



July 11, 2019

To: Transit Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

Subject: October 2019 and February 2020 Bus Service Plan Recommendations

Overview

Bus system changes to improve system productivity and ridership are proposed for the October 2019 and February 2020 service changes. The proposed changes required a public hearing and public outreach process to gather customer input prior to implementation. Final route recommendations have been developed based on the input received.

Recommendations

- A. Approve the final October 2019 and February 2020 Bus Service Plan and direct staff to begin implementation.
- B. Receive and file the October 2019 and February 2020 Bus Service Plan Public Involvement Program final report.
- C. Direct the Executive Director of Planning, or his designee, to file a Notice of Exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act related to the bus service changes.

Background

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) implements schedule and route revisions to selected bus routes three times a year, in February, June, and October. The goal of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-20 Bus Service Plan is to grow ridership, increase productivity, and implement routing changes during the OC Streetcar construction. Several of the recommendations are considered major service changes under OCTA's Service and Fare Change Evaluation Policy and required public outreach and a public hearing prior to Board of Directors' (Board) approval.

Staff presented the draft recommendations to the Board in April 2019 (Attachment A). A comprehensive public outreach program was conducted and concluded with a public hearing at the Board meeting on June 10, 2019. Staff is proposing final route recommendations based on public feedback.

Discussion

To address continuing bus ridership declines, in 2015, the Board endorsed a comprehensive action plan, known as OC Bus 360°. This effort included a comprehensive review of current and former rider perceptions, a peer review panel that reviewed the OCTA performance and plans, new branding and marketing tactics tied to rider needs, improved bus routes and services to better match demand and capacity, technology changes to improve passenger experience, fare adjustments, and other changes to stimulate ridership and provide new funding.

There are indications that the ridership decline is slowing after implementation of OC Bus 360°. Staff has developed the draft FY 2019-20 Bus Service Plan to reallocate additional service to grow ridership and improve productivity. In addition, the recommendations include restructuring bus service in the Santa Ana Civic Center area during the OC Streetcar construction. The recommended final service plan would reallocate about 1.9 percent of the bus service, equivalent to 30,000 annual revenue hours. The route recommendations are consistent with prior OC Bus 360° efforts and the OC Streetcar Bus Rail Interface Plan.

Public Outreach Summary

In April 2019, the Board directed staff to implement a public outreach program to solicit feedback on the proposed October 2019 and February 2020 Bus Service Plan. This effort resulted in a total of 210 individual respondents giving feedback on the proposed changes and concluded with a public hearing at the June 10, 2019, Board meeting. At the public hearing, six speakers requested that OCTA consider modifying the final Bus Service Plan in response to each individual's travel circumstance.

While there was general support for the approach to the service reallocation included in the proposed Bus Service Plan, there were concerns over:

- Eliminating routes 129, 206, and 211,
- Eliminating segments of routes 83 and 86,
- Reducing frequency on routes 53/X and 89,
- Simplifying routing for direct service on Route 213/A,
- Combining routes 129 and 143 into a new Route 153.

Other specific comments are included in the draft Public Involvement Program Report (Attachment B).

Final Service Plan Changes

Staff recommends a series of changes to the October 2019 and February 2020 Bus Service Plan based on customer and stakeholder feedback received. The final recommendations are detailed in Attachment C. Maps with the updated changes on weekdays and weekends are shown in Attachment D and Attachment E. Of the original 24 routes recommended for changes, 11 were modified in some manner based on feedback. Below is a summary of the recommended changes to the final Bus Service Plan.

- Route 53/X (Anaheim – Irvine)
 - Draft: Reduce weekday AM peak frequency from 20 to 30 minutes. and midday service from 24 to 36 minutes.
 - Final: Withdraw recommendation based on negative public input and further review of ridership impact.
- Route 60 (Long Beach - Tustin) and Route 560 (Long Beach - Santa Ana)
 - Draft: Run all trips to Long Beach during peak and midday. Implement more direct routing for Bravo! 560.
 - Final: Withdraw recommendation based on further review of ridership projection. An updated ridership projection for these combined changes does not justify the amount of resources required. The Route 60/560 routing and frequencies will be revisited when the OC Streetcar opens for revenue service.
- Route 79 (Tustin - Newport Beach)
 - Draft: Add weekday southbound trips between Michelson Drive and University of California, Irvine (UCI) due to heavy passenger loads.
 - Final: A review of recent ridership shows that only one trip needs to be added at this time. Staff will monitor ridership after implementation to see if any more trips are necessary. This additional service will only operate during the UCI school year.

- Route 83 (Anaheim - Laguna Hills)
 - Draft: Implement OC Streetcar routing in Santa Ana, cut Walnut Loop (Anaheim), and serve Anaheim Gardenwalk; improve weekday frequency to 15/30 minutes during peak and 30 minutes midday. Improve weekend service to 30-minute frequency.
 - Final: Withdraw routing changes in the Anaheim Resort area based on input from City of Anaheim regarding ridership impacts on Walnut Street and uncertainty securing a bus layover location at Gardenwalk. Frequency improvements and routing changes in Santa Ana will be implemented.
- Route 86 (Costa Mesa - Mission Viejo)
 - Draft: Cut route back to Laguna Hills Transportation Center; improve frequency to 60 minutes all day.
 - Final: Withdraw recommendation based on negative public input and further review of ridership impact.
- Route 129 (La Habra - Anaheim)
 - Draft: Eliminate and combine sections with routes 145 and 153.
 - Final: Withdraw recommendation based on negative public input and further review of ridership impact.
- Route 143 (La Habra - Brea)
 - Draft: Implement new route from combined portions of routes 129 and 143 at 50-minute weekday frequency.
 - Final: Withdraw routing recommendation based on negative public input and further review of ridership impact. Implement weekday frequency improvements only.
- Route 153 (Brea - Anaheim)
 - Draft: Implement new route from combined portions of routes 129 and 153 at 60-minute frequency.
 - Final: Withdraw recommendation based on negative public input and further review of ridership impact.

- Route 206 (Santa Ana - Lake Forest Express)
 - Draft: Eliminate route.
 - Final: Eliminate only one morning and one afternoon trip based on public input to keep the service. A recent ridership review shows that some of the trips have higher ridership and some resources can be saved by only eliminating low ridership trips.
- Route 213 (Brea - Irvine Express)
 - Draft: Simplify routing for direct service between Brea Mall, Santa Ana Depot, and UCI.
 - Final: Routing has been revised from original proposal based on public feedback. The new routing will keep the stop at the Fullerton Transportation Center and Village at Orange. It will serve most of the existing passengers while making all the trips more direct and easier to understand.

Service Improvement and Reduction Highlights

Overall, the proposed service changes are expected to temporarily increase annual revenue hours by 4,800 per year and decrease peak vehicle requirements by three buses. The new Downtown Santa Ana Shuttle will use approximately 8,100 of the increased revenue hours and would be discontinued when the OC Streetcar opens. The changes are expected to grow ridership by 107,000 annual boardings. Below is a summary of the route improvements and reductions in the proposed final October 2019 and February 2020 Bus Service Plan organized by service change. Full details are included in Attachment C.

Final October 2019 Service Changes.

- Extend Route 26 to Yorba Linda Boulevard and Imperial Highway (all days) and reduce peak frequency (weekdays),
- Extend weekday Route 59 midday trips to The District (weekdays),
- Add one morning trip on Route 79 to address passenger loading to UCI (weekdays),
- Eliminate two low ridership trips on Route 206 (weekdays),
- Eliminate Route 211 because of low ridership (weekdays),
- Reduce two low ridership trips and revise routing on Route 213 (weekdays),
- Eliminate Stationlink Route 462 in Downtown Santa Ana for OC Streetcar,
- Revise routing on routes 55 and 83 in Santa Ana Civic Center for OC Streetcar construction (all days),

- Improve frequency on Route 83 (all days),
- Implement new Downtown Santa Ana Shuttle during OC Streetcar construction (all days).

Proposed Final February 2020 Service Changes.

- Eliminate routes 21 and 24 and replace with new Route 123 covering most of the discontinued routes with service from the Goldenwest Transportation Center to Anaheim Canyon Metrolink Station via the Buena Park Metrolink Station (weekdays),
- Extend all peak trips on Route 54 to Chapman Avenue and Valley View Street (weekdays),
- Improve frequencies on routes 56 and 72 (weekends),
- Improve frequency on Route 143 (weekdays).

Title VI and Environmental Justice Analysis

Staff conducted a Title VI and Environmental Justice Analysis of the recommended October 2019 and February 2020 Bus Service Plan, per OCTA policy and Federal Transit Administration requirements. The analysis accumulated impacts to minority and low-income communities by comparing the transit service levels before and after the route changes. Based on this analysis, it has been determined that the final Bus Service Plan recommendations, taken in their entirety, would not have a disparate impact on minority persons nor a disproportionate burden on low-income persons.

Next Steps

With Board approval, staff will begin implementing the recommendations for the October 2019 and February 2020 service changes. Customers will be notified of the changes starting three weeks prior to implementation.

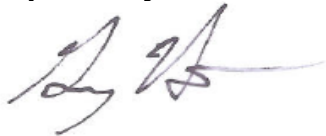
Summary

It is recommended the Board approve the proposed final October 2019 and February 2020 Bus Service Plan. The final route recommendations respond to public feedback and will improve productivity of the fixed-route bus service.

Attachments

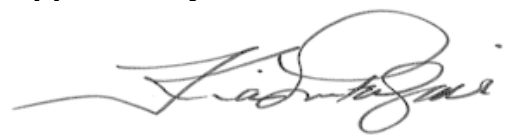
- A. Draft Fiscal Year 2019-20 Bus Service Plan
- B. Proposed October 2019 and February 2020 Bus Service Plan, Public Involvement Program, Final Report, July 11, 2019
- C. Proposed Fiscal Year 2019-20 Bus Service Plan
- D. Proposed Final October 2019 and February 2020 Bus Service Plan, Weekday Route Changes
- E. Proposed Final October 2019 and February 2020 Bus Service Plan, Weekend Route Changes

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