



June 20, 2019

To: Legislative and Communications Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer 

Subject: Special Needs Advisory Committee Annual Update and Member Appointments

Overview

The Special Needs Advisory Committee was formed to advise the Orange County Transportation Authority on the transportation needs of senior citizens and persons with disabilities. The member appointment status and a summary of the committee's activities during the past year is provided with this report.

Recommendation

Receive and file the Special Needs Advisory Committee's status report.

Background

On January 13, 1992, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Board of Directors (Board), concurrent with approving the OCTA 1992 Complementary Paratransit Plan as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, voted to establish a standing citizens' committee to advise OCTA on the requirements of transit users with special needs. The Special Needs Advisory Committee (SNAC) was formed in 1992 and formalized the predecessor "504 Committee."

Discussion

The SNAC's mission is to advise OCTA on the promotion of integrated public transit services and improve communication between OCTA and its customers who have special transportation needs. Committee members also provide support for ACCESS service eligibility appeals. The SNAC meets quarterly, and members serve staggered three-year terms.

The committee met four times during fiscal year (FY) 2018-19 and discussed the following items:

OC Bus 360° and FY 2019-20 Bus Service Plans

Committee members discussed the OC Bus 360° Plan and received several updates on the OC Bus initiative. Discussion included comments on the College Pass Program and the status of other interested colleges. In reviewing the OC Bus 360° Plan, committee members asked about the development of new services for seniors and those with special needs. In addition to providing feedback on each of the FY 2018-19 OC Bus service changes, the SNAC gave input on proposed service changes for October 2019 and February 2020. Committee discussion also included interest in the OC Vanpool program as an OC Bus alternative, feedback on I-405 construction bus detours, and comments on limited service connectivity between Central and South Orange County.

OC ACCESS Online

After a walkthrough of the new online ACCESS booking service, committee members provided feedback on “OC ACCESS Online.” Discussion included comments on how to schedule advance trips using the online service, with committee members appreciating the scheduling flexibility. Committee members also discussed the service’s compatibility with common text to speech applications. Suggestions for future enhancements included adding large print and audio prompt versions of the service, along with syncing with Google/Outlook calendars for scheduled trips.

Long Range Transportation Plan

Following the November 2018 finalization of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), committee members received an update and discussed the next short-term planning activities. Committee members asked how the aging of Orange County will be accommodated in the LRTP, commenting on both the expected increase in mobility devices, along with the lack of ACCESS service in areas without fixed-route bus service. Staff discussed the current planning efforts, such as the bus fleet plan, and the development of new services, such as OC Flex, to address areas with ridership challenges. Discussion also included comments on bikeways as part of the Active Transportation Plan, adding mobile phone chargers on buses and future zero-emission vehicles.

Transit Planning / Corridor Studies

The SNAC was presented with information about the Beach and Bristol corridor studies. The committee also discussed potential impacts to the proposed statewide ballot initiative that would have overturned SB 1 (Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017).

Exceptional Service Awards

The presentation of exceptional service awards to ACCESS drivers continues to be an important and much appreciated function of the SNAC. This year the SNAC presented awards to 13 drivers for outstanding service to customers.

New Member Recruitment

The SNAC is structured such that each OCTA Board Member appoints two citizens to serve, creating a 34-member committee reflecting a broad representation of constituents from throughout Orange County. The terms of six SNAC positions expire on June 30, 2019. To commence the appointment process, the committee members whose terms are expiring were asked if they would be willing to serve on the committee for another term. In addition, announcements were made seeking potential applicants by email to social service organizations, developing a list of interested and qualified potential applicants, and outreach to individuals and agencies involved in services for senior and disabled individuals.

The opportunity to reappoint interested members for an additional term along with recent resignations was presented to each OCTA Board Member and their staff beginning in April. The recruitment period is now complete, and Board Members have either reappointed current members, appointed new members to begin service on July 1, 2019, or have appointments pending. A roster of members, including pending appointments, is included (Attachment A).

All candidates meet the following criteria:

- Demonstrate interest and involvement with persons with disabilities, senior citizens, and others with special needs;
- Represent large, active constituencies with whom regular interface regarding transportation matters is conducted; and
- Commit to dedicate no fewer than 12 hours per year to OCTA meetings and activities.

Next Steps

New SNAC members will attend an orientation prior to their first committee meeting of the fiscal year on July 23, 2019. Staff will return to the Board next year with a report on the SNAC activities and notification of appointment of members whose three-year terms have expired. Outgoing members will receive resolutions of appreciation for their service.

Summary

The SNAC continues to serve in an advisory and advocacy role on transit issues of importance throughout the year. A roster of members, including pending appointments, is included (Attachment A).

Attachment

- A. Orange County Transportation Authority Special Needs Advisory Committee Roster Fiscal Year 2019-20

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