



June 9, 2022

To: Transit Committee

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Darrell E. Johnson", is written over the "To:" line.

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

Subject: Bus Operations Performance Measurements Report for the Third Quarter of Fiscal Year 2021-2022

Overview

The Orange County Transportation Authority operates fixed-route bus and demand-response paratransit service throughout Orange County and into neighboring counties. The established measures of performance for these services assess the safety, courtesy, reliability, and overall quality of the services. This report summarizes the year-to-date performance of these services through the third quarter of fiscal year 2021-22.

Recommendation

Receive and file as an information item.

Background

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) operates a countywide network of 58 routes, including local, community, rail connector, and express bus routes serving over 5,000 bus stops. Fixed-route bus (OC Bus) service operates in a 798 square-mile area, serving more than three million residents in 34 cities and unincorporated areas, with connections to transit services in Los Angeles, Orange, and Riverside counties. OCTA provides these services through both directly-operated fixed-route (DOFR) and contracted fixed-route (CFR) service. OCTA also provides OC ACCESS, a federally mandated paratransit service, which is a shared-ride program available for people unable to use the OC Bus service because of functional limitations. Performance measures for OC Bus, OC ACCESS, and OC Flex services are summarized and reported quarterly (Attachment A).

In response to a significant decline in ridership as the result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, OC Bus service has operated on a significantly reduced schedule, beginning with a Sunday-only schedule, seven days a week, implemented in March 2020. This was followed by the implementation of a Saturday schedule, six days a week, in June 2020. This level of service was sustained through the entirety of fiscal year (FY) 2020-21, ending June 30, 2021. In August 2021 and February 2022, more capacity was added to support the return of students to in-person instruction in fall 2021 and increases in ridership. During this time, OCTA operated 52 of the 58 total OC Bus routes.

Discussion

This report provides an update on the performance of the OC Bus and OC ACCESS services by presenting the current trends and comparisons with OCTA-established performance standards for transit system safety, courtesy, and reliability. OCTA counts preventable vehicle accidents to evaluate system safety, customer complaints to assess courtesy, and uses both on-time performance (OTP) and miles between road calls (MBRC) to measure service reliability.

This report includes performance through the third quarter, including the months of January, February, and March of FY 2021-22. OCTA continues to operate a reduced level of service with the prolonged impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is reflected in the performance to be discussed in this report. During this reporting period, increased ridership coupled with driver availability negatively impacted OC Access OTP and courtesy. The ongoing procurement and replacement of OC Access cutaway buses resulted in an improvement in MBRC.

- Safety – DOFR and CFR OC Bus service performed below the accident frequency standard of one preventable accident per 100,000 service miles. OCTA Operations and contracted staff continue to stress safety in the bus loading/unloading zones and vehicle operation that impacts passenger safety inside the vehicle (passenger falls). Training and discussions continue with coach operators emphasizing safety and identifying problem locations where fixed-object strikes frequently occur. Accident prevention is also reinforced during post-accident retraining and during annual refresher training. OC ACCESS exceeded the performance standard.
- Customer Service – Customer service is measured by evaluating the number of valid customer complaints received compared to boardings. Through the third quarter, the DOFR and CFR modes of service performed above the respective standards. OC ACCESS fell below the

standard as increasing ridership and driver shortages resulted in challenges to meet key metrics, including OTP, causing an increase in customer complaints.

- Reliability – Through the third quarter, the OTP for DOFR service met the standard while CFR service also improved but remained below standard. The improvements were a result of the service changes implemented in October 2021. OC ACCESS remained below standard due to increasing demand and driver shortages.
- MBRC – The MBRC for CFR and OC ACCESS improved from the previous quarter and met the standard. DOFR also improved from the previous quarter but was slightly below the standard. Improvements are expected as OCTA continues to replace its OC ACCESS fleet.

The report also includes:

- An assessment of the efficiency of OCTA transit operations based on industry standards for ridership, productivity, farebox recovery, and cost per revenue vehicle hour;
- A review of contractor performance for CFR and OC ACCESS services;
- A route-level performance evaluation that includes subsidy per boarding, revenue per boarding, and resource allocation (buses); and
- A performance assessment of the OC Flex microtransit service and a report on the College Pass Program.

Summary

Through the third quarter of FY 2021-22, the performance of OC Bus service exceeded the performance in the area of courtesy and OTP but is below the performance standard for safety and reliability (MBRC). OC ACCESS exceeded the performance standard for safety and reliability (MBRC) but was below standard for Courtesy and OTP as the contractor had a difficult time with coach operator availability in light of increasing ridership. OCTA staff continues to focus on strategies to improve safety and reliability, track the established key performance indicators, manage the service agreements pursuant to contract requirements, and work to identify other strategies to improve overall system performance.

Attachment

- A. Bus Operations Performance Measurements Report, Third Quarter, Fiscal Year 2021-22

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