




September 25, 2017

To: Members of the Board of Directors
From: Darrell Johnson, Chief Executive Officer 
Subject: Public Hearing for the Proposed February 2018 Bus Service Plan

Overview

The Orange County Transportation Authority has developed a proposed bus service plan for February 2018 as part of its OC Bus 360° initiative to improve bus service and productivity. On July 24, 2017, an outreach program was introduced to share proposed service changes and gather feedback. To complete the public participation process, a September 25, 2017 public hearing date was set. Based on the input received, staff will refine the proposed February 2018 Service Plan and return to the Board of Directors in October with recommended changes to Orange County Transportation Authority bus transit service.

Recommendations

Receive and file initial public input on the Proposed February 2018 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 after the initial implementation of the OCBus 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 February 2018 Service Plan to reallocate service to improve productivity and reduce fleet requirements. The scope of this effort is approximately a third of the size of the major service changes made in 2016, which reallocated about 10 percent of the bus service, or 160,000 annual revenue vehicle hours.

Discussion

Proposed service change recommendations for February 2018 were presented to the Board on July 24, 2017. The draft service plan for February 2018 consists primarily of a 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 buses during peak hours. 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 July 24, 2017, 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 invite them to attend community meetings and public hearings, OCTA advertised through five newspapers and placed advertisements inside of all buses.
- **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 outlets and traditional media outlets. Multiple email blasts were deployed to 20,000 email addresses from OCTA’s email list.
- **Three Community Meetings** – Meetings took place in Garden Grove, Laguna Hills, and Orange. A total of 21 comments were received from 38 attendees.
- **Citizen Committees** – The OCTA Citizens Advisory Committee and Special Needs Advisory Committee were presented with the February 2018 proposed service plan 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.

As of September 8, 2017, 293 comments have been received. Approximately half of the comments were from customers who will be impacted by the proposed changes, while the other half shared their suggestions regarding general service-related issues. The table below identifies how comments were received.

Individual Responses Received*

Method Received	Number
Mailed Surveys	20
Phone Calls/Emails	89
Online Surveys	156
Community Meetings	21
Customer Roundtable	7
Total	293*

* As of 9/8/2017

Key themes from comments received:

- The majority of customers agreed with OCTA's approaches to:
 - Reallocate service from areas of low demand to provide more frequent 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 disagreed with:
 - Eliminated routes 177 (weekend), 212, 216, 794/A
 - Proposed frequency changes on route 50, which would have increased frequency in the core, but decreased frequency on the outer limits of the route, generated more opposing comments (14) than supporting comments (5).

Summary

A public hearing on the proposed February 2018 Bus Service Plan is required. Initial public feedback is presented for Board review. Staff will return to the Board on October 23, 2017, with a final public outreach report, as well as a refined service plan recommendation.

Attachments

- A. Proposed February 2018 Bus Service Plan Brochure
- B. February 2018 Service Change Comments, Regarding Major Changes (25%+, Required Public Outreach)

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