

OCTA's ACCESS Service – The Way to Go!!!!

SUMMARY

The Orange County Transit Authority (OCTA) is responsible for the public transportation services in Orange County. It provides fixed-route public transportation, rail service, manages the State Route 91 Express Lanes, and coordinates some freeway, street and road improvement projects.

In conjunction with its fixed-route bus service, OCTA is required to provide complementary paratransit service to fulfill the public transportation requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Complying with the regulations of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) fulfills those ADA requirements.

ACCESS is OCTA's shared-ride paratransit service for people who are unable to use the regular fixed-route bus service because of functional limitations due to developmental or physical disability.

OCTA's ACCESS service provides a critical and much-needed paratransit service for its qualified passengers. This study provides details on the service, its processes, contracting practices, and performance.

REASON FOR STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the ACCESS service to determine if this program is meeting the transportation needs of ACCESS eligible residents and eligible visitors to Orange County. Additionally, this study seeks to identify ways to provide sustainable ACCESS service that are consistent with the current budget and funding forecasts.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The Grand Jury conducted in-depth discussions about the ACCESS service with members of OCTA's Transit Division and Community Transportation Services (CTS) management,¹ accompanied ACCESS bus passengers to assess the adequacy of bus service and its ease of use, and visited the OCTA's new indoor transit simulator facility in Anaheim to observe the ACCESS eligibility evaluation process.² In addition, Grand Jury reviewed a number of OCTA's documents related to transit and the ACCESS service, including:

- Fiscal Years³ (FYs) 2011-12 and 2012-13 funding for ACCESS service⁴
- Veolia Transportation Services, Inc. Agreement No. C-5-3021 and Amendments 1 through 6
- C.A.R.E. Evaluators⁵ Agreement No. C-0-1937 and Amendments 1 through 2

¹ Meetings with OCTA management on 23 August and 28 September 2012

² ACCESS bus ride and visit to ACCESS eligibility assessment facility on 14 November 2012

³ OCTA's FY is from July 1 (current year)-June 30 (following year)

⁴ Source: Information provided by OCTA

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- Paratransit Growth Management Plan (2004)
- ACCESS Rider's Guide (July 2009)
- Destination 2035: OCTA Long Range Transportation Plan (2010)
- OCTA Agreement No. C-0-1407 with Yellow Cab of Greater Orange County for the Provision of Same-Day Taxi Services (June 2010)
- OCTA Strategic Plan (February 2011)
- Smart Dial-A-Ride for Demand-Responsive Transit Operations: Research and Development of a Concept of Operations (May 2011)
- OCTA Approved Budget Fiscal Year 2011-12 (June 2011)
- OCTA Internal Audit Report 11-509 "Review of Veolia Transportation Services, Inc. Agreement No. C-5-3021 for ACCESS services and Scheduling of Non-ADA Same-Day Taxi Services" (September 2011)
- OCTA 2011 ACCESS Customer Satisfaction Survey Report (November 2011)
- OCTA Case Study –Integrated Transit Management System (November 2011)
- OCTA Transit System Study (TSS) Final Report (April 2012)
- OCTA Approved Budget Fiscal Year 2012-13 (May 2012)
- OCTA Fleet Plan Update Staff Report (September 2012)
- OCTA Transit Division Performance Measurements Report for the Fourth Quarter of Fiscal Year 2011-12 (October 2012)
- ACCESS service Map with Fixed-Route Overlay (October 2012)
- OCTA Comprehensive Business Plan Fiscal Year 2012-13 (November 2012)
- ACCESS service related news articles
- OCTA Special Needs Advisory and Transit Committee agenda and minutes

BACKGROUND AND FACTS

OCTA, a \$1.1 billion dollar⁶ multi-modal⁷ transportation agency, was formed in 1991 through consolidation of the former operating agency (the Orange County Transit District), the planning and funding agency (the Orange County Transportation Commission), and several other transportation related agencies. This saved county taxpayers tens of millions of dollars through increased efficiency and the elimination of duplicate functions. As an organization, OCTA is responsible for providing coordinated, effective, and accountable transportation planning and public transportation services within Orange County to its 3 million residents and millions of visitors. It is comprised of seven distinct programs with unique characteristics and objectives. The seven programs (Bus Operations, Rail, Measure M (M1), Renewed Measure M (M2), the 91 Express Lanes, Non-Program Specific Planning and Capital Projects, and Motorist and Taxicab Services) work together to accomplish OCTA's mission, "To develop and deliver

⁵ C.A.R.E.Evaluators, LLC is a consulting company specializing in providing health and wellness related evaluations and services for public and private organizations.

⁶ Source: OCTA Approved Budget for FY 2011-12 and FY 2012-13

⁷ Combination of two or more modes of transport

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transportation solutions to enhance the quality of life and keep Orange County moving.”⁸

OCTA's bus operations program is tailored to various market demands and needs, and delivers fixed-route, express, Metrolink station shuttles, and the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 mandated complementary paratransit service. The paratransit service, known as ACCESS, was implemented in Orange County in 1993. Demand for ACCESS has grown significantly since FY 2000-01 when OCTA adopted a policy of “zero denials” to comply with ADA requirements⁹ and continues to see increases in both ridership and cost.

What is ACCESS?

ACCESS is OCTA's shared-ride paratransit service for people who are unable to use the regular fixed-route bus service because of functional limitations due to developmental or physical disability. Within public service areas, ACCESS service is required to meet the paratransit service requirements described in the U.S Department of Transportation (DOT) Title 49 Section 37.131 of the Code of Federal Regulations. These requirements are:

- Service must operate during the same hours and days as fixed-route service and within a $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile corridor¹⁰ of fixed-route service.
- Fares may be no more than twice the base fixed-route fare.
- Advance reservations are required.
- Trips cannot be denied.
- A formal process is required to determine customer eligibility for the service.
- A process to appeal an eligibility determination must be established.

ACCESS Eligibility Requirements

ACCESS customers are certified by OCTA to use the ACCESS service by meeting the ADA eligibility criteria. A person is eligible for OCTA ACCESS service if an individual is:

- Unable to board or exit a fixed-route bus.
- Unable to get to or from a bus stop¹¹ due to a physical or environmental barrier.
- Unable to understand how to ride the bus due to a cognitive disability and/or limitation.

Eligibility is based on a person's functional limitations due to a disability, not a specific diagnosis or disability, age, distance to a bus stop, overcrowded buses, weather

⁸ Source: OCTA Comprehensive Business Plan FY 2012-13

⁹ Source: Veolia Transportation Services, Inc., Agreement No. C-5-3021, Amendment No. 4, Exhibit A-1

¹⁰ An area extending $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile, in each direction, from an operating OCTA fixed-route line

¹¹ It involves traveling a certain distance and negotiating terrain with hills, cut curbs, and sidewalks, as well as orienting oneself in the community by recognizing landmarks and intersections, and then locating a bus stop.

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conditions, trip distance and comparable travel time on fixed-route buses, or lack of bus service to an area.

ACCESS Certification Process

The eligibility certification process consists of a completed ACCESS application¹², followed by an in-person functional assessment.¹³ Valid photo identification is needed to verify applicants for the in-person assessment, which includes a personal interview and observation of the applicant's functional abilities. OCTA has contracted the professional eligibility assessment services to C.A.R.E. Evaluators, which performs functional assessment at OCTA's new indoor transit simulator facility in Anaheim. The simulator facility is staffed by seven contract personnel including one physical therapist, two psychologists, three call center representatives, and an office manager. The professionals who conduct the evaluations (i.e., physical therapist and psychologists) have bachelor degrees and experience relating to the functional abilities of individuals with disabilities. Currently, C.A.R.E. Evaluators charges \$81.51 for each completed in-person functional assessment, and this rate will remain in effect during the base term of the contract (July 1, 2011- June 30, 2014).¹⁴

The \$53,000 indoor facility¹⁵, built as part of OCTA's contract with C.A.R.E. Evaluators, was unveiled in April 2012 and is one of only four indoor facilities in the nation. It is equipped with a 40-foot, 1998 model, fixed-route bus (leased by C.A.R.E. Evaluators from OCTA at a cost of \$1.00 per month¹⁶), sidewalks, wheelchair-accessible curbs, a crosswalk, and operating traffic signals to fully replicate a bus stop. Customers who apply to use ACCESS go through a series of tests that verify their eligibility to use the ACCESS service. These tests include boarding and exiting the bus, navigating through the center aisle, using the farebox, and determining how long it takes them to cross a simulated street. The simulator helps evaluate an applicant's abilities more accurately and testing can be completed within 30 minutes. Before the availability of this new indoor transit simulator facility, applicants were taken outdoors to test their ability to navigate uneven surfaces and curbs, but did not board a bus. Additionally, the outdoor evaluation lasted about an hour. If an applicant uses a mobility device (e.g., a wheel chair), the mobility device is required for the assessment interview to ensure the mobility device meets or is within ADA guidelines. A video "ACCESS Service" is also shown during the certification process to introduce applicants to ACCESS service. While the current video is helpful, it does not meet ADA guidelines as the video is not closed-captioned. The entire assessment process, including travel to and from the appointment, may take from four to six hours.

¹² Application can be downloaded from OCTA website. It is a downloadable PDF file that needs Adobe Acrobat Reader to view the application and print it out.

¹³ For scheduling ACCESS in-person assessment, contact (714) 560-5956, Ext.2 or (714) 560-5474 (TDD)

¹⁴ Source: Agreement No. C-0-1937 dated 20 May 2011 between OCTA and C.A.R.E. Evaluators

¹⁵ Source: Amendment No. 1 dated 18 October 2011 to Agreement No. C-0-1937 dated 20 May 2011 between OCTA and C.A.R.E. Evaluators

¹⁶ Source: Amendment No. 2 dated 8 December 2011 to Agreement No. C-0-1937 dated 20 May 2011 between OCTA and C.A.R.E. Evaluators

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ACCESS applicants are notified by mail regarding their eligibility determination within 21 days following the submission of a completed application. If eligible, an ACCESS identification number and a Rider's Guide (currently dated July 2009) describing the ACCESS service and booking process is included with the notification letter. Applicants who are denied ACCESS eligibility are sent a letter explaining the reasons for denial and informing them of their right to appeal the decision and instructions on how to submit an appeal. ACCESS eligibility is valid for up to five years. At the expiration of the eligibility period, an ACCESS customer may be recertified.

Currently, on average, a total of 510 persons are certified/recertified each month (6,120 per year) to use the ACCESS service. Table 1 shows ACCESS eligibility certifications for FYs 2008-12.¹⁷

Table 1. ACCESS Eligibility Certifications

	FY 2007-08	FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12
No. of Applicants	6,289	6,839	6,394	6,336	5,749
Approvals	6,035	6,640	6,278	6,196	5,624
Denials	254	199	116	140	125
% Denial Rate	4.0%	2.9%	1.8%	2.2%	2.2%

According to OCTA, the primary reason for ACCESS service denial is an applicant's ability to independently use fixed-route service. The denial rate is low because many potential ACCESS customers who call to inquire about the service do not complete the two-step eligibility certification process once they become aware of the comprehensive eligibility assessment process.

ACCESS Eligibility Categories

There are four different categories of eligibility for ACCESS customers:

- Unrestricted category applies to individuals unable to use fixed-route service under any circumstances due to their disability or medical condition. They are eligible to use ACCESS service for all trips as identified by the certification analyst.
- Conditional category applies to individuals that make some trips on the fixed-route service under certain conditions and are eligible to use ACCESS service for limited circumstances identified by the certification analyst.
- Trip-by-Trip category applies to individuals unable to use accessible fixed-route bus service for certain trips due to architectural and/or environmental barriers. They are eligible to use ACCESS service for trips identified by the certification analyst.
- Temporary category applies to individuals unable to use accessible fixed-route bus service at this time but the condition or circumstance(s) leading to eligibility is reasonably expected to change within a specifically determined time frame of less than three years.

¹⁷ Source: Information provided by OCTA

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ACCESS Service Types

ACCESS service is available seven days a week in the same areas and during the same hours as fixed-route bus service. Types of ACCESS service are as follows:

- Standard Service: Curb-to-curb service for riders certified by ACCESS.
- Door-to-Door Service: An additional service where the driver escorts the passenger to or from the vehicle at either end of the trip. This service is provided at an additional cost.
- Subscription Service: Regular Service for eligible ACCESS customers without the need to call and request each trip. This service is good for riders who take the same trip on a regular basis, for instance to work, school, regularly scheduled medical appointments, etc.
- Same-Day Taxi Service: This service is an alternative transportation choice (i.e., a service not required under the ADA) for ACCESS eligible riders. Riders call to schedule a trip on the day they are ready to travel. The taxi service is not restricted to the ¾ mile corridor requirement, includes taxis that can accommodate persons using mobility devices, and takes place within Orange County. Scheduling a ride in an accessible taxi depends on vehicle availability.

Currently, there are approximately 60,000 ACCESS eligible customers. Of the 60,000, 26,000 are active customers who use ACCESS service at least two times per year.¹⁸

ACCESS customers contact OCTA at (714) 560-5956 to report any change in address or telephone number, or to update emergency contact information.

Reserving/Cancelling an ACCESS Ride

Certified individuals can schedule an ACCESS ride from one to three days in advance to allow schedulers to more efficiently route vehicles. Due to the number of ACCESS trip requests, OCTA is not always able to give riders the exact time they request. OCTA works with riders to establish agreeable pick-up times as ADA allows for a negotiated pick-up time of up to one hour on either end of the trip. OCTA offers trip times as close as possible to those requested, with a 30-minute pick up time window. However, if a rider refuses the negotiated trip time, it is considered a customer trip refusal, and not an OCTA denial of service. ACCESS service attempts to schedule rides efficiently and effectively. However, because ACCESS is a shared-ride service, a trip can be 90 minutes long and may be shared with other riders in compliance with ADA laws.

¹⁸ Source: Information provided by OCTA

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ACCESS Service Hours

ACCESS service hours are generally from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., Monday through Friday and 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Saturday, Sunday, and Holidays throughout most of OCTA's fixed-route service area. However, additional service hours are available in some areas. As the fixed-route service area expands during the day and contracts into the evening, the ACCESS service area changes to reflect the fixed-route network. The overall span of service, that is the time of the first pick-up until the time of the last drop-off, is approximately from 3:30 a.m. until 2:00 a.m. on weekdays, and approximately 4:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. on weekends. To enquire if a location is served by ACCESS during various times of the day, customers can check with ACCESS Reservations at (714) 560-5888, (949) 857-7188, (877) 628-2232, and (800) 564-4232 (hearing impaired). ACCESS service is provided wherever fixed-route service is available with service hours the same as the fixed-route bus service in each area.¹⁹

ACCESS Ride Request (or reservation) and Information Hours

- Monday-Friday: 7 a.m.- 5 p.m.
- Saturday, Sunday, and Holidays: 8 a.m.- 5 p.m.

To request an ACCESS ride or make Same-Day taxi reservation, the contact numbers are: (714) 560-5888, (949) 857-7188, (877) 628-2232, and (800) 564-4232 (hearing impaired). Calls should be made during ACCESS reservation hours. Each call is limited to scheduling rides for one eligible rider. There is no limit to the number of rides that can be scheduled within the 3 day period for the eligible rider. An exception is if the caller is scheduling rides for individuals going from the same origin to the same destination at the same time. The caller may schedule rides for up to eight eligible riders.

ACCESS Ride Status and Cancellation Hours

- Monday-Friday: 5 a.m.-10 p.m.
- Saturday, Sunday, and Holidays: 6 a.m.- 8 p.m.

Trips on an ACCESS bus must be cancelled at least one hour before the pick-up time or as soon as it is known that a trip is not needed so schedulers can plan the vehicle routes more effectively for other customers. Subscription customers canceling periods of one month or more lose their subscription service. Subsequently, future requests for subscription service are treated as new requests.

To check the status of an ACCESS ride or Same-Day taxi service and/or cancel an ACCESS ride or Same-Day taxi reservation, the contact numbers are: (714) 560-5888, (949) 857-7188, (877) 628-2232, and (800) 564-4232 (hearing impaired). Calls should be made during ACCESS cancellation hours.

¹⁹ Source: Information provided by OCTA

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OCTA uses the “Trapeze”²⁰ Computer-Aided Scheduling and Dispatch (CASD) system for reservations, scheduling, dispatching, and reporting. The CASD system improves vehicle routing, which increases the number of shared trips and reduces extra or single trip miles. Passenger and daily operations data such as calls received, calls un-accommodated, calls denied, calls served, no-show calls and no-pick-ups are also reported and stored electronically to measure ACCESS service performance. However, one of the Trapeze functions, the use of automated phone reminders to ACCESS customers is not currently incorporated into ACCESS operations.

ACCESS No-Show Policies

In accordance with Section 37.125 (h) of the ADA regulations, paratransit service can be suspended for a customer who establishes a “pattern or practice” of missing scheduled trips. A no-show is counted when an ACCESS rider is not at the designated location at the scheduled pick-up time or cancels a ride reservation less than one hour before the scheduled trip. If the rider is not at the pick-up location at the scheduled time, the driver waits five minutes before indicating the rider is a no-show. In addition, a rider receives a no-show indication if a required care provider or agency representative is not present to receive the rider at the drop-off destination and the rider cannot be left alone. There are penalties for three or more no-show occurrences in a single month, which can be appealed to a formal appeals board. When no-shows happen in a month, the following occurs:

- First No-Show: No action is taken.
- Second No-Show: A warning letter is issued to the customer specifying OCTA's intent to suspend ACCESS service if an additional No-Show/Late Cancellation occurs during the month. Information about the appeal process is included with the warning letter. A phone call is made to visually impaired riders.
- Third No-Show: A 30-day notice of temporary suspension of service is sent to the customer if an appeal is not received in writing. Complete information about the appeals process is included with the service suspension letter.

A rider may appeal any no-show/late cancellation believed to be incorrect or beyond the rider's control and has 65 days to appeal the suspension in writing. The customer receives notification of the appeal decision before a suspension takes effect.

If a subscription customer receives two service suspensions in a floating 24-month period, the subscription service is cancelled and the customer is required to call ACCESS to book all future trips.

ACCESS Fares

²⁰ Source: Veolia Transportation Services, Inc. Agreement No. C-5-3021, Amendment No. 4, Exhibit A-1

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In accordance with the ADA requirements, ACCESS fares may be no more than twice the base fixed-route fare, with Measure M²¹ providing a 10 percent subsidy. All customers pay exact fare in cash, coupons, or any combination when boarding the ACCESS bus. Customers without the exact fare are transported but no change is returned. It is noted effective July 1, 2012, shipping and handling charges are applied to ACCESS coupon purchases made online, over the phone, or via mail. To avoid shipping and handling charges, ACCESS coupons can be purchased online, as well as from all pass sale outlets, for example, the OCTA store (550 S. Main Orange, CA 92868), Northgate Market, Vons, Pavilions, and Ralphs grocery stores. Coupons are sold in packs of 10.

In accordance with the ADA regulations, one Personal Care Attendant (PCA) may ride free if accompanying a customer who is eligible to have a PCA. The need for a PCA is determined during the ACCESS certification process for each ACCESS customer. In addition to a PCA, one companion is permitted to accompany an ACCESS-eligible customer and is required to pay the full fare for the ACCESS trip. If accompanied by children, up to three children, 5-years old and younger, can ride free with each ACCESS-certified, fare-paying customer. OCTA's ACCESS service also complies with federal regulations regarding the total number of subscription trips scheduled, which is offered on a space available basis dependent on vehicle routing. All applicable ACCESS fares are paid by the customer for these trips.

Due to the economic recession which started in 2008, OCTA's farebox revenue (passenger fares) from bus operations decreased from \$54.6 million in FY 2008-09 to \$50.6 million in FY 2011-12. The operating costs rose from \$98.01 per revenue hour in FY 2008-09 to \$108.34 per revenue hour in FY 2011-12. To cover rising operating costs, sustain the current level of bus service, and to qualify for sales tax funding by meeting the state-mandated 20 percent farebox recovery ratio requirement,²² OCTA Board approved an overall, average fare adjustment of 25 percent per boarding in November 2012. The fare adjustment impacted both the fixed-route and ACCESS services and was effective since February 10, 2013. A fare increase was postponed two years ago due to the recession. Table 2 presents ACCESS bus fare information for both FYs 2011-12 and 2012-13.²³

Table 2. ACCESS Bus Fare (one-way)

Fare Type	Fare Structure (see note 1)		% Increase
	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13	
ACCESS Standard (curb-to-curb) Service (total fare)	\$3.00	\$4.00	33.33%
<i>Measure M pays</i>	\$0.30	\$0.40	33.33%
ACCESS Standard (curb-to-curb) Service (rider pays)	\$2.70	\$3.60	33.33%
Companion of ACCESS Rider (total fare)	\$3.00	\$4.00	33.33%
<i>Measure M pays</i>	\$0.30	\$0.40	33.33%

²¹ Source: ACCESS fares are subsidized by Measure M, the half-cent sales tax approved by Orange County voters in 1990 and extended in 2006 for another 30 years from 2011 through 2041.

²² Collect from passengers a minimum of 20 cents for every dollar spent on operating the service

²³ Source: OCTA Website

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Companion pays	\$2.70	\$3.60	33.33%
Personal Care Attendant (PCA) of ACCESS Rider	free	free	N/A
ACCESS Door-to-Door Service (total fare)	\$5.00	\$5.00	0.00
<i>Measure M pays</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
ACCESS Door-to-Door Service (each time a rider is escorted, rider pays.)	\$5.00	\$5.00	0.00%

Note 1: In accordance with the ADA regulations, ACCESS fares may be no more than twice the base fixed-route fare²⁴, which was \$1.50 for FY 2011-12 and is \$2.00 for FY 2012-13.

Same-Day Taxi Service Fare

OCTA modified fare policies for Same-Day taxi service in July 2012 and has been subsidizing up to five miles on a Same-Day taxi trip, up from three miles. For a five-mile ride, a customer pays the ACCESS standard fare (cash or credit card only) and any additional costs above the five mile trip. For example, OCTA's FY 2011-12 subsidy amounts²⁵ are as follows:

- Up to 3-miles: \$2.70 (fare) + \$7.30 (OCTA subsidy); total \$10.00 (one-way)
 - 3.1 - 4 miles: \$2.70 (fare) + \$9.80 (OCTA subsidy); total \$12.50 (one-way)
 - 4.1 - 5 miles: \$2.70 (fare) + \$11.80 (OCTA subsidy); total \$14.50 (one-way)
- ACCESS fare coupons are not accepted for the Same-Day taxi services.

Companions or PCAs of an ACCESS customer travel in the same taxi as space allows at no additional cost. This service is good for quick, short-distance trips and takes place in a taxi within Orange County only.

ACCESS Buses

Vehicles used for ACCESS service include small buses (that can accommodate two to five wheelchairs), vans, and taxis. OCTA currently has an ACCESS dedicated, active fleet of 248 low emission gasoline powered buses (a 6 percent reduction since FY 2008-09) operated and maintained by Veolia Transportation. The service area is 798 square-miles providing more than one million annual trips to ACCESS customers in Orange County. Out of 248 buses, 17 cutaway style buses²⁶ in the ACCESS fleet have exceeded the minimum Federal Transit Administration regulations prescribed age and mileage criteria for replacement, which is five years or 150,000 miles²⁷ as these buses are either six years old or have an average mileage of 207,826. These 17 ACCESS vehicles are in need of replacement.

OCTA donates retired buses to cities that operate their own transit program such as the Senior Mobility Program (SMP). The number of buses each city receives at no

²⁴ Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Title 49, Section 37.131 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)

²⁵ Source: Information provided by OCTA

²⁶ A cutaway bus consists of a bus- body attached to a small- or medium-sized truck chassis behind and attached to the trucks' cabin. The backside of the cabin is cut away to allow access to and from the bus body.

²⁷ Source: OCTA Fleet Plan Update Staff Report dated 13 September 2012

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cost is proportional to their allocated SMP funding. If a city needs additional buses over its SMP funding, it may obtain them for \$5,000 per vehicle. The charge for additional vehicles covers the costs of refurbishment and is deducted from the city's SMP funding in the following year.

OCTA's ACCESS buses have a manual farebox²⁸, which can accept fares in the form of coins, dollar bills, and coupons. Veolia, OCTA's ACCESS service operator, manually collects cash fare, records it in the Trapeze database, and deducts the amount from its monthly invoice. Coupon fares collected are returned to OCTA with Veolia's monthly report and invoice. This manual fare collection process is not cost-effective and can be improved by automizing the process.

OCTA buses use Mobile Data Terminals through which most of the communications (e.g. text messages) between dispatchers and drivers are carried out at pick-up, drop-off, and en-route. Direct radio contact is used only when necessary and mostly en-route for adjustments to the schedule, emergencies, or in case of no-shows to minimize driver distraction and maximize efficiency.

OCTA and ACCESS Budget

OCTA's public transit system, which includes the ACCESS service, is funded by a combination of federal, local and state funds. OCTA's approved annual budget for FY 2012-13 is about \$1.075 billion, a decrease of \$30.5 million compared to the FY 2011-12 budget of \$1.105 billion. Table 3 shows the OCTA budget details for both FYs 2011-12 and 2012-13.²⁹

Table 3. OCTA's Approved Annual Budget

	Approved Budget (In Millions)		Variance	Variance (%)
	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13		
Sources				
Revenues	\$868.6	\$870.7	\$2.1	0.2%
Reserves	\$236.7	\$204.1	(\$32.6)	-13.8%
Total Revenue/Reserves	\$1,105.3	\$1,074.8	(\$30.5)	-2.8%
Uses				
Salaries and Benefits	\$147.3	\$147.9	\$0.6	0.4%
Services and Supplies (see note 1)	\$254.9	\$286.4	\$31.5	12.4%
Contributions to Other Agencies	\$321.1	\$299.9	(\$21.2)	-6.6%
Debt Service (see note 2)	\$29.2	\$35.2	\$6.0	20.5%
Capital Expenditures	\$226.5	\$189.1	(\$37.4)	-16.5%
Designations for future use	\$126.3	\$116.3	(\$10.0)	-7.9%
Total Expenditures/Designations	\$1,105.3	\$1,074.8	(\$30.5)	-2.8%

²⁸ Source: Veolia Transportation Services, Inc., Agreement No. C-5-3021, Amendment No. 4, Exhibit B-1

²⁹ Source: OCTA Approved Budget for FY 2011-12 and FY 2012-13

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Note 1: These items include appropriations for the purchase of services (e.g., engineering, design, legal, and audit services) and supplies (e.g., fuel, office supplies, training, and travel).

Note 2: These funds are used for the accumulation of resources for and payment of, OCTA's long-term debt obligations, including principal, interest, and related costs.

All revenue sources for FY12-13 OCTA budget in Table 3 include the following:

- Fare box revenues (passenger fares generated from fixed-route and paratransit services (\$55.9 million).
- Local sources (Measure M2 (\$267.2 million) plus gas tax, property tax, advertising revenue, and contributions for projects from local jurisdictions (\$49.3 million)).
- Interest income on investments (\$20 million).
- State sources (\$261.6 million).
- Federal sources (\$179.6 million).
- Toll revenues (\$37.1 million), and
- Reserves (Measure M1 cash reserve \$73.3 million, \$96 million from M2 bonds, \$32.9 million from Commuter and Urban Endowment, and \$1.8 million in other reserves).

OCTA has budgeted \$45 million for ACCESS service in FY 2012-13. Table 4 shows ACCESS budget for both FYs 2011-12 and 2012-13.³⁰

Table 4. ACCESS Budget

Operating Revenues and Costs	Budgeted Amount (FY 2011-12)	% of Operating Costs (FY 2011-12) (See note 1)	Budgeted Amount (FY 2012-13)	% of Operating Costs (FY 2012-13) (See note 1)
Operating Revenue				
Farebox Revenue	\$4,864,816	9.9%	\$4,870,963	10.8%
FTA 5307 Grants³¹				
ACCESS Operating Assistance	\$5,852,837	11.9%	\$5,882,805	13.1%
Cost of Contracting Assistance	\$19,253,118	39.3%	\$16,854,948	37.4%
Sales Tax	\$19,066,472	38.9%	\$17,432,932	38.7%
Total Revenue	\$49,037,243	100%	\$45,041,648	100%
Total Operating Costs	\$49,037,243	N/A	\$45,041,648	N/A

Note 1: % of operating cost is the ratio of total fare revenue/total operating expenses.

ACCESS service is operated under the Community Transportation Services of OCTA's Transit Division and is supported by 12 staff members.

³⁰ Source: Information provided by OCTA

³¹ Source: U.S. FTA website (FTA 5307 is a formula grant program for urbanized areas providing capital, operating, and planning assistance for mass transportation. Funds are apportioned to urbanized areas using a formula based on population, population density, and other factors associated with transit services and ridership.)

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ACCESS Contracts

Veolia Transportation: Veolia provides ACCESS service using OCTA's assets (i.e., OCTA's ACCESS dedicated fleet of 248 buses) and supplemental ADA vehicles, which could be taxis or vans. Veolia has subcontracted the ADA service to American Logistics and operates/maintains ACCESS service from OCTA's Irvine Construction Circle facility. Trips provided by Veolia account for approximately 72% of all paratransit trips.³² Veolia also provides scheduling services for non-ADA Same-Day taxi services.

In 2006, the Veolia contract covered management and operation for ACCESS, Contracted Fixed-Route, StationLink, and Express Bus Services. However, in July 2008, the contract was amended (Amendment No. 4) to provide these services in accordance with the existing scope of work through June 30, 2009. Beginning July 1, 2009, Veolia was to provide ACCESS services pursuant to a revised scope of work and rates for a term of three years ending on June 30, 2012. In September 2011, OCTA extended the contract through June 30, 2013. Table 5 shows contract rates since July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2013.³³

Table 5 Veolia's Contract No. C-5-3021

Contract/Amendment	Fixed Rate (per month)	ACCESS Variable Rate (per RVH)	Brokered Trips Variable Rate (per completed trip – taxi service)	Brokered Bookings Variable Rate (per booked trip – taxi service)
Amendment 4 (July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009)	\$287,844.42	\$38.04	\$28.98	\$1.34
Amendment 4 (July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010)	\$288,466.00	\$50.88	\$39.00	\$1.38
Amendment 4 (July 1, 2010-June 30, 2011)	\$300,722.00	\$53.33	\$39.00	\$1.42
Amendment 4 (July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012)	\$312,318.00	\$56.61	\$39.00	\$1.46
Amendment 5 (August 31, 2009)	Key personnel change and revised hours of operation			
Amendment 6 (July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012)	\$309,195.00	\$54.38	\$38.61	\$1.46
Amendment 6 (July 1, 2012-June 30, 2013)	\$312,318.00	\$54.92	\$38.61	\$1.46

For FY 2011-12, OCTA re-negotiated the ACCESS contract with Veolia reducing the Revenue Vehicle Hour (RVH) rates to \$54.38 per RVH and \$38.61 per taxi trip (see rows 4 and 6 in Table 5). The lower rates yielded cost savings of approximately \$1.2 million. Without this re-negotiation, the scheduled, pre-negotiated rates for the direct

³² Source: OCTA Comprehensive Business Plan Fiscal Year 2012-13 (November 2012)

³³ Source: Veolia Transportation Services, Inc. Agreement No. C-5-3021, Amendments 4 through 6

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contract costs would have increased to \$56.61 per RVH and \$39 per subcontracted taxi trip for FY 2011-12.

OCTA projects a service delivery of 495,089 RVH of primary ADA ACCESS service in FY 2012-13, a decrease of about 10 percent from FY 2011-12. Veolia's contract value for FY 2012-13 ACCESS service is \$31 million, a reduction of about 11 percent from FY 2011-12.

Veolia employs 477 people, including 414 operations staff (e.g., call center representatives, schedulers, dispatchers, and drivers), 55 maintenance staff, and 8 administrative staff to support the ACCESS service.

American Logistics: Veolia has subcontracted the supplemental ADA vehicle service to American Logistics for providing ACCESS trips during peak and non-peak periods. This helps OCTA: keeping the size of the ACCESS fleet from increasing significantly, reducing ACCESS service cost, and increasing total system efficiency. The supplemental ADA vehicles also provide overnight services. Due to the fixed-route service area expansion during the day and contraction into the evening, the overall span of service (i.e., the time of first pick up until the time of the last drop off) is approximately from 3:30 a.m. until 2:00 a.m. (weekdays) and 4:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. (weekends). In each case, the scheduled pick-up window must begin during the ACCESS designated hours. The supplemental ADA vehicle service can also be used under the following circumstances: a vehicle breakdown, excessively late bus run, or operator shortages.

In FY 2012-13, the number of supplemental ADA taxi trips is projected to be 190,000, an increase of 11 percent over FY 2011-12 trips of 171,000. American Logistics' contract value for FY 2012-13 ADA taxi service is \$7.3 million, a 10 percent increase over the FY 2011-12 contract.

American Logistics employs 27 administrative staff members and has 317 drivers, who are independent contractors.

Yellow Cab of Greater Orange County: OCTA has contracted the Same-Day taxi service to Yellow Cab of Greater Orange County. This Agreement (C-0-1407) was initiated in June 2010, and included an initial term of two-years with a two-year option for \$319,742. Based on revised ridership projections, an amendment to increase the contract value by \$141,290 was implemented in December 2011. When demand for the Same-Day taxi service exceeded projections for FY 2011-12, OCTA executed another amendment in March 2012 to extend the Agreement C-0-1407 through June 30, 2014 in an amount not to exceed \$984,115. As such, the total cumulative contract value through June 30, 2014 is \$1,445,147.³⁴ Same-Day taxi trips are projected to be 56,063, a 108 percent increase over FY 2011-12 trips of 26,900.

³⁴ Source: OCTA Agreement No. C-0-1407 with Yellow Cab of Orange County for the Provision of Same-Day Taxi Services (June 2010)

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C.A.R.E. Evaluators: This contract was initiated in May 2011 for a period of three years to evaluate individuals for ACCESS service eligibility. The C.A.R.E. Evaluators charge of \$81.51 for each completed in-person functional assessment will remain in effect during the base term of the contract (July 1, 2011- June 30, 2014). After that, OCTA has the discretion to extend the terms from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015 (Option 1) and then from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016 (Option 2). If these options are exercised, the assessment rate could increase to \$84.00 under Option 1 and to \$85.00 under Option 2. Table 6 shows contract details up to 2014.³⁵

Table 6 C.A.R.E. Evaluator’s Contract No. C-0-1937

Contract/Amendment	Description
C-0-1937 (July 1, 2011-June 30, 2014)	\$81.51 (rate for per in-person assessment completed)
Amendment No. 1	\$53,000 (Assessment facility enhancement)
Amendment No. 2	\$1.00 per month (OCTA lease fee)

The total contract value for C.A.R.E. Evaluators’ services in FY 2012-13 is \$440,100, a 33 percent decrease from FY 2011-12.³⁶

ACCESS Cost Control Strategies

ACCESS service levels grew significantly since FY 2000-01 when OCTA adopted a policy of “zero denials” to comply with ADA requirements and continued to see increases in both ridership and cost, consuming a significant portion of the transit budget resources. The Paratransit Growth Management Strategies³⁷ implemented in 2005 helped mitigate increasing service levels. To address significant cost increases, the ACCESS service delivery model was adjusted to include implementation of the taxi trip program and developing community partnerships with adult daycare agencies or community centers to provide alternate transportation options for persons with disabilities. Non-ADA Same-Day taxi service offers ACCESS eligible customers opportunity to schedule a partially subsidized taxi trip. This service is currently expanding to provide services over a greater coverage area³⁸. Agencies participating in community partnership programs get subsidy amounts from OCTA to provide services comparable to ACCESS services at a significantly lower cost per hour (or cost per trip). Diverting costly ACCESS trips to less expensive fixed-route bus service is another strategy identified in OCTA’s Paratransit Growth Management Plan.

ACCESS Cost Control Strategies are evaluated using the OCTA’s 2011 ACCESS Customer Satisfaction Survey results, where applicable. The survey was mailed to 13,578 customers; 2,732 (20%) were returned.³⁹

Same-Day Taxi Service: The survey results are summarized below:

³⁵ Source: Agreement No. C-0-1937 dated 20 May 2011 between OCTA and C.A.R.E. Evaluators

³⁶ Source: Information provided by OCTA

³⁷ Source: Paratransit Growth Management Plan (2004)

³⁸ Source: OCTA FY 2012-13 Comprehensive Business Plan

³⁹ Source: OCTA 2011 ACCESS Customer Satisfaction Report (November 2011)

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- More ACCESS customers were using the Same-Day taxi service since the 2008 survey – up from 23 percent to 32 percent (874 survey respondents)
- The level of satisfaction with the Same-Day taxi service among those who have used this service is very high – 83 percent very satisfied or somewhat satisfied. In 2008, the level of satisfaction was 70 percent.
- Among those 68 percent (1,858 respondents) who had not used this service, 57 percent (1,059 respondents) were not aware of this service.

The financial benefit of providing Same-Day taxi service is significant when comparing OCTA's cost of a Same-Day taxi trip at \$7.30 to the average cost per trip on ACCESS, which was \$42.86 in FY 2010-11. Assuming 1,858 survey respondents used the Same-Day taxi service, it would cost OCTA \$13,563 (1,858 x \$7.30). On traditional ACCESS, it would have cost OCTA \$79,634 (1,858 x \$42.86). This would generate an estimated savings of \$66,071. Therefore, the Same-Day taxi service is shown to be efficient and cost effective.

Community Partnership Program (CPP): Beginning in FY 2007, OCTA's Community Transportation Services implemented a new five-year subsidy agreement with four adult day healthcare facilities, expanding it to six adult daycare agencies or community centers in FY 2010 for ADA eligible customers, who would otherwise be using traditional ACCESS service. The funding for this program comes from local transportation funds of the California Transportation Development Act, public transit's primary state funding source. Table 7 summarizes the Community Partnership Program cost savings.⁴⁰

Table 7. Community Partnership Program Summary

Programs/Trips	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09	FY 10	FY 11	FY 12
Acacia	9,938	34,220	37,099	35,703	29,453	27,323
Alzheimer Family Services	7,855	8,892	9,202	9,090	11,527	9,800
Community Senior Service			45,941	48,871	50,864	48,167
Orange County ARC	14,052	23,793	29,026	35,228	69,277	76,481
South County Senior Services	12,080	12,887	13,909	15,248	12,779	9,318
Sultan Adult Day Health Care				7,070	10,179	30,482
Total Trips (subsidized)	43,925	79,792	135,177	151,210	184,079	201,571
OCTA Cost	\$549,934	1,138,213	2,046,655	2,306,239	2,662,885	3,109,627
Avg. Cost/Trip using CPP	\$12.52	14.26	15.14	15.25	14.47	15.43
Avg. Cost /Trip on ACCESS	\$26.55	25.83	28.76	34.34	42.86	50.17
ACCESS	\$1,166,209	2,061,027	3,887,691	5,192,551	7,889,626	10,112,817
Cost Savings	\$616,275	922,814	1,841,036	2,886,312	5,226,741	7,003,190

Table 7 shows the financial benefits of using CPP. For example, in FY 2011, the community partnerships provided a total of 184,079 trips and OCTA's cost was \$2,662,885. The average cost per trip is \$14.47, a substantial savings compared to average cost per trip for ACCESS services, which is \$42.86. Additionally, if these

⁴⁰ Source: Information provided by OCTA

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184,079 trips were taken on ACCESS, the total cost would have been \$7,889,626. Thus, using CPP, there is a significant cost saving of \$7,889,626 - \$2,662,885 = \$5,226,741 in FY 2011.

In FY 2012-13, the number of CPP trips is projected to be 212,707.

ACCESS Reduced Fare Identification Card (RFID): OCTA offers reduced fares (0.25 cents one-way) only for ADA eligible ACCESS customers on accessible fixed-route buses. A special identification card (ACCESS RFID) is required to get reduced fares. To apply for this RFID card, an application needs to be completed. The ACCESS customer contacts ACCESS Eligibility staff at (714) 560-5956 or (714) 560-5474 (hearing impaired) to receive an application. The completed application is mailed to ACCESS Eligibility staff for processing. After verification of the customer's ACCESS certification dates, the staff prepares the ACCESS RFID card using the digital photo included in the customer's ACCESS eligibility profile. The ACCESS RFID card is mailed to the customer within two weeks of receiving the completed application. A valid ACCESS RFID card must be shown to the fixed-route coach operator each time the ACCESS RFID card holder boards the bus.

Renewed Measure M (M2) does not subsidize the \$0.25 reduced fare for persons traveling with a valid ACCESS RFID. Similar to the free category for children under five years of age traveling with a fare paying adult, there is no subsidy provided to the fixed-route bus system for this reduced fare.

The 2011 ACCESS Customer Satisfaction Survey results about using ACCESS RFID are as follows:

- 75% of ACCESS customers (2,049) were not aware of the ACCESS RFID program that enables them to use fixed-route bus service for 25 cents per trip.
- 20% of ACCESS customers (546) also used the fixed-route bus system in addition to ACCESS service.
- Among the 80% of ACCESS customers (2,186) who have not used fixed-route buses, 34 percent (743) would consider the fixed-route training.

The financial benefit of using an ACCESS RFID will be significant if more ACCESS customers become aware of this program.

With a population increase forecasted to be 14 percent over the next 25 years, which may include disabled senior citizens, growth rates are expected to be 3 percent annually over the long-term. OCTA projects ACCESS service levels to increase by 13 percent from 2010-11 through 2014-15. ACCESS currently accounts for 26 percent of the total fixed-route and paratransit RVHs (or bus level of service), and is expected to grow to 38 percent by 2030-31.⁴¹ As such, OCTA should emphasize cost effective strategies and find additional ways to serve ACCESS customers.

⁴¹ Source: OCTA Approved Budget FY 2012-13

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Visitor Policy

ADA eligible visitors to Orange County can use the ACCESS service if they are unable to use the fixed-route system due to disability limitations. According to ADA regulations, an individual residing outside the service area is eligible for ACCESS service as a visitor if the following conditions are met:

- The individual presents documentation of ADA paratransit eligibility from his/her home jurisdiction.
- If such documentation is not available, then, proof of residence outside of Orange County, as well as a proof of disability is required, if it is not apparent.
- Acceptable proof of disability includes a letter from a doctor or the visitor's statement of inability to use the fixed-route system.

After an ADA visitor is found eligible, they get an ADA identification number including the Rider's Guide, and information about how to use the OCTA ACCESS paratransit service. Visitors pay the same fare as Orange County residents.

ACCESS Performance

OCTA uses performance metrics⁴² to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of ACCESS service. The key Measures of Effectiveness and Performance (MOEs/MOPs) that track service safety, courtesy and reliability are: preventable vehicle accidents, customer complaints, on-time performance, service delivery failure (a MOP specific to OCTA), and miles between road calls. In addition to these metrics, industry-standard performance measurements that assess ACCESS operations are: ridership, passenger fare revenues, operating costs, farebox recovery ratio, and cost per RVH. ACCESS performance for FY 2012 (July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012) compared to FY 2011 is summarized below.

Table 8. ACCESS Operational Performance Data

	FY 2011	FY 2012	% Change
Ridership	1,320,062	1,334,460	1.1%
Operating Expenses	\$45,596,777	\$48,137,535	5.6%
Passenger Fare Revenue	\$2,601,552	\$2,777,198	6.8%
Cost Per Revenue Vehicle Hour	\$72.90	\$76.65	5.1%
Fleet Miles	10,174,673	9,483,203	-6.8%
Miles Between Road Calls (for maintenance)	38,251	25,981	-32.1%
On-Time Performance	93.9%	93.3%	-0.6%
Service Delivery Failure	129	233	80.6%
Service Complaints per 1,000 boardings	1,741	2,007	15.3%
Safety (# of accidents)	77	67	-13%

⁴² Source: OCTA Transit Division Performance Measurements Report for the Fourth Quarter of Fiscal Year 2011-12 (October 2012)

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In FY 2012, ACCESS service transported over 1.3 million customers in Orange County, a 1.1% increase in ridership from FY 2011. ACCESS met or exceeded operational performance standards (or budgetary goals) for ridership, operating expenses, cost per RVH, miles between road calls, and safety. The operating expenses and cost per RVH performance parameters met the budgetary goals of equal or less than \$55,706,243 (for operating expenses) and \$89.39 (for cost per RVH) but were higher in FY 2012 by 5.6% and 5.1%, respectively. ACCESS exceeded the reliability standard of 25,000 or more miles between road calls with a rate of 25,981 miles between road calls, a decrease by 32.1% from FY 2011 rate of 38,251 miles between road calls. The decrease in miles between road calls (maintenance reliability) of ACCESS buses was influenced by the age and mileage of the vehicles. For vehicle safety in FY 2012, ACCESS service met the standard of one or less preventable vehicle accidents per 100,000 miles with a rate of 0.71, a decrease of 6.6% from FY 2011 rate of 0.76 and recorded 67 accidents, a decrease of 13% from 77 accidents recorded in FY 2011.

Performance standards for ACCESS service reliability indicators (on-time performance and Service Delivery Failure (SDF)) and courtesy were not met. On-time performance for FY 2012 was at 93.3%, less than the performance standard of equal to or more than 95%. SDF, a measure specific to ACCESS service, shows an occurrence when a vehicle does not arrive at pick-up location until 90 minutes after the conclusion of a 30 minute on-time window (120 minutes). There were 233 such occurrences in FY 2012, an increase of 80.6% from 129 occurrences in FY 2011. For FY 2012, 1.5 customer complaints for every 1,000 trips (2007x1000/1,334,460) were recorded, which represents an increase of 14% from FY 2011 rate of 1.32 complaints for every 1,000 trips (1741x1000/1,320,062).

For amplifying information on ACCESS operational performance, refer to Appendix A in this report, which summarizes OCTA Transit Division Performance Report for the Fourth Quarter of FY 2011-12.

ACCESS Customer Satisfaction

OCTA conducts a periodic customer satisfaction survey⁴³ to evaluate customer opinions and perceptions regarding ACCESS service in an effort to understand the needs of its customers and to deliver quality service. A prior customer satisfaction survey was conducted in 2008.

In 2011, OCTA mailed out 13,578 surveys and 2,732 completed surveys were returned (a 20% response rate). Rea and Parker Research of San Diego conducted the survey, and tabulated data and analyzed the results of the ACCESS survey. The survey found that ACCESS customers continue to be very satisfied with the quality of the service and some may be able to use the lower cost fixed-route service. The survey also found a high level of satisfaction with the taxicab services.

⁴³ Source: OCTA 2011 ACCESS Customer Satisfaction Survey Report (November 2011)

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For 2011 customer satisfaction survey details, refer to Appendix B in this report, which summarizes OCTA 2011 ACCESS Customer Satisfaction Survey Report.

FINDINGS

In accordance with *California Penal Code* Sections §933 and §933.05, the 2012-2013 Grand Jury requires responses from each agency affected by the findings presented in this section. The responses are to be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court.

Based on its investigation of the OCTA ACCESS Service in Orange County, the 2012-2013 Orange County Grand Jury has arrived at 12 principal findings, as follows:

- F1 ACCESS service fulfills the transportation needs of its qualified subscribers and ACCESS customers continue to be very satisfied with the quality of the ACCESS service.
- F2 Some of the ACCESS customers may be able to use the OCTA's lower cost fixed-route service which may reduce ACCESS service costs.
- F3 Standardizing the eligibility evaluation process has helped to accurately determine if a customer can use the fixed-route service for some trips, thereby, significantly reducing ACCESS service costs.
- F4 The current video "ACCESS Service" shown during the ACCESS eligibility certification process needs to be updated to meet ADA guidelines.
- F5 A majority of ACCESS customers are not aware of either the Same-Day taxi service or the reduced fare program on a fixed-route bus.
- F6 The current ACCESS Rider's Guide (July 2009) is outdated and needs to be updated.
- F7 Cancelled rides and no-shows puts stress on dispatchers and reservationists to efficiently manage bus schedules.
- F8 The Interactive Voice Response (IVR) feature of the Trapeze system for automated phone reminders is not implemented.
- F9 No-shows are detrimental to the productivity of the ACCESS system impacting efficiency and operating cost per vehicle mile.

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- F10 The current radio system on ACCESS buses uses old technology and does not meet the Federal Communications Commission's narrow-banding mandate⁴⁴.
- F11 ACCESS service is being influenced by the age and mileage of the ACCESS fleet vehicles, which impact maintenance reliability, increase vehicle downtime and maintenance costs, reduce vehicle availability, and diminish service quality.
- F12 ACCESS service fare collection process is manually driven and inefficient.

RECOMMENDATIONS

California Penal Code Sections §933 and §933.05 require governing bodies and elected officials to which a report is directed to respond to findings and recommendations. Responses are requested from departments and local agencies and their non-elected department heads.

In accordance with *California Penal Code* Sections §933 and §933.05, the 2012-2013 Grand Jury requires responses from each agency affected by the recommendations presented in this section. The responses are to be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court.

Based on its investigation of the OCTA's ACCESS service, the 2012-2013 Orange County Grand Jury makes the following 7 recommendations:

- R1 Address the growth of ACCESS demand by using community partnerships, same-day taxi service, and emphasizing reduced fare fixed-route travel training during eligibility assessment process and outreach programs. (F2, F3, F5)
- R2 Consider using new technologies for ACCESS fare system such as Smart Card or cell phone applications to reduce processing cost of fare collected, customer complaints, and customer service related operational costs, as well as to improve travel time. (F12)
- R3 Replace ACCESS buses that have reached the end of their useful life and have exceeded minimum FTA regulatory requirements for age and mileage to limit and/or decrease operational/maintenance costs, control service failures, and improve efficiency of the service. (F11)

⁴⁴ Source: FCC Website (All public safety and industrial/business licensees in the 150-174 MHz and 421-512 MHz bands must either migrate to 12.5 kHz technology or use a technology that achieves equivalent efficiency.)

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- R4 Update the training video “ACCESS Service” to meet ADA video guidelines (i.e., incorporate closed-captioning feature) and use the video during certification process to educate and encourage ACCESS applicants to consider other transportation options such as the “reduced fare fixed-route” service to help lower ACCESS service costs. (F2, F3, F4)
- R5 Upgrade or replace ACCESS bus radio communication systems to meet FCC narrow-band mandate. Improve efficiency by eliminating multiple system logons by bus operators. (F10)
- R6 Incorporate IVR feature into the reservation process to alleviate demands placed upon reservationists and allow them to focus solely on scheduling trips, as well as to improve system efficiency and operating cost per vehicle mile. (F7, F8, F9)
- R7 Update the ACCESS Rider's Guide. (F6)

REQUIRED RESPONSES

The California Penal Code §933 requires any public agency which the Grand Jury has reviewed, and about which it has issued a final report, to comment to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of the agency. Such comment shall be made *no later than 90 days* after the Grand Jury publishes its report (filed with the Clerk of the Court); except that in the case of a report containing findings and recommendations pertaining to a department or agency headed by an elected County Official (e.g., District Attorney, Sherriff, etc.), such comment shall be made *within 60 days* to the Presiding Judge with an information copy sent to the Board of Supervisors.

Furthermore, the *California Penal Code* Section §933.05 (a), (b), and (c) details, as follows, the manner in which such comment(s) are to be made:

(a.) As to each Grand Jury finding, the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following:

- (1) The respondent agrees with the finding.
- (2) The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefore.

(b.) As to each grand jury recommendation, the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions:

- (1) The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.

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- (2) The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.
- (3) The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.
- (4) The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefore.

OCTA shall respond to Findings 1-12 and recommendations 1-7.

COMMENDATION

To the management and staff of OCTA involved with ACCESS Service – A JOB WELL DONE!!!!

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Appendix A

ACCESS Service Performance⁴⁵

OCTA uses performance metrics to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of ACCESS service. The key measures of effectiveness and performance (MOEs/MOPs) that track service safety, courtesy and reliability are: preventable vehicle accidents, customer complaints, on-time performance, service delivery failure (a MOP specific to OCTA), and miles between road calls. Along with these metrics, industry-standard performance measurements that assess ACCESS operations are: ridership, passenger fare revenues, operating costs, farebox recovery ratios, and cost per revenue vehicle hour. ACCESS performance for FY 2012 (July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012) compared to FY 2011 (July 1, 2010-June 30, 2011) is summarized below.

- **Safety: Preventable vehicle accidents** are counts of incidents concerning physical contact between vehicles used for public transit and other vehicles, objects, or pedestrians where a coach operator failed to do everything reasonable to prevent the accident. To obtain a standardized measurement, the accident counts are multiplied by 100,000 then divided by the total miles on the vehicles used for public transit. OCTA's safety standard is no more than one vehicle accident per 100,000 miles. Table A-1 shows number of accidents and fleet miles for both FYs 2011 and 2012.

Table A-1 Safety: Preventable Vehicle Accidents per 100,000 Miles

Performance Measurement	Standard	FY 2011	FY 2012	Variance	Variance (%)
Safety	≤ 1 per 100,000	0.76	0.71	-0.05	-6.6%
Accidents	N/A	77	67	-10	-13%
Fleet Miles	N/A	10,174,673	9,483,203	-691,470	-6.8%

For FY 2012, ACCESS met the safety standard of one or less preventable vehicle accidents per 100,000 miles with a rate of 0.71, a decrease of 6.6 percent from FY 2011 rate of 0.76. Total accidents for the year decreased from 77 to 67, a decrease of 13 percent. It is noted though the fleet miles reduced by 6.8% in FY 2012.

- **Courtesy: Customer complaints** are counts of incidents where a user of public transit is dissatisfied with the service received. As ACCESS service does not record over 1,000,000 boardings per month, the statistics is factored by 1,000 and then divided by the total ridership. The standard for customer complaints is one valid complaint per 1,000 boardings for ACCESS service. Table A-2 shows number of customer complaints for both FYs 2011 and 2012.

⁴⁵ Source: Transit Division Performance Measurements Report for the Fourth Quarter of Fiscal Year 2011-12

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Table A-2. Courtesy: Customer Complaints

Performance Measurement	Standard	FY 2011	FY 2012	Variance	Variance (%)
Courtesy	≤ 1 per 1,000	1.32	1.5	0.18	14%
Valid Complaints	N/A	1,741	2,007	266	15.3%
Passengers	N/A	1,320,062	1,334,460	14,398	1.1%

For FY 2012, ACCESS did not meet the courtesy standard of one or less complaints per 1,000 boardings with a rate of 1.5, an increase of 14 percent from FY 2011 rate of 1.32. Total valid complaints for the year increased from 1,741 to 2,007, an increase of 15.3 percent and ridership increased in by 1.1%, respectively.

Reliability of ACCESS service is measured using three performance metrics: on-time performance, service delivery failures, and miles between road calls.

- **Reliability: On-time performance (OTP)** is a measure of performance evaluating a revenue vehicle's adherence to a scheduled pick-up time for transportation on a demand-responsive schedule. On ACCESS, a trip is on-time as long as the revenue vehicle arrives no later than the 30-minute window of the scheduled pick-up time. Table A-3 shows on-time performance data for both FYs 2011 and 2012.

Table A-3. Reliability: On-time Performance

Performance Measurement	Standard	FY 2011	FY 2012	Variance	Variance (%)
Reliability: On-time Performance	≥ 95%	93.9%	93.3%	-0.6%	-0.64%

For FY 2012, ACCESS did not meet the reliability standard of operating on-time at 95 percent or more with a rate of 93.3 percent, a decrease of 0.64 percent from FY 2011 rate of 93.9 percent.

- **Reliability: Service Delivery Failure (SDF)** is a unique measurement specific to ACCESS service. This indicator is an occurrence when a vehicle does not arrive at the pick-up location until 90 minutes after the conclusion of a 30-minute on-time window (i.e., 120-minutes). Table A-4 shows SDF data for both FYs 2012 and FY 2011.

Table A-4. Reliability: Service Delivery Failure

Performance Measurement	Standard	FY 2011	FY 2012	Variance	Variance (%)
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Reliability: Service Delivery Failure	0	129	233	104	80.6%
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In FY 2012, ACCESS did not meet the SDF standard of zero service delivery failures. ACCESS recorded 233 SDFs, an increase of 80.6 percent from FY 2011 results of 129. Overall, SDFs accounted for less than one percent of the total trips provided annually.

- **Reliability: Miles Between Road Calls** is a maintenance performance indicator that measures the vehicles between mechanical failures of a vehicle used for public transit during revenue service (i.e., in active use). Road calls may cause a delay in service and necessitate removing the vehicle from service until repairs are made. Table A-5 shows number of road calls both in FYs 2011 and 2012.

Table A-5. Reliability: Miles Between Road Calls

Performance Measurement	Standard	FY 2011	FY 2012	Variance	Variance (%)
Reliability: Miles Between Road Calls	≥ 25,000	38,251	25,981	-12,269	-32.1%
Valid Road Calls	N/A	266	365	99	37.2%
Fleet Miles	N/A	10,174,673	9,483,203	-691,470	-6.8%

In FY 2012, ACCESS exceeded the reliability standard of 25,000 or more miles between road calls with a rate of 25,981, a decrease by 32.1 percent from FY 2011 rate of 38,251. Total road calls for the year increased from 266 in FY 2011 to 365 in FY2012, an increase of 37.2 percent. Maintenance reliability is influenced by the age and mileage of the vehicles. Currently, the average age of the fleet is approximately four years, and the average mileage per vehicle is nearly 150,000.

- **Ridership** (or boardings) is the number of rides taken by passengers using public transit, which is influenced by the weather, economy, and seasonal variations in demand. Table A-6 shows ridership for both FYs 2011 and 2012.

Table A-6. Ridership

Performance Measurement	Budget Goal	FY 2011	FY 2012	Variance	Variance (%)
Ridership	≥ 1,148,487	1,320,062	1,334,460	14,398	1.1%

In FY 2012, ACCESS met the ridership goal of 1.15 million boardings with 1.33 million, an increase of 1.1 percent in ridership from FY 2011 result of

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1.32 million. Comparing the factors impacting ridership between fixed-route and paratransit, many ACCESS trips are non-discretionary i.e., for medical appointments or to attend day programs provided to persons with special needs, unlike fixed-route ridership which is more heavily impacted by changes in the local economy, in particular, the unemployment rate and gas prices.

- **Passenger Fare Revenues** are the total revenues collected through the payment of passenger fares, which includes cash and pre-paid fares (coupons). Table A-7 shows passenger fare revenues for both FYs 2011 and 2012.

Table A-7. Passenger Fare Revenues

Performance Measurement	Budget Goal	FY 2011	FY 2012	Variance	Variance (%)
All Paratransit	≥ \$4,827,44	\$5,135,700	\$4,948,207	\$(187,493)	-3.7%
ACCESS	N/A	\$2,601,552	\$2,777,198	\$175,646	6.8%

In FY 2012, all paratransit exceeded the annual budget target for passenger fare revenues of \$4.8 million with \$4.9 million. This represents a decrease of 3.7 percent from FY 2011 results of \$5.1 million. Revenues for FY 2012 were lower from FY 2011 because the Senior Nutrition Transportation Program was no longer under OCTA's paratransit umbrella.

- **Operating Expenses** include the total expenses to operate and maintain the transit system including labor, fuel, maintenance, wages and salaries, employee benefits, taxes, and other costs associated with transit operations. Table 16 presents operating expenses for FYs 2011 and 2012. Table A-8 shows operating expenses for both FYs 2011 and 2012.

Table A-8. Operating Expenses

Performance Measurement	Budget Goal	FY 2011	FY 2012	Variance	Variance (%)
All Paratransit	≤ \$59,376,605	\$48,915,097	\$51,225,008	\$2,309,911	4.7%
ACCESS	≤ \$55,706,243	\$45,596,777	\$48,137,535	\$2,540,757	5.6%

In FY 2012, all paratransit expenses were lower than the annual budget target for operating expenses of \$59.4 million with \$51.2 million. This represents an increase of 4.7 percent from FY 2011 result of \$48.9 million. ACCESS met the annual budget target for operating expenses of no more than \$55.7 million

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with \$48.1 million. This represents an increase of 5.6 percent from FY 2011 result of \$45.6 million.

- **Farebox Recovery Ratio** is a measure of the proportion of operating costs covered by passenger fares calculated by dividing the farebox revenue by total operating expenses. Table A-9 shows farebox recovery ratio for both FYs 2011 and 2012.

Table A-9. Farebox Recovery Ratio

Performance Measurement	Budget Goal	FY 2011	FY 2012	Variance	Variance (%)
All Paratransit	≥ 9.8%	10.5%	9.7%	-0.8%	-8%
ACCESS	N/A	5.7%	5.8%	0.1%	1.8%

In FY 2012, all paratransit did not meet the annual budget target for the farebox recovery ratio of 9.8 percent or more with a ratio of 9.7 percent, a decrease of 0.8 percent from FY 2011 ratio of 10.5 percent. The ratio was affected by the lower fare revenues collected despite operating costs holding steady.

- **Cost per Revenue Vehicle Hour (RVH)** is one of the many industry standards used to measure the cost efficiency of transit service and establishes the financial resources needed to produce an hour of revenue service. It is calculated by dividing operating expenses by RVH. Table A-10 shows cost per revenue vehicle hour for both FYs 2011 and 2012

Table A-10. Cost Per Revenue Vehicle Hour

Performance Measurement	Budget Goal	FY 2011	FY 2012	Variance	Variance (%)
ACCESS	≤ \$89.39	\$72.90	\$76.65	\$3.75	5.1%
Operating Costs	N/A	\$45,596,777	\$48,137,535	\$2,540,758	5.6%
RVH	N/A	625,508	628,052	2,545	0.4%

In FY 2012, ACCESS met the annual budget target for the cost per RVH of no more than \$89.39 per RVH with a rate of \$76.65. This rate represents an increase of 5.1 percent from FY 2011 rate of \$72.90. The increase in demand-response taxi use is yielding cost efficiencies.

Appendix B

ACCESS Customer Satisfaction Survey⁴⁶

OCTA conducts a periodic customer satisfaction survey to evaluate customer opinions and perceptions regarding ACCESS service in an effort to understand the special needs of its customers and to deliver quality service. A prior customer satisfaction survey was conducted in 2008.

In 2011, OCTA mailed out 13,578 surveys and 2,732 completed surveys were returned (a 20% response rate). Rea and Parker Research of San Diego conducted the survey, and tabulated data and analyzed the results of the ACCESS survey. The survey results are summarized below:

Satisfaction with ACCESS service

- Overall, in 2011, 88 percent of ACCESS users were either very satisfied (62 percent) or somewhat satisfied (26 percent) with ACCESS service. In 2008, the level of overall satisfaction was at 85 percent. Other areas with high levels of satisfaction include cleanliness of the bus, safety on the bus, and bus driver courtesy. Compared to 2008, in 2011, the satisfaction levels in these three areas increased by 12 percent, 11.5 percent, and 11 percent, respectively.
- In 2011, 94 percent of ACCESS customers felt that ACCESS service is the same (57 percent) or better (37 percent) than it was 12 months ago. While in 2008, 90 percent of ACCESS customers had the same opinion.
- In 2011, ACCESS users were not satisfied with travel time, on-time, and the 30-minute on-time pick-up window performance of ACCESS service, even though these service characteristics showed an improvement in 2011 compared to 2008. The improvement levels in these three areas were 9 percent, 15 percent, and 12.4 percent, respectively.

ACCESS Usage Characteristics

- Forty nine percent of ACCESS customers had been ACCESS customers for more than four years.
- Frequency usage of ACCESS service varied. Forty seven percent used the service 1-7 days per week while 31 percent used the service at least one time per month. The most frequent trips were for work (3 trips per week) and school (2.4 trips per week). This was similar to the high usage found in 2008 survey except in at least once per month usage category, in 2011, it increased to 31 percent from 27 percent in 2008.
- Trip purpose varied with survey respondents. Seventy five percent used ACCESS service for health/doctor appointments, followed by social/recreational (37 percent) and personal business/errands (36 percent).

⁴⁶ Source: OCTA 2011 ACCESS Customer Satisfaction Survey Report (November 2011)

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More women than men used ACCESS service for shopping, social, recreational, and personal business trips.

- The percentage of relatively new users of ACCESS (using the service for less than one year) increased to 15 percent in 2011 from 8 percent in 2008.
- A large share of ACCESS survey respondents was female-69 percent female and 31 percent male. This is consistent with data in the overall ACCESS customer data base where 62 percent are female. There are also many seniors using ACCESS service with 70 percent age 60 years or older.
- A majority (48 percent) of survey respondents would not book ACCESS reservations on line if this service were available. Only 28 percent of respondents favored this option and 24 percent were not sure. Men (38 percent) and younger customers (51 percent in the age group 44 years and younger vs. 25 percent in the age group 45 years and older) were more likely to book reservations on line.

ACCESS Eligibility Process:

- ACCESS customers were very satisfied with the functional assessment process, including the OCTA eligibility staff, in-person assessment staff, in-person assessment evaluation tests, and in-person assessment facility. Compared to 2008, satisfaction levels for each category of the eligibility process increased as follows: 10.8 percent (OCTA eligibility staff), 11.3 percent (in-person assessment staff), 10.4 percent (in-person assessment evaluation tests), and 8.6 percent (in-person assessment facility).

Taxis for ACCESS trips

- There was an increase in the use of Same-Day Taxi Service since 2008 - from 23 percent to 32 percent in 2011. Among the 32 percent, who had used the Same-Day taxi service, frequency of use was not high with 53 percent using the service only a few times per year. Among the 68 percent of ACCESS customers who had not used the Same-Day taxi service, 57 percent were not aware that the service existed.
- There was considerable satisfaction with the Same-Day Taxi Service among the 32 percent those who have used this service. Eighty three percent of these users were very or somewhat satisfied with this service. This is an improvement over the 70 percent level reported in 2008.
- Same-Day taxi customers were also highly satisfied with travel time, safety on taxi trip, driver courtesy, on-time performance, and cleanliness characteristics of taxi service.

Reduced Fare Program

- Seventy five percent of ACCESS customers were not aware of this program, which enables them to use fixed-route bus service for 25 cents per trip.

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- Twenty percent of ACCESS customers had used both the fixed-route and ACCESS services. Among the 80 percent of ACCESS customers who had not used this service, 66 percent would not consider the regular, fixed-route travel training even if such training could enable them to ride fixed-route buses at a reduced fare of 25 cents per trip. Remaining 34 percent were willing to participate in this training. Only 3,500 Reduced fare IDs had been issued to ACCESS customers.