

SERVICE AND FARE CHANGE EVALUATION POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Service and Fare Change Evaluation Policy is to establish how the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) evaluates major service and fare changes to determine whether they will have a discriminatory impact based on race, color, or national origin and whether they will have a disproportionately high and adverse impact on minority populations and/or low-income populations.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS AFFECTED

- A. The Transit Division is responsible for determining if a particular service change meets the definition of a “Major Service Change”
- B. The Planning Division is responsible for completing service equity analysis documents as required.
- C. The Finance and Administration Division is responsible for completing fare equity analysis documents as required.
- D. The External Affairs Division is responsible for engaging the public to actively seek comments, suggestions and input in the decision-making process for both major service changes and fare changes through community outreach efforts as outlined in the Public Involvement Plan.
- E. The Finance and Administration Division is responsible for coordinating FTA review of service and fare equity analysis documents.

III. POLICY

A. Major Service Change

A major service change is defined as a numerical standard, as expressed by the distribution of routes as measured against the existing level of service. The following is considered a Major Service Change (unless otherwise noted in Section VI):

1. Route Alignment Reduction or Elimination

- Reducing an existing route by more than 50% of directional route miles or;
- Reducing an existing route by more than 50% of bus stops.

2. Route Alignment Extension or New Route

- Adding a new route or a route segment that increases directional route miles of an existing route by more than 50% and;
- When more than 50% of the new service bus stops are along currently unserved street segments

3. Route-Level Service Hour Change

- Increase or decrease of the following levels of service on a route within 12-months:
 - Weekday Service increase or decrease of 25% or more annualized Vehicle Revenue Hours or
 - Weekend Service increase or decrease of 25% or more annualized Vehicle Revenue Hours

4. System-Wide Service Hour Change

- Increase or decrease of 25% of annualized Vehicle Revenue Hours for all routes within 12-months.

B. Fare Change

All fare increases or reductions are considered a Fare Change unless otherwise noted in Section VI.

C. Disparate Impact Thresholds

When conducting a fare or service equity analysis, the following thresholds will be used to determine when a change would have a disparate impact:

1. Service Changes

- Route Alignment Reduction or Elimination
 - If the resulting alignment of a route alignment reduction serves a lower percentage of minority and/or low-income population than the existing route alignment service coverage or
 - If an identified low-income and/or minority route is eliminated
- Route Alignment Extension or New Route
 - If a new route alignment after the proposed alignment extension serves a lower percentage of minority and/or low-income population than the average minority and/or low-income population for the entire service area or
 - If a new route serves a lower percentage of minority and/or low-income population than the average minority and/or low-income population for the entire service area
- Route-Level Service Hour Change

- If a proposed route-level headway for a minority and/or low-income route is longer than the average headway for non-minority and/or non-low income routes for the same service type and time period or
- If a proposed route-level headway for a non-minority and/or non-low income route is shorter than the average headway for minority and/or low income routes for the same service type and time period
- System-Wide Service Hour Change
 - If the proposed average system-wide headways for minority and/or low income routes is longer than the average system-wide headways for non-minority and/or non low-income routes for the same service type and time period or
 - If the proposed average system-wide headways for non-minority and/or non low-income routes is shorter than the average headway for minority and/or low income routes for the same service type and time period

2. Fare Change

- Disparate impact will only be considered if the increase in fare product for minority and/or low income populations is greater than 10% compared to non-minority and/or non-low income.

D. Public Involvement

The public was engaged in developing this policy as documented in the Public Involvement Plan. The public will be engaged in any changes to this policy prior to approval.

The Public Involvement Plan also documents the outreach activities required prior to a major service or fare change.

E. Board Review

Service and Fare Equity Analysis documents will be presented to the OCTA Board prior to implementation of major service or fare changes. The documents will be presented to the Transit Committee as a receive-and-file report.

IV. DEFINITIONS

A. Disparate Impact

A facially neutral policy or practice that has a disproportionately excluding or adverse affect on the minorities or low income segments of the service area.

B. Disparate Treatment

An action that results in a circumstance in which minority persons are treated differently than others because of their race, color, national origin and/or low income status.

C. Low-income Persons & Areas

Low-income persons have an income of 80 percent or less of the national per capita income. "Low-income Areas" are residential land use areas within census tracts where the average per capita income is 80 percent or less of the national per capita income.

D. Low-income Transit Route

A route where at least 1/5 (20%) of the land within 1/2 mile of the route alignment is a "Low-Income Area".

E. Minority Persons & Areas

Minority persons include American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander as defined in the latest FTA Title VI Circular. "Minority Areas" are residential land use areas within census tracts where the percentage of minority persons is higher than the Orange County average.

F. Minority Transit Route

A route where at least 1/4 (25%) of the land within 1/2 mile of the route alignment is a "Minority Area".

G. Seasonal Service and Special Events

Changes to bus service levels on routes which occur because of seasonal ridership changes and event activities served by dedicated temporary bus routes. Routes which have these changes are documented in OCTA's current Title VI plan.

H. Temporary Detours & Closures

A short-term change to a route caused by road construction and maintenance, road closures, emergency road conditions, fiscal crisis, civil (and labor) disputes, any other uncontrollable circumstance when the route will be returned to the prior state after the circumstance has been resolved.

V. PROCEDURE

- A. Each service change is evaluated to determine if it is “major” and does not meet an exception in Section VI, therefore requiring an equity analysis. If a service change is not determined to be “major” it will be noted and no further analysis will be completed. All fare changes require an equity analysis unless it meets an exception in Section VI.
- B. Prepare service and fare equity documents as necessary using the current procedures on file with the Planning and/or Finance and Administration Division.
- C. Engage in public participation efforts (see Public Involvement Plan for Service and Fare Changes).
- D. Submit completed Service and/or Fare Equity Analysis documents to the FTA via the TEAM portal.
- E. Submit Service and/or Fare Equity Analysis documents to the OCTA Office of Civil Rights.
- F. Submit Service and/or Fare Equity Analysis documents to the OCTA Board of Directors (BOD) as described in Section III.

VI. EXCEPTIONS

- A. The following are exemptions to the Major Service Change policy and do not require an equity analysis:
 - 1. Seasonal Service Changes
 - 2. Temporary Detours & Closures
 - 3. Adjustments to lines during their first three years of service including elimination of service
 - 4. Splitting or combining routes where the changes would not otherwise constitute a major service change
 - 5. Route being taken over by another transit provider with substantially the same headways, fare, transfer options, span of service, and stop locations.
 - 6. Special Event Services operating for a limited period of time (less than seven consecutive months)

7. Shuttle routes designed to act as extensions of commuter rail service, linked to specific commuter rail schedules established by the commuter rail operator
 8. Trial service changes instituted for 180 days or less with notification to the FTA Region 9 Administrator in advance of implementation
 9. Service changes implemented in response to an emergency situation with notification to the FTA Region 9 Administrator within five working days.
- B. The following are exceptions to the Fare Change policy and do not require an equity analysis
1. Free-fare or reduced fare promotions of less than 60 days
 2. Seasonal passes and fares which have been reviewed for equity previously at the same proposed rate

VII. PROVISION AND CONDITIONS

Not applicable

VIII. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- A. FTA Circular 4702.1A
- B. Proposed FTA Circular 2702.1B
- C. OCTA Public Involvement Plan
- D. Service Change Equity Evaluation Process
- E. Fare Change Equity Evaluation Process