



November 9, 2023

To: Transit Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Darrell Johnson", is placed over the name in the "From:" field.

Subject: Bus Operations Performance Measurements Report for the Fourth Quarter of Fiscal Year 2022-2023

Overview

The Orange County Transportation Authority operates fixed-route bus and demand-response paratransit service throughout Orange County and into neighboring counties. The established performance measures for these services assess the safety, courtesy, reliability, and overall quality of the services. This report summarizes the performance of these services through the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2022-23.

Recommendation

Receive and file as an information item.

Background

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) operates a countywide network of over 50 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 directly operated fixed-route (DOFR) and contracted fixed-route (CFR) services. OCTA also provides OC ACCESS, a federally mandated paratransit service, 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).

Discussion

This report presents current trends and compares the performance of OC Bus and OC ACCESS services to OCTA-established standards for transit safety, courtesy, and reliability. OCTA measures safety through preventable vehicle accidents and courtesy through customer complaints. Service reliability is measured by on-time performance (OTP) and miles between road calls (MBRC). During the fourth quarter (Q4) of fiscal year (FY) 2022-23, the OC Bus CFR contract with First Transit/Transdev concluded, and a new contract began with Keolis. Consistent with the start of the new contract, OCTA aligned the standards for CFR customer comments and MBRC to be consistent with DOFR; this is reflected in the report.

This report includes performance through Q4 of FY 2022-23. OC ACCESS performance was negatively impacted by operator shortages due to a strike in May; this resulted in delays and an increase in complaints. OC Bus failed to meet the MBRC standard due to the age of the fleet; however, this is expected to improve as OCTA receives replacement buses through December 2023 and completes mid-life engine replacements.

- Safety – DOFR had one preventable incident per 108,780 miles traveled, surpassing the safety standard. In contrast, CFR failed to meet the standard through Q4 of FY 2022-23. The primary cause of preventable accidents for CFR is fixed-object strikes. Since transitioning to the current CFR provider, Keolis, the ratio of accidents to miles has improved. Staff will continue to work with the contractor to enhance performance through thorough accident reviews, trend analysis, and hot spot training. Similarly, in FY 2022-23, OC ACCESS had one preventable incident per 66,429 miles traveled, falling below the safety standard. During Q4, First Transit/Transdev implemented a safety campaign to reduce preventable accidents caused by fixed-object strikes. Although the campaign was successful in Q4, the results did not improve performance for FY 2022-23 in total.

- Customer Service – Customer service is evaluated by comparing the number of valid customer complaints received to the number of boardings. DOFR and the First Transit/Transdev CFR exceeded OCTA's courtesy standards. Keolis CFR, during the first two weeks of the new contract, did not meet the standard, with one complaint per 13,607 boardings. OC ACCESS failed to meet the courtesy standard, averaging one complaint per 447 boardings, mostly due to service delays caused by operator shortages throughout FY 2022-23. The OC ACCESS driver strike, which impacted service in May, also had a significant effect on

complaint metrics. First Transit/Transdev is actively recruiting employees and expanding the use of subcontractors to increase reliability for OC ACCESS.

- Reliability – Systemwide fixed-route OTP was 81 percent; OTP for DOFR was 82.5 percent, indicating a strong record of reliability. Meanwhile, CFR recorded an OTP of 78 percent. Additionally, OC ACCESS was below standard, with an OTP of 88.7 percent though improvement was noted in Q4 compared to previous quarters. First Transit/Transdev is actively recruiting operator resources to balance the existing operator shortage with increasing demand.
- MBRC – DOFR and CFR fell short of meeting the performance standard. Currently, OCTA has completed 73 percent of the fixed-route bus replacement campaign, leading to expected improvements in vehicle reliability. OC ACCESS exceeded the MBRC standard by operating for 37,069 miles without any mechanical issues.

The report also includes the following:

- 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 Q4 of FY 2022-23, DOFR met performance standards for safety, courtesy, and OTP. CFR OC Bus services met the courtesy standard for the year, but struggled to meet safety, OTP, and MBRC standards. The new OC Bus CFR contractor, Keolis, has made efforts to improve performance since the start of the contract. DOFR and CFR did not meet MBRC standards due to mechanical failures resulting from the age of the fleet, which OCTA is addressing with replacement buses. OC ACCESS did exceed the performance standard for MBRC, but fell short on courtesy, OTP, and safety. The contractor is focusing on providing more operator resources to improve reliability as ridership increases, while OCTA staff is working to improve safety and reliability, track key performance indicators, manage service agreements, and identify ways to enhance overall system performance.

Attachment

- A. Bus Operations Performance Measurements Report, Fiscal Year 2022-23, Fourth Quarter

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