

Jennifer said OCTA is looking for a committee member to serve on the evaluation committee. There will be a panel of five members including OCTA staff and a member from Los Angeles Metro. Once the applications are received in September there will be an internal review to make sure the applications are complete. Next, the applications will be disseminated to the panel members along with a scoring sheet. OCTA will be looking to the committee member assigned to the panel for feedback on how to make the next call/program better.

Committee Comments

Chair Sue Lau asked about the time commitment. Jennifer Farinas said we will not know the time commitment until we see how many applications are received. She said at the last Call there were about seven applications, and it took 1-2 day to go through the applications.

5. SNAC Name Considerations

Christina Byrne said earlier this year a committee member mentioned updating the name of the committee to represent its inclusive intention. In April, the committee had a great discussion and dialogue. She said there were three names suggested for this committee – Transit Accessibility Advisory Committee, Accessible Transit Advisory Committee, and Special Needs Advisory Committee. Christina asked the committee to choose from the displayed names.

A motion was made by Chair-Elect Wayne Heidle, seconded by Isaac López, and carried unanimously to change the name of the committee to Accessible Transit Advisory Committee (A-TAC) effective immediately.

6. Bus Restructuring Study

Kim Tucker presented the Bus System Restructuring Study which began in June. The last bus restructuring was in 2012 and it was implemented as OC Bus 360°. Since that study things have changed dramatically with Covid, ridership decline, and on-demand transportation services. OCTA will look at cell phone-based location data for travel to identify gaps in service which will help OCTA better serve emerging markets. This study will be comprised of three phases – research and data collection, recommendation development and refinement, and implementation assistance. Kim shared the timeline for this project. Phase 1 is underway and goes through December of 2021. The final changes will be implemented at the February 2023 Service Change. Kim talked about the public engagement. It is anticipated the first round of outreach will start in January 2022. The second round will occur in late Spring/early Summer 2022 and will focus on the final plan recommendations. <The full presentation is available on OCTA.net.>

7. OC Flex Microtransit Pilot Program Update

Jack Garate provided an update on the OC Flex Microtransit Pilot Program. He showed the two pilot zones – one in South Orange County and the other in Huntington Beach/Westminster. Jack talked about the project objectives, key performance metrics, year one performance, ridership trends, and pandemic adjustments. Due to the pandemic service was suspended in the Huntington Beach/Westminster Blue Zone and the number of vehicles in the South Orange County Orange Zone were decreased. The OC Flex service was extended through December 2021 to be in line with the OC ACCESS service which is now a combined contract. Staff was not able to accurately measure the success of the program due to these challenges. He showed the Key Performance Metric that would be used to measure the success in the future. Jack said users of the service continue to give OCTA's service a 4.9 rating. He said for a point of reference, as of June 2021 the boardings per revenue hours are at 2.0 and the subsidy per boarding is \$31.69. Jack showed a graph on the average weekday boardings. He said due to social distancing requirements ridership numbers were down. OCTA implemented an additional vehicle which bumped the ridership up and continues to increase. Jack said in the future OCTA is looking at possibly terminating the Blue Zone. He said OC Flex service will be incorporated into the OC ACCESS contract. Also, OCTA's budget assumes the addition of a new zone. In the second year there was a 20% growth in the service. <The full presentation is available on OCTA.net.>

Committee Member Comments

Isaac López asked if there were factors, other than the pandemic, that led to the suspension of the Blue Zone. Jack Garate said the service in the Blue Zone never really materialized at least compared to the Orange Zone. He said ridership was ultimately a determining factor in the suspension of service.

Vice Chair-Elect Cesar Hernandez asked who the contractor is for the current OC Flex Microtransit service. Jack Garate said it is the same contractor as OC ACCESS which is MV Transportation.

John Peat asked what transportation services are provided in the Blue Zone now that there is no longer OC Flex Microtransit service. Jack Garate said OCTA still has fixed-route bus services. This pilot project was to see how people would utilize this new type of service.

8. OCTA 2021-22 Budget Update

Anthony Baruch provided an update on the OCTA 2021-22 Budget. He talked about budget themes including emerging from the pandemic and federal supplemental funding to support ongoing transit programs. Next, he showed a graph of the budget sources and uses. Under transit assumptions Anthony said OCTA assumes sales tax revenues will increase and will help bus/paratransit programs. He said the increase in sales tax revenue will help fund Measure M2 projects overall. Anthony talked about the assumption of increased use on the 91 Express Lanes and the increase in revenue collection which will fund projects in the area. <The full presentation is available on OCTA.net.>

Committee Member Comments:

Pam Thompson asked about non-toll revenue. Anthony Baruch said this revenue is violation fees, interest income, etc.

Isaac López asked how much ridership affects the overall capital. Anthony Baruch said ridership affects revenue more so than capital. He said the money for capital usually comes from grants or from the federal/state government. Ridership dollars are not a significant contribution to the capital.

John Peat asked the value of supplemental federal funding that allowed OCTA to achieve a balanced budget. Anthony Baruch said the amount in the bus area this fiscal year was \$34.7 million.

Vice Chair-Elect Cesar Hernandez asked how decreased ridership effects the cost per passenger and its effects on the budget this year. Anthony Baruch said we have enough budget to support 90% of the service hours pre-pandemic. OCTA anticipates ridership will increase, but not get back to the pre-pandemic levels in the coming fiscal year. Anthony does not have the costs per boarding.

9. Reports

 OC Bus Update – Johnny Dunning said since the last report, the state reopened and the passenger capacity of buses has returned to normal (meaning more than 20 passengers are allowed on buses) with mask wearing while on board vehicles. He said pass-bys are no longer being reported which means service is meeting the needs of the traveling public. He said ridership is steadily increasing incrementally with the current trend now at approximately 70,000 boardings on the average weekday. OCTA is looking forward and anticipating an increase in ridership due to schools reopening. Johnny said due to this anticipated increase OCTA will be implementing its first ever August Service Change. OCTA continues to monitor performance levels as traffic conditions return to pre-pandemic levels and ridership continues to increase.

• OC ACCESS Operations – Christina Blanco said during the last couple of weeks staff has been closely monitoring day programs throughout the county as they begin to expand or resume capacity of their in-person services. She said to date we are aware of 50 programs that have reopened at varying levels of capacity. There are an additional 30 programs which have not yet disclosed plans to reopen. Resumption of some programs has had an impact on OC ACCESS demands. The demand for this service has increased significantly since the reopening. She said staff worked closely with the contractor to obtain drivers willing to return to duty. Call Center staffing has been inadequate which has resulted in increased hold times during peak hours. She said MV Transportation has now added additional agents and the hold times have stabilized. Christina said staff will continue to work with MV Transportation. OCTA is a member of the American Bus Benchmarking Group (ABBG) and decided to participate in a paratransit customer satisfaction survey. Currently ABBG has received 900 surveys from OCTA Customers.

Committee Member Comments:

Chair-Elect Wayne Heidle asked if there is an effort to increase the taxi portion of OC ACCESS operations. He said right now people are really unhappy with the OC ACCESS operations – especially in the mornings. Christina Blanco said OC Yellow Cab is actively recruiting drivers under the current contract. Jack Garate said OCTA is actively working with Cab Co Management to address those issues related to response time on trips provided by them. He said OCTA is aware of the issue, and we are hoping for a quick resolution. He said it is a continuing trend and staff is committed to getting it corrected.

Chair-Elect Wayne Heidle said at the last meeting we talked about the taxicab floor mats being turned upside down for the guide dogs. He asked if the taxicab service was notified. Christina Blanco said they were notified, and their response was there was an issue when getting the vehicles cleaned. She said OCTA had not received many comments until recently when OCTA received a comment from committee member Scott Quinlan. It was submitted to OCTA's Customer Relations Department for further investigation.

Chair Sue Lau asked about the supply of drivers and the lack of vehicles going down with the demand increasing. She said some riders can be flexible with their times, can there be a way to triage those customers. Jack Garate said OCTA is proactively working with MV Transportation to ensure they have the correct level of drivers without moving to their subcontractors. He said when ensuring the customers are getting where they need to be on time and meeting their needs OCTA has to work under the guidance of the FTA with regards to paratransit operations and OCTA cannot really do a triage because one person's trip is not more important than

another trip. He said riders can schedule trips with an appointment-based delivery time no later than "x" time versus a pickup time.

• OC ACCESS Eligibility/Mobility Management Service – Gracie Davis acknowledged the 31st anniversary of the ADA that was signed into effect July 26, 1990. She started with ACCESS Eligibility. She started with a comparison of 2020 versus 2021. She said there was a 40% decrease in auto-renewals, 44% decrease in visitors, 33% decrease in new individuals applying for service, 17% increase in recertifications and 13% decrease in evaluations. These decreases are generally due to Covid-19. She said we are returning to pre-pandemic levels. The new certification center has a soft opening of September 7, 2021. OCTA is getting ready to embark on the 100% Functional Assessment process. She said staff will identify those who are new or a presumptive eligibility for the start-up. After three months OCTA will incorporate everyone else.

Gracie Davis talked about Mobility Management Services. She said virtual training workshops are happening. OCTA has completed 39 workshops serving 495 individuals and identified 440 individuals from the eligibility process for travel training. Gracie said she is working in collaboration with marketing and the ADA eligibility team to send out an e-blast about the Travel Training Program to 550 participants including: libraries, social services agencies, senior centers, schools and religious organizations. This training is available in multiple languages. Multiple language information was also included in the Newsletter which went out in mid-July. Gracie said one-on-one travel training still has not begun and once OCTA obtains guidance from OSHA on field travel training OCTA will begin that training. There have been five online travel trainings and OCTA is in the process of moving forward with in-field training. <The full presentation is available on OCTA.net.>

• Senior Mobility Program (SMP) - Joanne Jacobsen provided background on the She said there are currently 32 cities and three non-profit agencies participating in the SMP. During the FY 2018-2019, 275,000 trips were provided. In FY 2019-2020, 193,000 trips were provided with the decrease in trips attributed to the beginning of the pandemic. In 2020-2021, 71,000 trips were provided. There continues to be five programs that have yet to be restarted. These cities are looking to restart their programs in the coming months. No agencies are running their nutrition programs which provide individuals with trips to senior centers for meals. No senior centers are currently operating for lunch service. 15 of these agencies are continuing to deliver meals to senior's homes. Five agencies are providing frozen meals to residents and those residents drive to the senior centers for the meals. Joanne said during the pandemic funding has not decreased. Agencies receive bi-monthly funding based on sales tax revenue and the population of For FY 2018-19 \$3.9 million was distributed. individuals 65 and older. FY 2019-2020 \$3.47 million was distributed. For 2020-2021 \$3.81 was distributed. She said the funding formula allocations are adjusted every 10 years based on the Census. The formula will not be adjusted until the Census has been validated which

will be early next year. Joanne said the SMP contracts have just been renewed for five years with a five-year option term. These agreements are in effect until Measure M2 sunsets in 2040.

- Marketing & Customer Engagement There was no report at this time.
- Committee Liaison Update Jared Hill said OCTA anticipates that the next meeting on October 26 to be held in-person at the OCTA offices. Jared directed the committee members to a link in the chat box from Cambridge Virtual Academy in Anaheim Unified School District. He said it will be of interest to this committee.

11. Committee Member Comments

Isaac Lopez thanked outgoing Chair Sue Lau and outgoing Vice Chair Paul Miller for all their hard work. He also congratulated incoming Chair Wayne Heidle and incoming Vice Chair Cesar Hernandez. Isaac said he was having some technical difficulties during Johnny Dunning's presentation and asked Jared Hill to forward his comments to Johnny. He has concerns about the school re-openings especially on Route 57 Southbound at the end of the school day. He said the majority of the kids getting on the bus are under 12 and not eligible for the vaccine. Isaac said he is concerned for disabled people who have to share those spaces. Some disabled people cannot wear masks and cannot get vaccinated. He proposed a special day-tripper for the kids. Jared will pass along the comment.

12. Public Comments

The public comment was noted at the beginning of the meeting and is on file.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned. The next scheduled meeting date is October 26, 2021.

Accessible Transit Advisory Committee Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Attendance Record

● = Present

E = Excused Absence

Member	7/27/21	10/26/21	01/26/22	04/26/22
Arturo Cazares	•			
Bhumit Shah	•			
Brandi Kelly Contreras	•			
Caroline Wahlstrom	•			
Cesar Hernandez	•			
Ellen Schenk	•			
Ericka Danczak	•			
Giovanna Lara	•			
Gloria Reyes	•			
Henry Michaels	•			
Isaac López	•			
John Ott	•			
John Ulrich	•			
Jon Peat	•			
Mallory Vega	•			
Mary Lou Shattuck	•			
Mike Gonzalez	•			
Morris "Jake" Schwartzberg	•			
Pam Thompson	•			
Paul Miller	•			
Raymond Bueche	•			
Richard King	•			
Sandra Albear	•			
Sandra Stang	•			
Sandy Rains	•			
Scott Quinlan	•			
Sue Lau	•			
Tom Krogstad	•			
Tracy Bryars	•			
Wayne Heidle	•			