



Accessible Transit Advisory Committee

550 S. Main Street, Orange CA, Room 07

April 26, 2022 | 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Agenda

1. **Call to Order/Welcome** (5 min.)
 - Pledge of Allegiance
 - Approval of MinutesWayne Heidle, *Chair*
Cesar Hernandez, *Vice Chair*
2. **Making Better Connections Study**
Dan Phu, *Planning*
3. **OC ACCESS Designated Stops**
Christina Blanco, *Paratransit Services*
4. **Trapeze EZ Wallet**
William Gonzalez, *Paratransit Services*
5. **Reports** (5 min. each)
 - **OC Bus Update**
Kim Tucker, *Operations*
 - **OC ACCESS Eligibility / Mobility Management Service**
Gracie Davis, *Paratransit Services*
 - **OC ACCESS Operations**
Melissa Mungia, *Paratransit Services*
 - **Senior Mobility Program (SMP)**
Joanne Jacobson, *Paratransit Services*
 - **Marketing & Customer Engagement**
Ryan Maloney, *External Affairs*
 - **Committee Liaison Update**
Christina Byrne, *External Affairs*
6. **Committee Member Comments**
7. **Public Comments***
8. **Adjournment / Next Meeting:**
July 26, 2022

Agenda Descriptions

The agenda descriptions are intended to give notice to members of the public of a general summary of items of business to be transacted or discussed.

Any person with a disability who requires a modification or accommodation in order to participate in this meeting should contact the OCTA at (714) 560 5611, no less than two (2) business days prior to this meeting to enable OCTA to make reasonable arrangements to assure accessibility to this meeting.

*Public Comments: At this time, members of the public may address the Accessible Transit Advisory Committee (ATAC) regarding any items within the subject matter jurisdiction of the ATAC, provided that no action may be taken on off-agenda items unless authorized by law. Comments shall be limited to three (3) minutes per person, unless different time limits are set by the Chairman, subject to the approval of the ATAC.



Accessible Transit Advisory Committee
January 25, 2022
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
Ericka Danczak, County of Orange Office on Aging
Giovanna Lara, St. Jude's Senior Services
Henry Michaels, Elwyn California
Isaac López, Special Needs Advocate
Jon Peat, City of Cypress Councilmember
Mary Lou Shattuck, Alzheimer's Family Services
Pam Thompson, Saddleback Valley USD

Paul K. Miller, Cal State Fullerton
Richard King, OC Guide Dogs Alumni
Sandy Rains, City of Laguna Niguel
Scott Quinlan, Lion Sight & Hearing Foundation a
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

Committee Members Absent

Brandi Kelly Contreras, City of Huntington Bch.
Cesar Hernandez, Express Transp. Solutions
Gloria Reyes, ABRAZAR, Inc.
Ellen Schenk, State of Calif. Dept. of Rehab
John Ott, Surf City Seniors on the Go
John Ulrich, Laguna Niguel Senior Committee

Mallory Vega, Acacia Adult Day Services
Miguel Gonzalez, SA Enviro/Transp Adv Comm
Morris Schwartzberg, Spc Needs at Dana Hills HS
Raymond Bueche, Saddleback Valley USD
Sandra Albear, Braille Institute of America
Sandra Stang, Housing & Transportation Committee

1. Call to Order/Welcome

Chair Wayne Heidle called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the Accessible Transit Advisory Committee (ATAC) meeting.

Christina Byrne said there were no advanced public comments submitted. She provided information on the meeting protocols. Christina took the roll call and established there was quorum.

• *Pledge of Allegiance*

Chair Wayne Heidle led the Pledge of Allegiance.

• *Approval of Minutes*

Chair Wayne Heidle asked if there are any corrections to the October 26, 2021, Minutes and Attendance Report.

A motion was made by Paul Miller, seconded by John Peat, and carried unanimously to approve the October 26, 2021, Minutes and Attendance Report with one abstention.

- *Chair's Report*

Chair Wayne Heidle did not have a report.

2. OC ACCESS Driver "Exceptional Service Awards"

This item was postponed due to Coronavirus impacts.

3. Public Comments

Christina Byrne opened the meeting to live comments from the public. There were no live comments.

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

Jennifer Farinas provided an update on the EMSD Call for Projects. She said the funding recommendations were approved by the OCTA Board of Directors on November 22, 2021. OCTA awarded \$2.75 million to eight non-profit organizations and county agencies for vehicles, equipment, mobility management, and operating assistance. She said the programming recommendations are available on the EMSD Program webpage. Jennifer said a grantee workshop was held for the eight awarded agencies to discuss program requirements which include reporting, invoicing, and execution of the cooperative agreements. OCTA anticipates the next Call for Projects will be held in 2023. Jennifer said OCTA will hold guideline development and application workshops and ATAC briefings ahead of the next Call.

Committee Member Comments:

There were no committee member comments.

Public Comments:

There were no public comments.

5. Overview of Service Animal Practices on OC ACCESS

Melissa Mungia introduced Kyle Hickey who is an OCTA intern in paratransit operations. Kyle Hickey shared federal regulations regarding service animals on public transportation. He noted for federal regulations on public transportation it says *any* service animal is allowed that is trained to perform tasks for an individual with disabilities. Kyle says this does not cover Emotional Support Animals (ESAs). He said vehicle operators may inquire what tasks the animal is trained to perform. Kyle talked about guidelines regarding the service animals in vehicles. He said if there are any complaints/comments regarding animals on board OCTA vehicles, report the comments to OCTA Customer Relations. <The full presentation is available on OCTA.net.>

Committee Member Comments:

Paul Miller asked for the latest issuance/revisions to the DOT guidelines versus the Department of Justice. Paul said he recalls a recent case in Washington state where a man with no arms had a boa constrictor that was trained to assist him with various things including putting the fare in the farebox. He said you can imagine the fear some people might experience with a snake on board public transportation. Kyle Hickey said are there no restrictions on what type of animals can be used to assist individuals with disabilities aboard public transit. Paul asked when the latest update was made. Melissa Mungia said the slide shows the difference in the current guidelines between both agencies.

Chair Wayne Heidle asked if the drivers are aware of these guidelines. Melissa Mungia said the drivers are aware of the procedures to report an animal if there is a direct threat which is to notify dispatch. When someone books a ride, it is in the system if there is a service animal accompanying the passenger, so the drivers are prepared and know this has already been vetted.

Paul Miller asked to clarify that a comfort animal would not qualify. Melissa Mungia said those animals would not qualify because they would not be trained to perform a task or a function.

Public Comments:

There were no public comments.

6. OC ACCESS

Melissa Mungia said on January 1, 2022, First Transit became responsible for the management, maintenance, and operations of OC ACCESS service. First Transit also provides contracted fixed-route service on behalf of OCTA using a different team of individuals. She said the transition process began in late October 2021. Melissa said the key challenge at the start of the agreement was staffing to meet increased demand for OC ACCESS service. She said First Transit retained 97% of the existing workforce due in large part to their outreach process and some familiar faces within the incoming management team. Melissa said some may remember Laura Samson who was assistant general manager for OC ACCESS service under MV Transportation. Laura is now the OC ACCESS General Manager for First Transit. Melissa said every employee participated in training to refresh key concepts specific to paratransit service and they were also trained on First Transits service quality expectations. First Transit will conduct a 30, 60, and 90-day assessment of the incumbent staff to verify that expectations are being met. First Transit also executed an agreement with CabCo to continue the practice of utilizing subcontracted taxi service to meet demand during peak hours and overnight.

Committee Member Comments:

There were no committee member comments.

Public Comments:

There were no public comments.

7. Making Better Connections Study

Kim Tucker said this study was formally called the Bus Restructuring Study, but it has now been branded as the Making Better Connections Study. She went over the purpose of the study. She said the outcome of the study is route alignment and schedule changes and modified/new OC Flex Zones. Kim went over the goals of the study. She shared the various phases of the project with the implementation of the service plan at the February and June 2023 Service Changes. She noted the use of cell phone data collection to see travel trends across all modes. Kim talked about the Public Involvement Plan and the outreach for this study that will begin in January 2022. Currently, there is a survey at OCbus.com/Connects that runs through February 18, 2022. She said this information along with other feedback will go into a plan that will be delivered to the OCTA Board in May 2022. Then there will be another round of outreach during the summer. <The full presentation is available on OCTA.net.>

Committee Member Comments:

There were no committee member comments.

Public Comments:

There were no public comments.

8. Reports

- *OC Bus Update* – Johnny Dunning said OCTA continues to operate reduced service as compared to before the pandemic. He said currently OCTA is providing about 68,000 rides on an average weekday which is slightly down and somewhat expected during the winter. He said the on-time performance is at 80% which is standard, but OCTA is striving for better. Johnny said at the February Service Change there will be adjustments which include 28 schedule revisions with 26 routes receiving time adjustments. He said these are due to increased traffic. Johnny said two routes will be re-instated – Route 402c and Bravo 529. He said OCTA is anticipating ridership to increase in the Spring and OCTA is ready to accommodate this increase.

Committee Member Comments:

Chair Wayne Heidle asked what the current ridership is in contrast to that of 2019. Johnny Dunning said OCTA is operating at about 60-65% of the pre-pandemic ridership. There used to be 126,000 boardings on an average weekday. He said OCTA received as many as 80,000 boardings in the Fall.

Sue Lau asked how to go about reporting construction interruptions or other mishaps to OCTA. She said at the bus stop 247 at the Disneyland East Shuttle area there has been major construction going on which blocks the bus loading area. She said she was unable to find the relocated spot. Johnny Dunning said call Customer Relations. He said the cities are pretty good about letting OCTA know about

construction and we try to get temporary signs out for boarding areas. Ryan Maloney said please call Customer Relations. He said OCTA is aware of this situation. He said OCTA received relatively late notification of this construction from the City of Anaheim and Disneyland. There is temporary signage indicating the temporary location for boarding. Richard King said since he is blind, he may not know the stop has been changed. He suggested there be a notice included in the on-hold message with the information or a quick button to get to this information when calling the Customer Information Center. He also noted that the change messages are often above the route signage, and he cannot reach the braille or will not know the message is there. Ryan said OCTA will work on this and look at posting the braille lower. He also suggested calling the Customer Information Center or using the Transit App.

Sue Lau said when a rider calls to make an OC ACCESS reservation there is a very lengthy Covid message and it would be great if there was a button to push to bypass the message since we all have it memorized at this point. She said this is lengthy when you are panicked and waiting at a stop.

- *OC ACCESS Eligibility/Mobility Management Service* – Gracie Davis said in December OCTA went to 100% in-person assessments, but due to the increase in Covid cases and safety precautions OCTA resumed telephone interviews as of January 7, 2022 and will continue through February 2022. Gracie said OCTA has certified 428 individuals over the past six months. She said the certification numbers are approaching the same as pre-pandemic. Gracie said for the Mobility Management Program OCTA discontinued in-the-field processes due to the resurgence of Covid and will resume after March 22, 2022. She said currently there are nine workshops pending in multiple languages. Gracie said in-the-field travel training activities have also been paused. She said there are 10 individuals waiting for this training. OCTA continues virtual workshops and training. Anyone interested in these training services should contact her.
- *OC ACCESS Operations* – Melissa Mungia updated the committee on ridership and performance. She said during the month of January ridership has been lower than anticipated. In the Fall there was an average of 2,400 trips per average weekday. She said in January that has declined to 1,700 trips per average weekday. The reason for this decline is being attributed to the surge in Covid cases throughout the county. Melissa said one of the first tasks First Transit had was to revise the drivers' schedules to increase coverage during peak weekday hours. She said they based this on October's travel demand. She said, so far in January, on-time performance has been 97% which is well above the standard and is a great improvement of the challenges during November/December.

Committee Member Comments:

John Peat said many of the regional centers were closed until the second week in January and may have remained closed. He said they are talking about reopening at the beginning of February. He asked how long it will take for ACCESS service to be reinstated for those traveling to the Regional Center. Melissa said OCTA is requesting a two-week notice.

Pam Thompson asked about the phone app. She asked if more riders are using that versus calling in and what the feedback is on the app. Ryan Maloney said the OCBus app has had some challenges and has been moved to a new provider. He said for support for that app please call the Customer Service Center. Melissa Mungia said there is no OC ACCESS app. Scott Quinlan said she may be referring to the old Same-Day Taxi app. Chair Wayne Heidle said the booking tool does not get updated in the morning, especially if it is a taxi. Melissa asked to be sent screenshots when this happens so she can investigate.

Sue Lau asked if it is possible to get an app for OC ACCESS. Melissa Mungia agrees this would be good to have. Unfortunately, the Trapeze software OCTA utilizes does not have an existing app feature... Sue asked what Los Angeles uses. Melissa said LA Metro uses a variety of scheduling software. She said their system is more complex and therefore able to create an app.

- *Senior Mobility Program (SMP)* – Joanne Jacobsen said currently all Senior Centers are open and providing transportation other than the City of Placentia. She said the pandemic is still affecting the SMP, but trips are gradually increasing. Joanne said July 2021 through January 2022 39,000 trips have been provided by all the programs. She said the largest trip generator last year was to provide meals to residents' homes. She said there are still seven cities providing meals to homes. Joanne said this fiscal year \$1.85 million has been distributed to the participating agencies. She said last year \$3.8 million was distributed to the participants.
- *Marketing & Customer Engagement* – Ryan Maloney recapped the OCBus Making Better Connections Study. OCTA is currently collecting online responses to a questionnaire that is available at OCBus.com/connections. He said OCTA has already received 350 responses to the survey. He mentioned there are some virtual meetings coming up in multiple languages. Ryan talked about the Youth Ride Free Program. He said this program has been very successful with 672,000 boardings. The program ends in February, but the OCTA Board is considering extending the program. Ryan said there is a public involvement campaign collecting feedback on the program. There is an online comment form that he will share with the committee in an email. So far there have been over 400 responses to the program and they are overwhelming in support of the program.
- *Committee Liaison Update* – Christina Byrne said staff is closely monitoring any changes in Covid-19 mandates and legislation to determine if the next meeting will be in-person or virtual.

11. Committee Member Comments

Chair Wayne Heidle said he spoke with Scott Quinlan about staff enunciating websites for the visually impaired during these meetings. Christina Byrne said OCTA can do this and she can always email the information to anyone who may have missed the information.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned. The next scheduled meeting date is April 26, 2022.

**Accessible Transit Advisory Committee
Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Attendance Record**

● = Present ⊙ = Absent E = Excused Absence R = Resigned

Member	7/27/21	10/26/21	01/25/22	04/26/22
Arturo Cazares	●	●	●	
Brandi Kelly Contreras	●	⊙	⊙	
Caroline Wahlstrom	⊙	R	R	
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	●	●	●	