

ORANGE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

FUEL CRISIS CONTINGENCY PLAN

Revised May 2008

Overview

As fuel prices rise, interest in public transportation as an alternative to private vehicle travel also increases. As demand increases, available capacity is reduced, and at some point, additional service will need to be deployed to accommodate growth in ridership.

To prepare for a significant increase in demand, the Orange County Transportation Authority (Authority) is executing the following fuel crisis contingency plan. It is based on maintaining additional reserve capacity that can be deployed to supplement those services where a depletion of capacity has been verified.

The plan is based on the following components:

1. Contingency fleet reserve maintenance
2. Retention of bus purchase option for 57 40-foot coaches and fleet plan that is updated regularly to address changing service needs
3. Verification of service capacity consumption and depletion
4. Adjust load ratio to increase capacity at maximum load point to 145 percent
5. Deployment of additional service capacity
6. Ongoing available resource adjustments
7. Promotion of alternative travel modes
8. Fuel crisis task force
9. Seek short-distance Metrolink fares

In detail, the plan elements are:

Contingency Reserve Fleet Maintenance

Approximately 150 large and 50 small buses will comprise the Authority's contingency fleet by the end of December 2008. Fifty 40-foot buses are immediately available for deployment while the remainder can be made service-ready within a week. The current fixed route fleet consists of 572 active buses; 477 are required for peak service.

Retention of Bus Purchase Option in 2010

The Authority is currently receiving 299 New Flyer 40' CNG-powered buses. While service levels for fiscal year 2008-09 have been held flat to reflect stagnant ridership throughout fiscal year 2006-07 and fiscal year 2007-08, the Authority has retained a remaining option with New Flyer to purchase an additional 57 of these 40' vehicles

through 2013. This will allow for rapid fleet expansion to meet increasing service levels beyond the capacity of the contingency fleet we maintain.

Verification of Service Capacity Consumption and Depletion

The Authority is actively monitoring passenger activity by line and service type to identify repeated cases of ridership levels in excess of load ratio policy guidelines. Initial growth in ridership is likely to be targeted toward selected service categories such as express bus and commuter rail feeder services. The Authority's ongoing rider data gathering program is being used to pinpoint those services and times of day where demand is clearly increasing to determine if available capacity is being depleted. Indicators of possible excess loads such as pass-up reports, passenger complaints, and operator reports are being monitored.

Deployment of Additional Service Capacity

Should ridership increase to the point it exceeds the approved load standard, we will consider adding capacity. Mitigation measures to address capacity depletion include adjustment of trip times and the addition of extra buses where necessary. In the event capacity must be inserted into the system between standard service change dates, temporary bus schedules will be utilized and supplemental passenger information will be distributed in the form of revised timetables, Rider Alerts, and updated web site information.

Ongoing Available Resource Adjustments

Fuel availability for transit vehicles is being monitored and delivery status is updated continually.

Coach operator and maintenance manpower will be scheduled to work additional overtime in the initial response to a significant increase in demand requiring service augmentation. Should the increase in demand continue to escalate, manpower levels to operate and maintain Authority buses may be increased. Authority hiring and training programs will be adjusted as necessary.

Promotion of Alternative Travel Modes

A critical component of the fuel crisis contingency plan is the public outreach and information programs helping motorists enhance their awareness of travel alternatives.

Should the crisis persist, a multi-agency, multi-media promotional campaign will be developed regarding service options for both short and longer distance trip making.

High speed alternatives such as Metrolink commuter rail and express bus services will be promoted and information developed regarding schedules, connections to feeder bus services, and associated fares.

Use of car pools and van pools will be promoted and contact with employee transportation coordinators will be offered to area employers.

Fuel Crisis Task Force

Should the crisis persist, the Authority's multi-disciplinary Fuel Crisis Task Force will be convened to review the effectiveness of agency responses, and, if necessary, to develop strategies to strengthen mitigation measures. Periodic reports and updates will be issued.

The Task Force is composed of representatives from the Development, External Affairs, Finance, Administration and Human Resources, and Transit divisions.

Metrolink Short Distance Fares

The current Metrolink fare structure includes very high fares for short trips, such as from Fullerton to Anaheim or Santa Ana, or between San Juan Capistrano and Irvine.

Authority staff will be working with Metrolink staff to seek early implementation of short-ride fare reductions to make better use of the Authority's investment in Metrolink and in the Lossan corridor, and to encourage increased Metrolink ridership and fare revenues.