



**Special Needs in Transit Advisory Committee
Meeting Notes
October 6, 2009
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**

SNAC Members Present

Noel Burcelis	<i>Helping Hands for Better Living</i>
Patricia Estrella	<i>City of Tustin</i>
Alice Grant	<i>Community Organizations of Anaheim</i>
Madeline R. Jensen	<i>Office on Aging</i>
Pethuru Lourthu	<i>Westview Services</i>
Sylvia Mann	<i>Office on Aging</i>
Kathryn McCullough	<i>Lake Forest City Council</i>
Henry Michaels	<i>California Elwyn</i>
Charles Mitchell	<i>American Legion</i>
Judi Murray	<i>Program Director, Nursing Facility</i>
Randy Platt	<i>Community Senior Services Inc.</i>
Susan Ray	<i>Council Services Coordinator</i>
Ronald Salda	<i>Hall Family Home, LLC</i>
Bob Tiezzi	<i>OCARC</i>
Bill Turner	<i>Demiurgic Livings Solutions</i>
Mallory Vega	<i>Acacia Adult Day Services</i>
Gary Wisser	<i>Vocational Visions</i>

SNAC Members Absent

Diana Burkhart	<i>Braille Institute</i>
Tabitha Evans	<i>Multiple Sclerosis Society</i>
Francine Harris	<i>Santa Ana Senior Center</i>
Penny Hinds	<i>Circle of Friends</i>
Carol Kawanami	<i>Braille Institute Student</i>
Denise Larsen	<i>Program Assistant, Disabled Student Program & Services</i>
Sue Lau	<i>Polio Survivors</i>
Roberta Menn	<i>Program Director, W.C.A.R.E. Career Division</i>
Paul Miller	<i>Cal State Fullerton</i>
Jane Neglia	<i>Dayle McIntosh Center</i>
Ellen Schenk	<i>California Department of Rehabilitation</i>
Dick Waltz	<i>Fullerton Senior Citizen Club</i>
Denise Welch	<i>South County Seniors Services</i>

1. Call to Order/Welcome

Chair Mallory Vega called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and welcomed committee members. Chair Vega asked Charles Mitchell to lead the pledge of allegiance.

2. Self-Introductions: Name and Organization

Each member introduced themselves around the table.

3. Chair's Report

Chair Mallory Vega announced Ellen Burton, Executive Director of External Affairs, will be leading the Special Needs Advisory Committee (SNAC) in a workshop type activity to gain input from the SNAC on the up coming bus service reductions.

4. March 2010 Bus Service Reduction Strategy

Ellen Burton said OCTA staff would like the SNAC's perspective on how to address the bus service reductions. Ellen began the presentation with some good news – the State Supreme Court denied the State of California's petition to review the Third District Court of Appeals' decision regarding the diversion of transit funding to other budget purposes. The State of California has taken \$111 million in transit funding from Orange County over the last three years. The California Transit Association (CTA) sued the State of California saying this was illegal. CTA won the suit in the lower courts and the State appealed the decision to the State Supreme Court and lost. It is yet unknown what this decision means since there are no funds in the State budget to repay the money. On November 9, the OCTA Board will be making a decision on what OCTA should assume in terms of State funding for transit and this assumption will drive the decision making on service reduction. In the mean time OCTA is going forward in planning the service reductions.

Ellen gave a status report on the transit service reductions plans. The opinions from the public outreach will be gathered together into a staff report presented to the Board of Directors on November 23. There will be a Public Hearing on the service reductions on October 26, and this is when the SNAC should present their opinions on the proposed changes.

Ellen introduced Gordon Robinson, OCTA Project Manager, who reviewed the four Service Reduction Strategies for March 2010.

A committee member asked how the time of the routes affects ACCESS? Ellen said ACCESS parallels the transit routes and would be reduced along with the route it parallels. The committee member said he would be happier keeping earlier and later time on the route intact and reduce the frequency during off peak hours.

A committee member asked if OCTA had considered looking to the Veterans Administration for a Grant to help with routes going to the Veterans Hospital? Ellen said OCTA could look into this, but so far all the federal grants OCTA has received have been for capital purposes and OCTA needs operating revenue.

A committee member asked how OCTA looked at passenger volume when cutting routes? Gordon said OCTA looked at cutting the lowest ridership routes first and tried to preserve the most used routes. There are various tools used for this including monthly ridership reports, feedback from the coach operators, and customer comments. Ellen said OCTA has posted on its website under "March Change" a binder of information regarding the proposed service change strategies.

Chair Mallory Vega asked the committee members if they had received any feedback from their constituents as a result of the September service changes? A committee member said she had heard from people who had not been able to get home from

work due to cuts in service hours and also from students not being able to get to and from school. Gordon asked if these people were using fixed route service or ACCESS. The committee member said they were using fixed route service.

A committee member said she was concerned about the routes in South County being eliminated because they are low ridership routes. They may have low ridership but they are the only way for some to get to work and school without a very long walk. Also, because of budget cuts lighting in some areas is reduced and it is very dangerous to walk in these areas at night.

A committee member said in his opinion it would make the most sense to spread out the off-peak trips as much as possible. Keep the peak early morning and late night trips. Edmund Buckley, OCTA Service Planning and Customer Advocacy Manager, said proposed strategy "B" would be the closest to this solution.

A committee member asked if smaller buses could be used for off-peak service?

A committee member said he could not vote for any of the options presented, he would like to see another option.

A committee member said he liked Option B the best because it preserved the most ACCESS service.

A committee member said it was not good to preserve core routes at the expense of coverage.

A committee member said at previous meeting members said preserving their ability to have ACCESS on the weekends and after hours was important.

A committee member said the figures presented show the number of fixed routes affected but not the number of ACCESS routes. It does not always follow. She would like to see the ridership numbers for ACCESS service affected. ACCESS riders are totally dependant.

A committee member said he would like to see the longest routes preserved and cut back on the adjacent shorter routes.

A committee member said weekends are important not only for those who work weekends but for those who do their shopping. He suggested varying the trip times on certain routes every hour.

A committee member said she would like staff to look at the connection timing of routes and make sure it is preserved.

A committee member said all four options affect Night Owl Service. Will this eliminate all Night Owl service? Ellen said Night Owl runs from midnight to 4:00 a.m. and that we could certainly look at perhaps running Nite Owl service until 1:00 a.m.

A committee member suggested there would be a cost saving on fuel if OCTA ran more small buses on the low ridership routes. Ellen said this could be considered although there were some variables such as the labor contract, fleet availability, and contracted services to be considered. It could be done but not immediately.

Ellen Burton drew the committees' attention to the Bus Service Reduction Approaches ranking sheet found in their agenda packages. She asked the committee members to rank the nine approaches from 1 (being the best approach) to 9 (being the least favored approach). She also asked the committee to consider the best way to convey their feeling to the OCTA Board of Directors.

After the committee members completed their ranking, Alice Rogan, OCTA Community Relations Officer, let them know the results of the rankings sent in before the present meeting. These ranking sheets were sent to the committee members as practice for the meeting. Alice said 13 responses were received: B scored the highest, D and F were the next highest, E was the least favored approach followed by G and I.

Chair Mallory Vega and Vice-Chair Randy Platt announced they would be at the October 26, Public Hearing on the Bus Service Change at the OCTA Board Meeting. They urged all SNAC members to attend.

A motion was made by Ronald Salda and seconded by Kathryn McCullough to convey the SNAC's recommendations for the best bus service reduction approach by way of a letter to the OCTA Board. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Office on Aging Update

Sylvia Mann gave a report on the Office on Aging. She reported additional new Freedom funds had been made available and will aid the seniors on emergency medical transportation programs. These funds will add \$500,000 this year and \$500,000 next year to the program.

6. Members' Privilege

A committee member suggested the minutes from the previous meeting needed to be approved. Chair Mallory Vega asked if there were any additions or corrections to the August 25, 2009 meeting minutes. A committee member asked to have Denise Welch's affiliation changed from ~~Acacia Adult Day Services~~ to South County Seniors Services. A motion was made and seconded to approve the August 25, 2009 meeting minutes as corrected. The motion was passed unanimously.

7. Other

Jane Reifer, Transit Advocates of Orange County, distributed a newsletter that talked about other ways to remedy the proposed bus service cuts. Jane drew the committee's attention to the list of Funding Sources Within OCTA's Control or Influence.

A committee member asked if there was a legal writ pending on the bankruptcy diversion? Will OCTA get their money back? Ellen Burton said there is no writ pending. The CTA is doing everything it can to get the money back but the problem is there is no money. The bankruptcy diversion was done under State statute - \$38 million goes from the transit fund to the County of Orange, in return they give OCTA \$23 million in Gas Tax money. Later the OCTA Board decided to put the gas tax funds toward the Bristol Street widening project.

8. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.