

**Orange County Transportation Authority Principles for Transit Fare Program
Legislation**

1. Implement the requirements at a date that allows sufficient time for transit agencies to comply with relevant federal requirements, including Title VI analysis and outreach and public hearings for fare changes. Time will also be needed to allow development of any necessary infrastructure and processes for transit passes and qualification requirements, and to program any needed funds to pay for the programs (assuming Principle 2 is completed). At a minimum, this may require a two-year lead time.
2. Provide a necessary source of funding to backfill the funds lost by the reduced fare revenues to prevent impacts to service levels, and to ensure the program is appropriately subsidized to prevent Title VI implications. This can take multiple forms, with priority being placed on the creation of an entirely new program to prevent funding from being siphoned away from planned transit projects:
 - a. A new, supplemental transit program, funded by cap-and-trade or other funding source, dedicated for this purpose and allocated on a formula basis consistent with State Transit Assistance (STA) and Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) funding. Such program should not include timing restrictions, or other limitations that create hurdles to transit agencies being able to consistently predict funding levels for this purpose or restrict geographic use.
 - b. Simultaneous to the above, allow cap-and-trade funding provided from the LCTOP to be used for these programs, without having to report greenhouse gas emission reductions, and be eligible to be used in perpetuity for this purpose (ie., no five-year limitation).
3. Consider a phased-in approach that first looks at requiring free-fares for targeted populations (K-12, 65 and older) during off-peak time periods, such as weekends and evenings. This can be done with reporting requirements to determine the policy's success at increasing ridership and analyze any inadvertent impacts to either a transit agency's financial standing or conflicts with federal requirements. If the program is successful, legislation could provide a pathway to expansion of the program with a correlating funding increase.
4. Require individuals to go to the transit agency to qualify for these services and receive a separate pass to allow them to ride the transit system. This will allow transit agencies to be able to report required ridership data to the federal government to qualify for federal funds. In addition, this will provide transit agencies with necessary data to support service levels on certain high-traveled corridors.
5. Limit required applicability to traditional fixed-route transit service, before broadening eligible services.

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6. Require school districts to coordinate with transit agencies prior to removing any service levels from school bus service, and to analyze the potential to provide supplemental funding for increased public transit demand within school areas. Transit agencies shall not be required to provide service which is contrary to federal prohibitions against public transit operators operating services solely designed to transport students to school.
7. In order to allow for a safe operating environment for passengers, ensure transit agencies have the ability to revoke a transit pass from a person who has multiple infractions or violations of transit agency code of conduct.
8. Specify that nothing requires a transit agency to expand services beyond existing service as of the date of enactment or be prohibited from reducing service in the future.
9. Minimize qualification requirements to prevent an overly burdensome, costly process for transit agencies that requires the sharing of financial details.