



Accessible Transit Advisory Committee
550 S. Main Street, Orange CA, Room 07
April 23, 2024 | 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Agenda

1. **Call to Order/Welcome** (5 min.) Raymond Bueche, *Chair*
 - Pledge of Allegiance
 - Welcome New Members
 - Approval of Minutes
2. **ACCESS Driver Exceptional Service Awards**
3. **ACCESS Policy Update** Jack Garate, *Specialized Transit Services*
4. **Community Transportation Programs Update** Martin Browne, *Specialized Transit Services*
5. **Trapeze Project Update** Jack Garate, *Specialized Transit Services*
Allison Kale, *Specialized Transit Services*
6. **Reports** (5 min. each)
 - **EMSD Update** Denise Sifford, *Planning*
 - **OC ACCESS Operations Update** Christina Blanco, *Specialized Transit Services*
 - **Mobility Management Services Update** Gracie Davis, *Specialized Transit Services*
 - **Coordinated Plan: Proposed Survey for Stakeholders' Interviews** Kevin Khouri, *Planning*
 - **Marketing & Customer Engagement** Ryan Maloney, *Marketing and Customer Engagement*
 - **Self-Certification Form for Non-Elected Boards** Christina Byrne, *Public Outreach*
 - **Committee Liaison Update** Christina Byrne, *Public Outreach*
7. **Committee Member Comments**
8. **Public Comments***
9. **Adjournment / Next Meeting:**
July 23, 2024

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 23, 2024
12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Orange County Transportation Authority
550 S. Main Street, Orange, CA

Committee Members Present

Arnel Dino, Fullerton Resident

Arturo Cazares, Regional Center of OC

Brandi Kelly Contreras, City of Huntington Bch.

Claudia Harris, County of Orange Office on Aging

Ellen Schenk, State of Calif. Dept. of Rehab

Henry Michaels, Ashling's Residential Villa

Isaac López, Special Needs Advocate

Jon Peat, Cypress Council Member

Lawrence Klein, Santa Ana Resident

Mario Ortega, ABRAZAR, Inc

Mary Ann Remnet, Rossmoor Resident

Meredith Chillemi, LeadingAge

Oscar Valadez, Fullerton Resident

Paul K. Miller, Cal State Fullerton

Raymond Bueche, Saddleback Valley USD

Richard King, Braille Institute

Samir Hijazi, TBD

Sandra Stang, Housing & Transportation Committee

Sue Lau, Polio Survivors Plus AARP

Committee Members Absent

Beck Levin, Dayle McIntosh Center

Cesar Hernandez, Transportation Solutions

Jim Nguyen, Alzheimer's of Orange County

John Ulrich, Laguna Niguel Chamber of Commerce

Nelly Gomez, Dayle McIntosh Center

Pam Thompson, Saddleback Valley USD

Scott Quinlan, Lion District 4-4L

Tom Krogstad, Senior and Special Needs Advocate

1. Call to Order/Welcome

Raymond Bueche called the meeting to order.

• *Pledge of Allegiance*

Jon Peat led the Pledge of Allegiance.

• *Approval of Minutes*

Mary Ann Remnet made a motion to approve the October 24, 2023, minutes and Jon Peat seconded the motion. Raymond Bueche noted a correction in the October 24 minutes, he was marked as absent but was present for the meeting.

2. OC ACCESS Driver Exceptional Service Awards

The following ACCESS Drivers were recognized for their exceptional service:

- Misty Hardesty
- Juan Hernandez

3. ACCESS Policy Update

Jack Garate, Specialized Transit Services, presented the update on the ACCESS Policy Updates.

Committee Member Comments:

A committee member asked how often certifications are. Jack Garate responded certifications occur every five years.

A committee member asked if policy changes could be presented in a different way, so perception is not they are losing something, but are being provided with something different. Jack Garate thanked the member for the comment and responded that attempting to contact fourteen thousand people was challenging and the decision was to use a direct letter to inform. As the change happens, they will be cognizant of and exhibit grace to assist riders through the process change.

A committee member commented that the term “large-wheel chair” was confusing and suggested changing the language to use “non-standardized mobility equipment”. Jack Garate thanked the member for the comment and responded, there is no defined standard wheelchair and in the letter it will address the term “large” in respect to how our ramps and lifts are designed. It does not have to do with the wheelchair itself, but the dimensions and our limitations within the vehicles. What is meant by large wheelchairs is that they are larger than the vehicle dimensions.

A committee member asked if that is in the letter. Jack Garate responded yes. He could not use standard as there are no standards for wheelchairs.

A committee member commented that there is a standard, a weight standard. Jack Garate responded that they are making them aware of the ramp, lift and weight dimensions. The vehicles being sent are accessible and that is what the dimensions are being based on. Riders will have the opportunity to board as required by the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), unless there are safety issues with onboarding or securing the equipment within the vehicle.

A committee member asked about language preferences and translations for the letters. Jack Garate responded all the letters are being sent in English, there is not a process setup that automatically sends the letter in the language of choice. The riders can contact us and request it in another language and it will be sent. Interpreters are available for calls and to send letters in the requested language. In 2022, we began capturing their language of choice and are in the process of being able to send the letters in the language of choice in the future. We are abiding by any requirement that is necessary at this point.

A committee member asked if it would be sent in Braille. Jack Garate responded that not everyone understands or uses Braille and that riders usually contact by calling.

A committee member commented that if their chair fit on a ramp but could not readily use the ramp and wanted to request a different vehicle, would that be under the Not Ready Return Policy. Jack Garate responded yes, the vehicle sent met ADA requirements. To illustrate, during peak hours of service, 6:00 am to 6:00 pm, the high occupancy, cutaway vehicles are in service. If a return is after that, a minivan with a ramp may be sent which may not fit your requirement but does fulfill the ADA requirement. This is what we are informing our riders about to help them best utilize the service.

A committee member asked could they specify a lift. Jack Garate responded no, they route and utilize the vehicles to provide maximum efficiency for the riders. Vehicle specifications and service parameters may change over time and this is prepping riders for future real-world scenarios. The letter specifies the minimum and if you meet the requirements in that letter, then you will meet the ramp specifications.

A committee member asked if a person's mobility device exceeds the specifications in the letter will they become ineligible to use the service. Jack Garate responded eligibility for paratransit service, OC ACCESS, has to do with the ability to use or not use the Fixed Route System. Wheelchair size does not have a bearing on the ability to use Fixed Route System. Eligibility has nothing to do with what we are doing, no one's eligibility is changing. What is changing is the sending of a second vehicle. That is what we are eliminating.

A committee member asked if not sending a second vehicle was only for certain hours during the day. Jack Garate responded no. We will not send secondary vehicle at any time. That is why we are sending the information so riders understand the smallest vehicle limitations that we have.

A committee member asked what happens if a rider books a trip but their device exceeds the specifications provided in the letter. Jack Garate responded the ADA requires us to schedule the trip, arrive at that location and allow the passenger to attempt to board the vehicle. We are unable to provide the limitations upfront. When the rider goes through the certification process, we provide them the information, and they will know the limitations. If someone changes their device, they are not required to inform us. Our intent is to provide efficient service and not create service delays for others.

A committee member commented that transparency upfront allowing the consumer to inform about the device they have was better for OCTA and the consumer rather than having a vehicle show up that they could not board. Jack Garate responded that is the intent of this notification. This implementation has been over two years; a new riders guide was sent with this new updated information, the website updated, direct letters have been sent and the new eligibility letters going out inform everyone about the vehicle limitations and specifications.

A committee member asked how many trips for the second vehicle have been required over the years. Jack Garate responded there is not an actual log of that but the impact has always been there. It is not a high frequency item, but impactful and not sustainable.

A committee member asked as the notifications about the changes are sent out, what is the method of measuring the efficiency of the riders receiving the communication and understanding what the changes are. Jack Garate responded we do not have a survey but will be conducting one asking those same questions in the future.

A committee member asked for clarification, if the fixed route bus is running after midnight, aren't you required to send a vehicle out. Jacke Garate responded yes, but we can't transport someone who doesn't fit in the vehicle. The committee member responded, it just may not be the heavier duty vehicle. Jacke Garate responded yes.

A committee member commented the letters are getting out as he has had feedback and commented that the committee should also help to relay the message to their groups. Jack Garate responded he appreciated the feedback and will continue to work with the committee to provide data and receive feedback.

4. Trapeze Project Update

Jack Garate, Specialized Transit Services, and Allison Kale, Section Manager Vanpool Program presented the update.

Committee Member Comments:

A committee member asked if they receive a text of no-show, can they reply to that message that they are here or is it just one way. Allison Kale responded it is outbound notification only. You can call the number of our reservation line that is in the message to discuss the no-show.

A committee member asked if a text reply could be implemented. Jack Garate responded that is not available in the product at this time.

A committee member commented that if you receive a no-show notification, the first call would be to Same Day Taxi as there is no return ride that would be coming. Jack Garate responded that if we are not on time for your trip, we have to take you back.

A committee member commented that the imminent arrival notification should help stop the no-shows and asked how soon is it calling. Allison Kale responded it is five minutes within arrival.

A committee member asked if you are forty-five minutes late, then is it a cancel for the client, not a no-show. Jack Garate responded yes, it is texted and marked a no-show in our system as that is the way it is recognized, but it will not go to the rider's account as a no-show.

A committee member commented that they could change the language to vehicle no-show. Jack Garate responded that the pilot is starting with standard transit language and they will use the feedback to assess the changes requested.

A committee member commented that they had volunteered for the pilot but had not been contacted. Christina Byrne responded they will be in contact and Jack Garate responded the pilot just started January 10.

A committee member asked in an instance where they are present but the driver is near but at a wrong location resulting in a no-show, how is that handled. Jack Garate responded in that situation it is looked at, the driver can be talked to or the vehicle can be seen at the wrong location, then a secondary vehicle will be sent to correct the problem that we created. Allison Kale responded if the customer receives a notification, it can be remedied by OCTA.

A committee member commented that the difference in pay between local and longer distance transports may incentive drivers to leave for the longer distance transport. Jack Garate responded that is something they can look at and work with the contractor to improve.

5. Coordinated Plan: Project Overview & Schedule

Kevin Khouri, Planning, and Paul Sharmen, Transpo Group USA Inc. presented the update. <The full presentation is available on OCTA.net.>

Committee Member Comments:

A committee member asked if they would be working with Advance OC who has been contracting with the Office on Aging for the Master Plan on Aging for Orange County. Paul Sharmen responded they would be reaching out to the Office of the Aging at some point.

A committee member asked what the end result of this study is. Paul Sharmen responded the end result is to provide strategies to improve mobility options to persons with disabilities, low-income folks and seniors. It does not touch fixed route, it may help fund ACCESS and is needed to help keep the Federal Section 5310 funding in place.

A committee member commented that these types of studies have greatly affected the availability of ACCESS in South Orange County and they are in need of more small routes, access to ACCESS. Paul Sharmen responded this is the type of information needed.

A committee member asked if it was possible to look at how people with disabilities and ACCESS riders would be affected by the new ACCESS policy. Paul Sharmen responded it was not within this scope but perhaps a future project.

A committee member asked if information would be sent out. Christina Byrne responded yes.

A committee member asked how they got data regarding persons with disabilities as that information is protected. Paul Sharmen responded the first source is census data, then survey outreach and face-to-face conversations.

A committee member asked when the website goes live and ready to deliver messages, is there a way for the service providers to know ahead of time in order to be ready. Paul Sharmen responded yes.

6. Reports

- *February Service Change Update* – Kevin Khouri, Planning, presented the update.

Committee Member Comments:

There were no comments.

- *OC ACCESS Operations Update* – Christina Blanco, Specialized Transit Services, presented the update. <The full presentation is available on OCTA.net.>

Committee Member Comments:

There were no comments.

- *Mobility Management Services Update* – Gracie Davis, Paratransit Services, presented the item. <The full presentation is available on OCTA.net.>

Committee Member Comments:

A committee member asked how individuals were identified for the OC Sheriff “Take Me Home Program”. Gracie Davis responded they are registered on the website with a photo, their disability or any unique conditions that would assist the Sheriff in working with that individual.

- *Marketing & Customer Engagement* – Ryan Maloney, External Affairs, presented the item.

Committee Member Comments:

A committee member asked if each of the Cal State Fullerton districts or campuses are paying a certain fee for their students to ride. Ryan Maloney responded that specifically this is for the community colleges and Cal State Fullerton has a different program. When we say College Pass we are specifically talking about community colleges.

A committee member asked if they are processed through the schools, they have access to a pass for free ridership anywhere in the county or just to and back from school. Ryan Maloney responded there are two different programs, The Youth Ride Free Pass, available through OCTA and distributed through the schools, ages six to eighteen which allows them to use OC Bus for free, and this extends to ACCESS riders in that age range. The second program is the Community Pass Program. As part of registering as a community college student there is a small transportation fee and during that period of registration you get free transportation throughout the county.

- *Committee Liaison Update* – Christina Byrne, Public Outreach, presented the update Recruitment for the 2024-2025 term has begun and will continue to May.

Committee Member Comments:

There were no comments.

7. Committee Member Comments

There were no comments.

8. Public Comments

There were no comments.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

The next scheduled meeting date is April 23, 2024.

**Accessible Transit Advisory Committee
Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Attendance Record**

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

Member	7/25/23	10/24/23	01/23/24	04/23/24
Mary Ann Remnet	●	●	●	
Henry Michaels	●	⊙	●	
Scott Quinlan	⊙	⊙	⊙	
Jim Nguyen	⊙	⊙	⊙	
Mario Ortega	●	⊙	●	
Beck Levin	●	●	⊙	
Lawrence Klein	●	●	●	
Arturo Cazares	⊙	●	●	
Raymond Bueche	●	●	●	
Cesar Hernandez	⊙	⊙	⊙	
Richard King	●	●	●	
Ellen Schenk	⊙	●	●	
Samir Hijazi	●	⊙	●	
Claudia Harris	●	●	●	
Sue Lau	⊙	●	●	
Nelly Gomez	●	⊙	⊙	
Paul Miller	●	⊙	●	
Arnel Dino	●	●	●	
Oscar Valadez	●	●	●	
John Ulrich	⊙	⊙	⊙	
Tom Krogstad	⊙	⊙	⊙	
Pam Thompson	⊙	⊙	⊙	
Sandra Stang	●	⊙	●	
Jon Peat	●	⊙	●	
Isaac López	●	⊙	●	
Meredith Chillemi	●	●	●	
Brandi Kelly Contreras	●	●	●	