



**Special Needs Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 29, 2011
1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Orange County Transportation Authority
600 S. Main Street, Orange, CA
Conference Room 103/104**

Committee Members Present

Vicki Connely, *St. Anselm's*
Alice Grant, *Community Organizations of Anaheim*
Fran Gustin, *Law Office of Fay Blix*
Penny Hinds, *Circle of Friends*
Madeline Rae Jensen, *Office on Aging, Santa Ana*
Elizabeth Lee, *Alzheimer's Family Services*
Pethuru Lourthu, *Westview Services, Inc*
Sylvia Mann, *Office on Aging*
Kathryn McCullough, *Lake Forest City Council*

Henry Michaels, *California Elwyn*
Paul Miller, *California State Fullerton*
Charles Mitchell, *American Legion*
Gloria Reyes, *ABRAZAR, Inc.*
Ronald Salda, *Hall Family Homes, LLC*
Ellen Schenk, *State of California Department of Rehab*
Denise Simpson, *N.O.C. Community College District*
Sandra Stang, *Housing & Transportation Committee*

Committee Members Absent

Diana Burkhardt, *Braille Institute*
Michael Castillo, *Dayle McIntosh Center*
Patricia Estrella, *City of Tustin*
Sue Lau, *Polio Survivors Plus (AARP)*
Judi Murray, *Program Director, Fairview Development Center*
Jane Neglia, *Dayle McIntosh Center*
Gary Osterbach, *Fountain Valley Advisory Committee*
Sue Ray, *City of Anaheim Council Services*

Bob Tiezzi, *Intake Coordinator, OCARC*
Bill Turner, *Demiurgic Living Solutions*
Cencio Ulit, *C&R Guest Homes*
Mallory Vega, *Acacia Adult Day Services*
Denise Welch, *South County Seniors' Services*
Minaya Wright, *Integrity House*
Janis White, *RCOC*

1. Call to Order/Welcome

Vice Chair Charles Mitchell called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

Self Introductions

Committee members, OCTA staff and guests introduced themselves.

Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Chair Charles Mitchell led the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

Vice Chair Charles Mitchell asked if there were any additions or corrections to the April 26, 2011 Special Needs in Advisory Committee (SNAC) Meeting minutes. A motion was made and seconded to approve the August 23, 2011 meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed with Kathryn McCullough abstaining.

Chair's Report

There was no report by Vice Chair Charles Mitchell.

2. ACCESS Driver "Exceptional Service Awards"

Vice Chair Charles Mitchell presented ACCESS Driver Exception Service Award to ACCESS driver: Mr. James Williams who works for American Logistics.

3. West County Connectors Outreach Program & Project Update

Christina Byrne, Outreach Manager, discussed the outreach update and highlights about the WCC project. She has customized communication for the various groups impacted by the project. The key is consistent communication with road closures and updates being sent to stakeholders on a weekly basis. Currently we have spoken to more than 140 organizations including cities and elected officials. We have spoken with every business along the project corridor, more than 700, with contact information and to mitigate potential impacts to their bottom-line.

OCTA has developed coupon books by partnering with 90 businesses which are available online. A new edition will be available next year. We are able to meet with any organization who would like more information. Two main organizations that are impacted by this project are Cal State University, Long Beach and Veterans Affairs. Keeping that in mind we have worked diligently to keep the students, veterans, and staff apprised of construction updates. Additionally, OCTA launched a "Know Before You Go" campaign to keep all school districts in the project corridor informed with the most up-to-date information. OCTA has received mostly, 66%, neutral calls regarding the WCC project. We have integrated social media updates to keep those interested apprised via Facebook and Twitter.

Christina Byrne then enumerated a few project highlights. The 55-hour Valley View Street Bridge closure just took place. In spring of 2012, the 7th Street Connector will be reopening. For more information please contact Christina Byrne at (714) 560-5717 or cbyrne@octa.net, or www.twitter.com/WCCprojectinfo.

Vice Chair Charles Mitchell inquired whether there has been any contact with the trucking association regarding the 405 Improvement Project proposals.

Christina Byrne, Outreach Manager, responded that truck traffic is part of the analysis and will be released as part of the draft environmental document next year.

4. Lap Belt Safety Presentation

Eric Zandhuis, Veolia Transportation, discussed improving safety with ACCESS services. Lap belts are put around mobility devices. The device itself has a belt as well for postural support but would not sustain the individual during an accident. Zandhuis wanted to

educate the committee to bring back the information to their respective organizations. Veolia will secure the mobility devices with straps and provide a lap belt and shoulder harness to secure the passenger to ensure safety in transit. The postural lap belt is not sufficient.

Paul Miller asked to clarify the different belts.

Eric Zandhuis responded that the Veolia belts are secured to the floor, which make them more sturdy. This is no different than an ambulatory seat with a seatbelt. We want to make sure should an accident occur that the passengers are as secure as possible during transport.

A Committee Member inquired if it was mandatory to wear both belts and if a passenger declined what the protocol is.

Eric Zandhuis replied that Veolia staff typically will buckle both unless the client requests not to wear the shoulder belt. The lap belt is required to keep the passenger seated. The shoulder belt is more optional. For example if he / she had a recent surgery.

Ron Salda asked whether these policies are currently in place.

Eric Zandhuis responded that this is not an add-on device but the equipment that comes on the buses we purchase.

A Committee Member inquired if the practice is not consistently applied how to respond.

Eric Zandhuis replied that the passenger can file a complaint with OCTA Customer Relations. Every passenger should be secured before the buses leave.

A Committee Member inquired how Veolia is informing the public about these policies.

Eric Zandhuis responded that Veolia is putting the information in a newsletter to reinforce the expectation. Drivers are also informing passengers directly of the policy.

A Committee Member asked if Veolia intends to communicate with senior centers and libraries.

Eric Zandhuis replied that Veolia will work with OCTA to take care of that.

Robert Gebo, OCTA, responded that ADA rules and regulations and OCTA policy requires that every passenger must wear the lap belt. The shoulder belt is optional. If a consumer requests not to wear the shoulder belt the driver is required to call into dispatcher to log. OCTA is retraining taxi and bus drivers regarding policies.

A committee member asked about exigent circumstances.

Eric Zandhuis responded that the driver would call dispatch and deal with each individual's circumstances on a case by case basis to find a solution to transport the

individual safely. Ideally the passenger would be able to wear both the lap and shoulder belt.

Paul Miller inquired when the policy was implemented.

Robert Gebo, OCTA, stated that OCTA paratransit services policy has always been that passengers must wear a lap belt.

Paul Miller asked about school bus safety.

Eric Zandhuis responded that it deals with the Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) when a vehicle is over 26,000 pounds it does not require seatbelts.

Paul Miller inquired if the Department of Transportation is reviewing the requirements.

Eric Zandhuis replied that school buses are different. They have higher backed seats for smaller individuals. Students could also use the lap belts to harm other students.

Gracie Davis, ACCESS Eligibility, stated that transit companies must have policy above and beyond Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which allows the enforcement of the lap belt policy. OCTA has this policy.

A Committee Member asked for clarification on Gracie Davis' comment about how a municipal policy supersedes federal law.

Gracie Davis, ACCESS Eligibility, clarified that ADA provides minimum guidelines. It depends on what best fits the community.

Robert Gebo, OCTA, responded that there are different obstacles in California versus Colorado due to the mountainous region, which is where the above and beyond comes into play.

5. Pass Sales Shipping & Handling Fees

Gina Jimenez, Customer Relations, discussed pass sales shipping and handling fees. OCTA's goal is to encourage both fixed route and ACCESS customers to reach greater independence by creating a one-stop location for customers. We are encouraging customers to purchase their coupons at the retail vendors because OCTA has limited manpower due to a recent reorganization. During Fiscal Year 2010-2011 OCTA spent nearly \$84,000 by subsidizing the Shipping & Handling costs. We experienced a high level of returned and lost mail items when sending out USPS.

In June VONS, Pavilions and Ralphs began selling ACCESS coupons. This has resulted in a reduction of OCTA direct sales while our Vendors sales have increased. Our future potential vendors include: Northgate, Wal-Mart, Albertsons, and Food 4 Less.

Effective July 1, 2012 OCTA will begin charging \$2 USPS and \$7 Fedex for shipping and handling. We will begin a customer education program in January 2012 to inform our customers.

Paul Miller inquired if OCTA is looking at new technology such as smart phone.

Gina Jimenez, Customer Relations, responded that OCTA is studying but our fareboxes are not currently equipped to handle.

6. Marketing Update

Marlon Perry, Customer Engagement Manager, provided a marketing update. An example of a successful marketing campaign was the OC Fair Express which had over 26,000 riders, many of whom were first timers. Next year we plan to add more locations. Currently we have Woo Woo Fridays and the Ducks Express which is part of our Metrolink Service Expansion Program.

This holiday season OCTA partnered with Second Harvest Food Bank for a county-wide food drive. We collected nearly 2,000 pounds of food. We also have a Jingle Pass which is a cost effective way to commute during this congested time of year. In addition, OCTA has two outreach staff members who attend events in the community and inform residents about our various programs.

7. Measure M2 Project U Update

Dana Wiemiller, Community Transportation Services Manager, provided an update on Project U. She said that Project U under Renewed Measure M (M2) is a program to meet the transportation needs of seniors and persons with disabilities. The projects that are funded under Project U include senior mobility programs, fare stabilization, and funding to supplement the County's funding of the senior non-emergency medical transportation program.

The Senior Mobility Program is an existing program that was formerly funded with state Transportation Development Act monies. As of April 1, 2011 they were eligible for M2 funds. Twenty cities transitioned to the current program and five additional cities joined. All cities are welcome to participate but not required. The new program is administered differently based on the collection 1% of net revenue based on sales tax receipts. The cities are then given a projection of what OCTA anticipates they will receive. The monies are then distributed bi-monthly. Any unspent money will go to supplement the fare stabilization program.

The senior non-emergency medical transportation program has distributed \$800K to date out of a \$2.2M annual projection to the County. The main policy change under M2 allows any ACCESS eligible senior (over 60) to utilize the SNEMTP service.

OCTA recently amended JARC and New Freedom agreements with agencies to provide an additional two years of federal funding. These programs provide employment related transportation services to low-income individuals, seniors and individuals with disabilities. We have five additional programs that were funded under JARC. We have a video to highlight the human impact which can be found on youtube.com on our channel goOCTA.

A Committee Member inquired about reduced tobacco settlement revenue funds. Does OCTA have plans to mitigate impacts?

Sylvia Mann, Office on Aging, acknowledged that there was a TSR funding cut this year. Orange County has an agreement with OCTA that the County will be responsible for the maintenance effort. Additionally the County could utilize other funds to back-fill with other funds.

Dana Wiemiller, Community Transportation Services Manager, clarified that the M2 ordinance requires that the County has a maintenance effort where the County must continue to fund the program at the same level that the ordinance was passed. M2 funds were intended to supplement not replace.

A Committee Member questioned further what would happen if the County could not maintain their responsibility.

Dana responded that the ordinance requires that the County maintain the maintenance effort. There would have to be a discussion at the Board level hypothetically speaking where an amendment to the ordinance could take place.

8. Update Reports

Eligibility Update

Gracie Davis, ACCESS Section Supervisor, provided an update on ACCESS eligibility.

Gracie Davis, ACCESS Section Supervisor, stated that since auto-renewal was implemented about 490 individuals are certified per month. This helps individuals who have no change in their condition and saves OCTA money on the reassessment. On average 135 individuals per month are identified for auto-renewal.

She also informed the Committee that the look of the ACCESS coupons has changed. The coupons cannot be falsely duplicated anymore.

Also a new policy as of November 1, 2011 requires customers of the reduced fare ID card to carry their eligibility card with them or they are responsible for the regular fare.

Office on Aging

Sylvia Mann, Orange County Office on Aging, stated that Measure M2 doubled the program funding which helped due to the TSR cut. New Freedom funding also helped. The agencies funded are mostly at capacity and managing within their budgets. The County does a Customer Satisfaction Survey and the programs involved are currently at 98% satisfaction level.

9. Committee Member Comments

A Committee member mentioned the OC Grand Jury is currently recruiting. It is known as the "Public Watch Dog" and has a one year obligation.

10. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 PM. Next scheduled meeting is for February 28, 2012 at 1 PM.