



May 17, 2018

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.

Fiscal Year 2017-18 Activities

Long Range Transportation Plan

Committee members participated in an interactive poll and discussion for the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan, a multi-modal plan for transportation for the next 20 years. Feedback on emerging technologies included discussion of the use of autonomous vehicles for seniors and individuals with disabilities, along with navigational devices to improve the efficiency of travel planning. SNAC members provided feedback on the importance of local street signal synchronization.

OC Streetcar

The committee provided their feedback on the OC Streetcar project following a presentation on the vehicle procurement and vehicle accessibility. Committee discussion included questions about the useful service life of the vehicles, as well as the cost of fares and transfers to other OCTA transportation services and connectivity to Metrolink stations.

OC Bus 360° Plan & Service Changes

The SNAC received several updates on the OC Bus 360° Plan, including bus service changes. Committee members discussed and made several recommendations to proposed October 2017 and February 2018 service changes. Discussion included public outreach efforts for service changes and possible impacts to the ACCESS service area. The growth of senior, ACCESS, and regional care center ridership was also discussed. SNAC members provided comments on the operation of bus alternatives, the relative operational costs of smaller buses, and reduced fare passes.

Transit Master Plan Opportunity Corridors

The SNAC discussed the Transit Master Plan, which provides a long-term vision of transit in Orange County. The members were presented with the schedule, survey results, and proposed opportunity corridors. Discussion of this item included comments about accessibility of new transit options for the disabled and updated ways to notify the driver of a requested stop. SNAC members also provided comments on seasonal special service, adaptive bikes / mobility devices on ACCESS, and limited space on bike racks.

OC ACCESS Online

The online ACCESS booking service “OC ACCESS Online” was shown to committee members in order to gather their feedback and insights. Discussion included online / mobile service, how to schedule recurring rides / subscription service, real-time location of the approaching ACCESS vehicle, and payment management for multiple individuals.

5310 Funding Alternative

Based on feedback from SNAC members, OCTA developed a grant funding program alternative to the discontinued 5310 Grant Program. The 5310 program provided federal grant funds to support private nonprofit groups in meeting the needs of older adults and people with disabilities. OCTA has developed a pilot program called Orange County Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Disabled to replace this program. Committee members provided feedback on the proposed program, including the number of agencies requesting the funds, the eligibility criteria, and also volunteered to review applications. SNAC members also communicated to their groups the critical dates for this grant request process.

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 15 drivers for outstanding service to ACCESS 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 ten SNAC members expire on June 30, 2018. 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 resignations, was presented to each OCTA Board Member and their staff beginning in April. The recruitment is now complete, and Board Members have

either reappointed current members, appointed new members to begin service on July 1, 2018, 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 at their first committee meeting of the fiscal year on July 25, 2017. 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 2018-19

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