

Meeting of April 26, 2021

Board Recognizes April Employees of the Month

The Orange County Transportation Authority's board of directors recognized three employees of the month for April.

The honors went to:

- Arturo Corona, a coach operator working out of the Garden Grove base. Arturo has been driving for OCTA since 1999 and achieved 20 years of safe driving last year.
- Raúl Bustamante, a maintenance employee on the service crew at the Santa Ana base. Raúl began working for OCTA in February 2020 and consistently services an average of 18 buses per night, exceeding the standard 16-bus requirement.
- Marie Latino, a maintenance resource manager who has worked for OCTA for more than 30 years. Marie recently completed a review of OCTA's hardware usage and acquisition processes. Through improvements and collaboration, she was able to realize a year-over-year cost savings of nearly \$40,000.

Public Hearing Held for Upcoming Bus Service Change

The OCTA board held a public hearing for the June bus service change and received updates on the agency's efforts to gather feedback from the public about OC Bus service.

Since March 2020, when the initial stay-at-home order was issued by the state, OCTA reduced bus service in light of reduced ridership and for employee safety but continued providing vital public transit for those who need it to reach essential jobs and medical appointments.

Subsequent changes to service gradually restored some service, always keeping the safety of the public and employees as the top priority. OC Bus service is currently operating at about 70 percent of what it was prior to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and no major changes are planned for the June 13 service change.

Over the past couple of months, OCTA sought public input to gather feedback on specific areas related to the recent service changes, including the customer experience with OC Bus during the pandemic and requested changes or improvements to current OC Bus routes. The public was invited to share their opinions through an online survey, as well as several virtual public meetings held in multiple languages.

As of March 31, more than 2,200 questionnaires and public comments have been received. Overall, 63 percent of responses were positive regarding OC Bus service provided during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the majority of customers are satisfied with current OC Bus routes. Suggestions for improvement included increasing service frequency and reducing travel time.

The feedback will be used to help decide what changes to make to bus service in June and beyond. The OCTA board is expected to approve the June service change on May 24.

Board Approves Comprehensive Business Plan

The OCTA board approved the agency's Comprehensive Business Plan for fiscal year 2020-21, demonstrating that the agency can deliver its programs and services as promised to the public over the next two decades.

The plan, which is updated annually, lays the foundation for future financial planning and demonstrates the financial feasibility of programs and services over a 20-year period.

Despite the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, tight budget controls, conservative long-range planning measures and supplemental federal funding have ensured that OCTA's core goals can be met.

Highlights of the plan include:

- Measure M – Orange County's half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements, also known as OC Go – will fulfill promises made to voters, consistent with the Next 10 Delivery Plan
- OC Bus can increase service to 90% of pre-pandemic levels based on demand and with public health and safety in mind
- Service levels will remain the same for Metrolink in Orange County
- The 91 Express Lanes continues to meet its objective of optimizing traffic at free-flow speeds, while meeting its financial obligations and continuing to support two Measure M freeway projects on SR-91