



**Special Needs Advisory Committee
Meeting Notes
January 26, 2010
1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
At The Orange County Transportation Authority
600 S. Main Street, Orange, Calif.
Conference Room 103/104**

Members Present

Noel Burcelis, *Helping Hands for Better Living*
Diana Burkhart, *Brail Institute*
Tabitha Evans, *Multiple Sclerosis Society*
Alice Grant, *Community Organizations of Anaheim*
Madeline R. Jensen, *Office on Aging, Santa Ana*
Elizabeth Lee, *Alzheimer's Family Services*
Sylvia Mann, *Orange County Office on Aging*
Kathryn McCullough, *Lake Forest City Council*
Paul Miller, *Cal State Fullerton*
Charles Mitchell, *American Legion*

Judi Murray, *Program Director, Nursing Facility*
Ronald Salda, *Hall Family Home, LLC*
Ellen Schenk, *Sr. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor*
Denise Simpson, *N. O. C. Community College District*
Bob Tiezzi, *OCARC Intake Coordinator*
Bill Turner, *Demiurgic Living Solutions*
Mallory Vega, *Acacia Adult Day Services*
Gary Wisser, *Vocational Visions*
Janis White, *RCOC*
Minaya Wright, *Integrity House*

Members Absent

Patricia Estrella, *City of Tustin*
Penny Hinds, *Circle of Friends*
Carol Kawanami, *Braille Institute*
Sue Lau, *Polio Survivors Plus (AARP)*
Pethuru Lourthu, *Westview Services, Inc.*
Roberta Menn, *W.C.A.R.E., Saddleback USD*

Henry Michaels, *California Elwyn*
Jane Neglia, *Dayle McIntosh Center*
Sue Ray, *City of Anaheim Council Services*
Dick Waltz, *Fullerton Senior Citizens*
Denise Welch, *South County Seniors Services*

1. Call to Order/Welcome

Chair Mallory Vega called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Self-Introductions: Name and Organization

Everyone introduced themselves around the table.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Vega lead the pledge of allegiance.

4. Approval of Minutes

Chair Mallory Vega asked if there were any additions or corrections to the October 6, 2009 Special Needs Advisory Committee (SNAC) Meeting Minutes? A motion was made seconded to approve the October 6, 2009 meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Chair's Report

Chair Vega welcomed three new members to the SNAC – Elizabeth Lee from Alzheimer's Family Services in Huntington Beach, Janis White from RCOC in Santa Ana, and Minaya Wright from Integrity House in Santa Ana.

6. State Budget Update

Sean Murdock, OCTA Principal Financial Analyst, presented an update on the State Budget with a focus on transit revenues. The State has a \$20 billion problem over the next 18 months and they are looking to solve it through a series of measures. The current proposal includes a \$4.5 million fund shift. As part of this fund shift the sales tax on fuel used for public transit would be eliminated and in its place there would be a 10.8% excise tax which would result in five cents a gallon tax saving on gas. By doing this the State government would eliminate the requirements on how the money is spent and could put the tax money into the General Fund account. This action would eliminate the public transit account which would severely impact Orange County bus service.

A committee member asked if there is a constitutional guarantee the previously diverted State Transit Assistance (STA) money would be returned. Sean said there are no guarantees this money will be returned. The committee member said the League of California Cities has an initiative they are trying to get on the ballot. Return of the transportation funds is part of the initiative.

A committee member asked when would this tax shift effect bus service. Sean said the assumption was OCTA would be getting \$15 million in STA money in fiscal year 2011/2012.

A committee member asked what this lack of funding would do to the amount of revenue hours. Sean said OCTA had about 1.9 million revenue hours at its highest point and currently it is at 1.5 million. The March service cut will eliminate 150,000 hours. Failure to receive the STA money could result in another 150,000 hour reduction in December 2011. Although, the OCTA Board has not made a decision on this as yet.

7. Long Range Transportation Plan: Draft Transit Strategy

Greg Nord, Strategic, LRTP Project Manager, gave an overview of the LRTP Draft Transit Strategy. The LRTP will look at how to bring the transit system back with future revenues. The Transit Strategy Framework outlined Authority Roles, Current Services, Key Factors in Increasing Bus Service Demand, Strategies to Meet Bus Service Demand, and Major Limitations. The major limitation to producing the bus

system improvements is the lack of financial resources. OCTA has done some initial analysis which shows a good deal of growth and demand for services but because of cuts and financial hardships it seems unlikely the demand will be met. Strategies need to be looked at on how to make the system as efficient as possible in the future.

A committee member asked what role OCTA played in establishing bike lanes and promoting bicycle riding. Greg Nord said OCTA is the funding agency for bikeways but currently there is no funding available for bikeways. Ultimately it is up to the local jurisdictions to plan, implement, and maintain the bikeways. OCTA encourages the use of bikeways through outreach efforts such as "Rideshare Week" and "Bike to Work Week". The committee member asked if OCTA had any interaction with cities when they decide to put in or take out bikeways. Greg Nord said OCTA will oversee environmental documents and work and encourage protection of bike lanes but bikeways are still the purview of the local jurisdictions. Alice Rogan said the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) has a bikeways subcommittee and they are holding a meeting to discuss recent action by the City of Placentia to remove the bike lanes.

Charlie Larwood, OCTA Planning and Analysis Manager, said OCTA did receive several calls from concerned bicyclers about the City of Placentia's action and OCTA reviewed the environmental documents for the project and made the city aware they were eliminating the bikeway and encourage them to maintain the bikeway. All cities have their own jurisdictional authority and OCTA has no control over this. Greg Winterbottom said it was rather strange to remove these bike lanes because of the proximity to a middle school and high school. The City of Placentia has responded to this by allowing bike riding on the sidewalks. A committee member said in defense of the cities, there are some routes where bike riding is not feasible on the street because of the danger. Cities have tried to compensate by making the sidewalks wider for bike riding.

A committee member asked for information on the Bravo service. Greg Nord said Bravo service will overlay certain existing routes but have fewer stops resulting decreasing the overall time for the route.

Alice Rogan said the CAC is the advisory committee for input on the development of the LRTP but wanted to hear the SNAC's comments on the Transit Strategy Framework. If the Committee has any further comments, email Greg Nord. This item will be brought back to the Special Needs Committee for review when the process is further along.

8. March 2010 Service Change

Tryal Edmundson reviewed the March 2010 Service Change with the Committee which will result in 150,000 vehicle service hours being cut from the existing transit system. He distributed a brochure prepared for the colleges telling the public which lines would be affected by the service change. Tryal also gave the Committee maps showing the effect of the cuts would have on ACCESS service. He cautioned the

maps distributed are “Draft” maps. Alice Rogan said once the maps are final they will be sent to the Committee.

A committee member asked if the people losing service could be “grandfathered” in. Tryal said it is the Board’s decision; “grandfathering” has been mentioned but the OCTA Board did not decide to do this. Chair Vega asked if there is still a window of opportunity to bring this to the Board. Tryal said he believes the Board considered this and rejected it but it could be brought up again. Gracie Davis, OCTA Eligibility Administrator, said it would be considered a form of discrimination to potential users of the system.

A committee member asked if a private van service could be established to take care of the eliminated ACCESS users in a specific area. Alice Rogan said cities can certainly establish these services with the help of the little bit of funding in Measure M2.

A committee member said in the initial presentation of the service cuts the Committee was presented with specific choices of A, B, C, or D plans to choose from. Which of these plans was selected for the service cuts? Tryal said the plans presented were methods and no one method was selected; it was a combination of all four methods. After the Board gave staff the direction they wanted to go, staff took strategies C and D and came up with a 300,000 vehicle service reduction plan. The service reduction occurring in March will be the first half of this reduction. The second half is scheduled to follow in September or December 2010.

A committee member applauded staff on their excellent job of making the cuts friendly to ACCESS users. Chair Vega said she would like to echo these feelings; the cuts made have been very kind. Dana Wiemiller, Community Transportation Coordinator, thanked the Committee on behalf of staff. ACCESS is very expensive to provide but the Board tried very hard to minimize cuts to ACCESS. Marlon Perry, OCTA Manager of Customer Relations, thanked the Committee for their participation in the development of the service cut plan. It was very dire in the beginning but the input and feedback of the Committee helped shape the plan. He asked the Committee to contact their constituents and as the time gets closer remind them to call and check on their schedules.

Alice Rogan said it is looking like there will be more cuts and input from the SNAC will be asked for again. Chair Vega asked if negotiations had begun with the drivers. Alice said the initial layoff will be through attrition but negotiations have started on their contract.

A committee member asked for members to sign the petition to get the initiative on the ballot to restore transit funding.

9. Meeting Frequency/Work Program Discussion

Chair Mallory Vega said as part of the plan to help with the budget the OCTA Board has reduced the number of Board Committee and Subcommittee meetings each month and staff has been asked to reduce the number of public meetings. Chair Vega asked the members to review the proposed SNAC Work Plan which proposes the Committee meet quarterly with the understanding if an urgent issue arises between meetings the Committee will convene and give their input. She asked the members to look at page four, 2010 Preliminary Work Plan Schedule, which lists how the meetings would be structured and the potential items to be reviewed at the meetings.

A committee member asked to have the committee name Special Needs Advisory Committee or SNAC consistent throughout the document.

A committee member asked for language to be added in the Work Plan to indicate additional meetings can be added to the schedule if needed.

Alice Rogan said the Work Plan would be amended to reflect these changes.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Special Needs Advisory Committee Work Plan. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Update Reports

Eligibility Update: Gracie Davis, OCTA Eligibility Administrator, gave an ACCESS eligibility update. As part of her report she said currently of 525 people have been qualified for ACCESS service for one year and the denial rate is 1.5%. Gracie explained a new policy decision related to passengers in wheelchairs and on scooters boarding buses. The current policy is individuals should board backwards, however, if any consumer with a medical condition preventing them from boarding backwards must call ACCESS eligibility. ACCESS eligibility will evaluate each case and make the appropriate decision. She also reviewed the Area Code 714 and 949 numbers for ACCESS reservations.

A committee member asked if the new Area Code 657 overlay has an ACCESS number. Gracie said they have not heard about adding a new number.

A committee member asked if it had been resolved that the ride-a-longs on the fixed route service would pay a reduced fare also. Gracie said she had met with the Fare Policy Committee and it was decided the PCA's could pay the same 25¢ as the customer.

A committee member asked if a disabled person needed a special identification card to pay the 25¢ disabled fare on fixed route service. Gracie said the ADA certified people must have the Identification Card to qualify for the reduced fare. There is another reduced fare for disabled and sixty-five and older and they can present their handicapped placard, Medical card, or Braille institute card to receive the reduced fare.

A committee member asked to have the certification program for ACCESS explained. Gracie said it takes five years for certification for ACCESS; once the five years has been completed renewals are honored. The five years will be up July 1, 2011; after this date letters will be sent out informing individuals about their auto-renewal status.

Short Message Service (SMS): Stella Lin, OCTA Marketing Manager gave an overview of the new Short Message Service (SMS) called Text4Next. Bus customers use their cell phones to get the next 3 scheduled times the bus will arrive at their bus stop. She presented a short video on the service and handed out a brochure of how it works.

Stella said OCTA staff is working on a bus service change highlight brochure. It will be available in the following week but the on-line information will be available by the end of the current week. This brochure will give all the details about the change and also the options if your route is changed.

A committee member requested staff keep up with published changes on the website. It has been his experience in the past, the changes published on the website were out of date and wrong. Stella said she would make sure they are kept up to date.

Staff Liaison Report: Gaile Raymer, OCTA Customer Relations, asked the members to review their member information found in the agenda package and relay any changes or updates needed back to her. Gaile said four members sit on the ACCESS Driver Awards Subcommittee, because of vacancies in the SNAC three new members are needed for the subcommittee. The following members volunteered for the subcommittee: Elizabeth Lee, Paul Miller, and Ronald Salda. Madeline Jensen volunteered as an alternate for the Subcommittee.

11. Election of Chair/Vice Chair

Chair Mallory Vega opened the nominations for the SNAC Vice Chair position. A committee member nominated Charles Mitchell for the Vice Chair position. There were no further nominations, Chair Vega called for a vote, and the vote was unanimous for Charles Mitchell as SNAC Vice Chair.

Chair Mallory Vega opened the nominations for the SNAC Chair position. A committee member nominated Mallory Vega for the SNAC Chair position. There were no further nominations, Chair Vega called for a vote, and the vote was unanimous for Mallory Vega as SNAC Chair.

12. Committee member Comments

Committee member William Turner said he has ended his relationship with Demiurgic Living Solutions and may be resigning from the SNAC. He said he has enjoyed being part of the SNAC and hoped to return to the Committee. Chair Vega said he has been an invaluable resource on the Committee and hoped to see him return.

A committee member suggested since the SNAC would be going to a quarterly meeting schedule; the meetings should be extended to two hours. Alice Rogan called for a vote and asked who was in favor of a 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. scheduled meeting or a 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. schedule. A majority of the members wanted the 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. scheduled for future SNAC meetings.

13. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

14. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.