



June 10, 2019

To: Members of the Board of Directors
From: Darrell Johnson, Chief Executive Officer
Subject: Public Hearing for the Proposed October 2019 and February 2020 Bus Service Plan

Overview

The Orange County Transportation Authority has developed a proposed bus service plan for fiscal year 2019-20 as part of its OC Bus 360° initiative to grow ridership, increase productivity, and implement routing changes to prepare for the OC Streetcar construction. On April 22, 2019, an outreach program was introduced to share proposed October 2019 and February 2020 service changes and gather feedback. To complete the public participation process, a June 10, 2019 public hearing date was set. Based on the input received, staff will refine the Proposed October 2019 and February 2020 Bus Service Plan and return to the Board of Directors in July with recommended changes to Orange County Transportation Authority bus transit service.

Recommendation

Receive and file initial public input on the Proposed October 2019 and February 2020 Bus Service Plan.

Background

In 2015, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Board of Directors (Board) launched OC Bus 360°, a plan that examines and improves bus service in an effort to reverse declining bus ridership and improve productivity. During the initial implementation of this comprehensive plan, OC Bus 360° provided better service in high-demand areas by reallocating existing resources, improved passenger experiences through technology, and created new branding and marketing to attract new riders. There are some indications the ridership decline is slowing following the initial implementation of the OC Bus 360° program.

With the decline in ridership, productivity for OCTA bus service has diminished during the last several years, while service levels have generally remained constant. To continue the positive direction of OC Bus 360°, staff has developed the Proposed October 2019 and February 2020 Bus Service Plan to reallocate

service to improve productivity and reduce fleet requirements. Overall, the plan would reallocate about 2.5 percent of the bus service, equivalent to 40,000 annual revenue hours.

Discussion

Proposed service change recommendations for October 2019 and February 2020 were presented to the Board on April 22, 2019. The proposed service changes consist primarily of the redeployment of resources, including both service reductions and improvements. The operating resources required (revenue vehicle hours) will be similar to current levels after implementation. Long-term capital needs will be reduced because the service plan requires fewer peak buses. In addition, the recommendations include restructuring bus service in the Santa Ana Civic Center area during the OC Streetcar construction. The service recommendations are consistent with prior OC Bus 360° efforts and the OC Streetcar Bus Rail Interface Plan. Attachment A summarizes the proposed service improvements and reductions.

Several of the recommendations are considered “major service changes” under OCTA policy and require extensive public outreach and a public hearing prior to Board approval. On April 22, 2019, the Board directed staff to implement a public outreach program to solicit feedback on the plan. To date, the following outreach activities have taken place:

- Brochures/Comment Cards – To communicate route-specific information, 50,000 multi-lingual brochures with comment cards were printed and distributed on the bus and to employers, colleges/universities, senior centers, libraries, and city halls.
- Print and Bus Advertisements – To notify customers and the general public of the proposed service changes and the community meetings and public hearings, OCTA advertised through three newspapers and placed advertisements inside all buses.
- Mailings – Letters with multi-lingual brochures were mailed out to 56 potentially impacted ACCESS customers.
- Local Jurisdiction Communication – Emails were sent to public information officers at all cities with service change information for re-distribution via cities’ communication channels. OCTA staff had direct communication with city public works staff where proposed changes would reduce or eliminate bus service.

- Digital Information – Information was placed on the OCTA website with an online survey to gather feedback on the proposed service changes. Information was also publicized in OCTA’s blog “On the Move” and social media and traditional media outlets. Multiple email blasts were deployed to nearly 17,000 email addresses from OCTA’s email list.
- Three Community Meetings – Meetings took place in Brea, Irvine, and Santa Ana. A total of 26 people participated in three community meetings and 18 public comments were recorded.
- Citizen Committees – The OCTA Citizens Advisory Committee and Special Needs Advisory Committee were presented with the proposed service changes and provided feedback.
- Bus Customer Roundtable – A special roundtable discussion took place with current riders of OC Bus to solicit their feedback on the proposed service plan.
- Diversity Community Leaders Quarterly Meeting – The Diversity Community Leaders Quarterly Meeting was presented with the proposed service changes and provided feedback.

As of May 24, 2019, 147 public comments have been received. The table below identifies how comments were received.

Individual Responses Received*

Channel	Comments Received
Mailed Surveys	8
Phone Calls/Emails	9
Online Surveys	93
Community Meetings	18
Customer Roundtable	22
Total:	147*

* As of 5/24/2019

Key themes from comments received:

- Most customers supported OCTA’s approaches to:
 - Reallocate service from areas of low demand to provide more service where demand is higher,
 - Reallocate service from areas of low demand to provide more service during weekend and late evening.

- Routes with proposed changes that customers supported:
 - Routes 26, 55, 56, 59, 60, 72, 79, and 560

- A number of customers disagreed with the proposed route eliminations and reductions. The table below lists the routes with a higher volume of comments received disagreeing with the proposed changes.

Proposed October 2019 Changes		
Route	Change Description	Opposing Comments
53/53X: Anaheim – Irvine	Reallocation / Frequency Change	33
206: Santa Ana – Lake Forest Express	Elimination	32
213/A: Brea – Irvine Express	Reallocation / Frequency Change	30
211: Huntington Beach – Irvine Express	Elimination	27
Proposed February 2020 Changes		
Route	Change Description	Opposing Comments
129: La Habra – Anaheim	Elimination	30
86: Costa Mesa – Mission Viejo	Reduction	28
24: Buena Park – Orange	Reduction	26

Summary

A public hearing on the Proposed October 2019 and February 2020 Bus Service Plan is required. Initial public feedback is presented for Board review. Staff will return to the Board with a refined service plan recommendation on July 22, 2019.

Attachment

- A. Proposed October 2019 and February 2020 Bus Service Plan Brochure

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