



Orange County Transportation Authority

Final Report

2015 OC Fair Express Service

Prepared for the
Mobile Source Air Pollution Review Committee (MSRC)
AB 2766 Discretionary Fund Work Program

July 14, 2016

OC Fair Express Service Final Report

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The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) expresses its gratitude to the Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee and staff for their invaluable support of OCTA's Orange County (OC) Fair Express service. The Authority also acknowledges the partnership provided by the Orange County Fair and Event Center and the support of the City of Costa Mesa in ensuring the success of the service.

Acknowledgements/Disclaimer

This report was submitted in fulfillment of AB 2766/MS16002, OC Fair Express Service by the Orange County Transportation Authority under the partial sponsorship of the Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee (MSRC). The statement and conclusions in this report are those of the contractor and not necessarily those of the Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee (MSRC) or the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). The mention of commercial products, their sources or their uses in connection with material reported is not to be construed as either an actual or implied endorsement of such products.



Project Description & Work Performed

With great appreciation for the sponsorship provided by the MSRC, the OC Fair Express bus service returned for the 2015 fair season. The Orange County Fair is a 120 year old tradition and is considered one of the largest fairs in the nation with over 1.3 million visitors. The popularity of the fair results in high weekend traffic congestion that exceeds the current capacity of the roadways and intersections in close proximity to the fairgrounds. The level of service is especially impacted at the intersection of Del Mar Avenue and South Newport Boulevard, as well as the on-ramps and off-ramps of the Costa Mesa (State Route 55) Freeway. The traffic congestion not only results in harmful emissions from idling autos, but also poses safety concerns resulting from autos cueing into the roadway intersections and onto the freeway mainline.



OC Fair Express Service Characteristics

To lessen these impacts, OCTA partnered with the Orange County Fair and Event Center, and with support from the City of Costa Mesa, provided direct, frequent bus service to the Orange County Fair on Friday, July 17, 2015, and continuing through Sunday, August 16, 2015, for a total of 15 days of operation. The service provided a convenient and attractive alternative to automobile travel by offering transit service directly to the Orange County Fair.

To satisfy the growing demand and in response to customer feedback received, the service was expanded from eight to nine routes for the 2015 season, serving the nine transit facilities listed on the following page. The new route provided service to the new Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center (ARTIC). In addition, headways were shortened 20 minutes and 40 minutes, depending on the route, to accommodate the increased demand. A map of the nine routes is presented on the following page.



2015 OC Fair Express Route Map



The Orange County Fair Express deployed 42 coach operators, 26 ambassadors, and 26 transit buses, including eleven (11) 2001 model NABI Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) buses, one (1) 2000 model NABI Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) bus, four (4) 2008 model New Flyer Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses, and ten (10) 2007 model New Flyer CNG buses. The 2000 and 2001 model NABI LNG buses are powered with 2008 Cummins ISLG engines with 0.2 grams-per-brake-horsepower/hour of nitrogen oxide (NOx). The 2008 model New Flyer CNG buses are powered with 2008 Cummins ISLG engines with 0.2 grams-per-brake-horsepower/hour of nitrogen oxide (NOx). The 2007 model New Flyer CNG bus is powered by a 2011 Cummins ISLG engine with 0.2 grams-per-brake-horsepower/hour of nitrogen oxide (NOx). Each vehicle accommodated a total of 36 seated passengers and 25 standees, and was fully accessible with two wheelchair positions available. All vehicles were also equipped with an exterior two-position bicycle rack to promote active transportation connectivity.

Depending on the route, the service was made available from noon to 1:00 a.m. on Fridays, and from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. In keeping with OCTA's current fare structure, the service required a \$2.00 fare with all applicable fare discounts and passes accepted to further facilitate transit transfers.

OCTA also utilized the OC Fair Express Mobile App to make purchasing fare media easy and convenient, and offer new payment options. The mobile application also lowered costs associated with handling cash, reduced bus dwell times at the bus stops, and fostered regional transit fare integration. Even though the option to purchase and print passes on the internet was eliminated for the summer of 2015, 2,174 passes were purchased on the OC Fair Express mobile app which was a 2.6 percent increase over last year's pass sales.



Promotion & Outreach

To maximize ridership potential, OCTA undertook a joint messaging campaign in partnership with the Orange County Fair and Event Center. The cooperative effort positioned the bus service as the “Official Transportation Provider for the Orange County Fair,” and provided riders with a \$9.00 discount off the \$12.00 fair admission price. Over 39,500 OC Fair Express admission coupons were used to enter the event.

The marketing campaign targeted both current OCTA customers as well as those who were not current or frequent transit users, and included community outreach events and partnership promotions with the OC Fair Event Center. Advertising promotions were comprehensive, and included print, broadcast, digital and outdoor media advertising. The outreach effort resulted in over 17 million impressions with additional highlights of the OC Fair Express marketing campaign are presented below.

- Bus advertising included the installation of 13 exterior ads and over 14,200 interior bus cards provided in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.
- Station banners including 50 light pole banners at bus stops, 12 kiosk banners at bus stations, 13 signs at the ARTIC station, 20 fence banners at all Metrolink stations as well as 14 signage ads at five different mall locations across Orange County.
- Television advertising included 1,115 aired commercials on Time Warner Cable, CBS local Channel 2 stations, and Media 55 Laguna Woods Cable.
- Newspaper advertising included over 444,500 prints in circulation through the OC Register and a variety of local city newspapers of different languages, as well as online banner ads on OCRegister.com.
- Printed material also included the distribution of over 75,000 bilingual brochure route schedules.

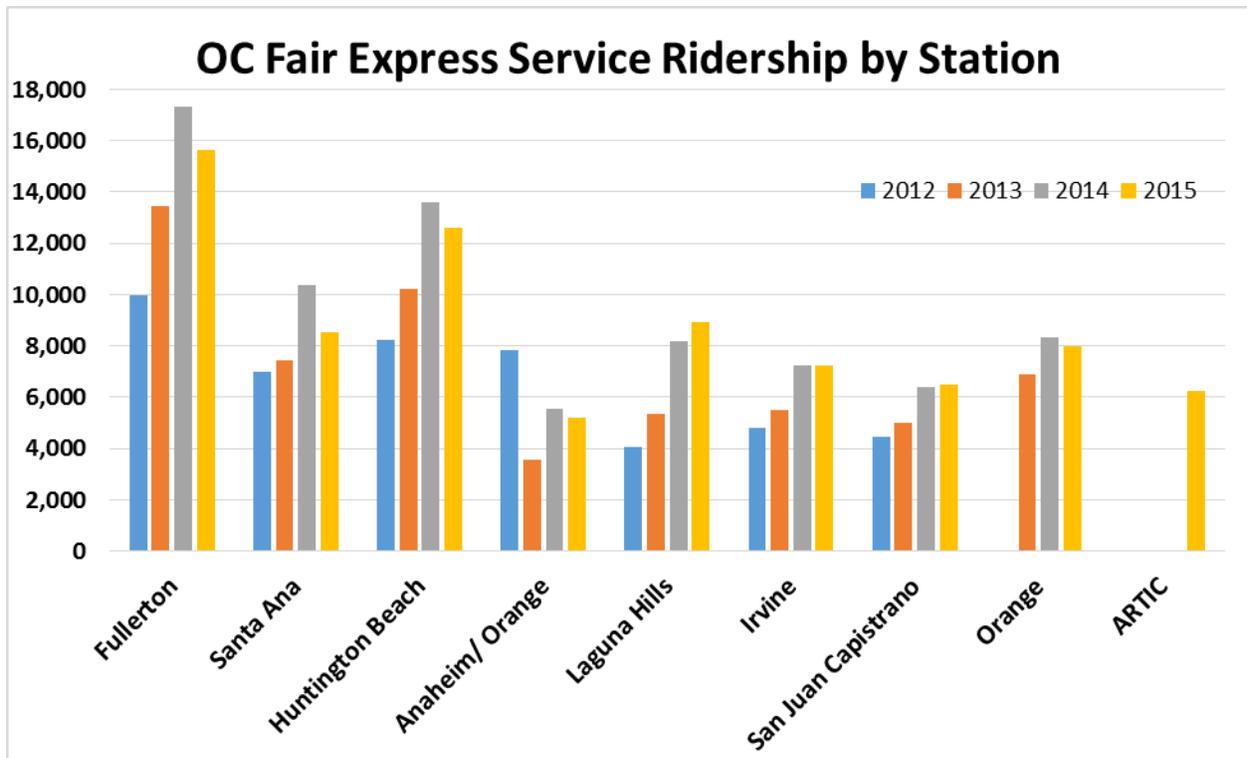
In addition, digital communications such as social media and e-mail communications were also provided to bolster awareness. Targeted emails resulted in approximately 100,000 impressions and mobile advertising on OCR mobile, geo-targeted Facebook advertising resulted in 940,000 impressions and CBS mobile resulted in over 306,000 impressions.

Ridership & Service Performance

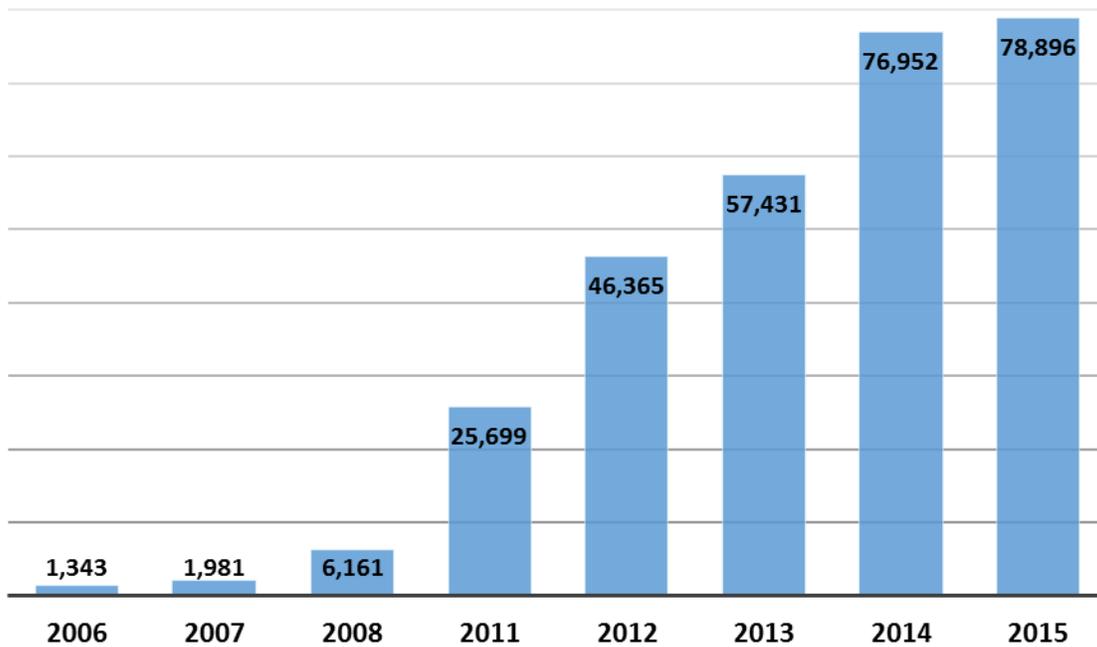
The year-over-year success of the 2015 OC Fair Express service can be attributed to outstanding and responsive service with convenient pick-up and drop-off locations, value pricing, and a multi-channel promotional mix. Taken together, the service provided a record high of nearly 78,900 boardings during five-week fair season, which is a 2.5 percent improvement over last year’s total ridership of 76,952. This overall ridership increase is especially significant given the

prolonged heat wave that persisted for three of the five weeks of operation. Data clearly showed the negative impact on Fair attendance and associated participation on the OC Fair Express service. Additionally, new Route 650 serving the ARTIC did well for its first year of operation attracting over 6,200 riders. More detailed information about the performance of the service is provided below.

OC Fair Express Routes		2012 Boardings	2013 Boardings	2014 Boardings	2015 Boardings	2014-2015 Increase
633	Fullerton	9,985	13,466	17,328	15,649	-9.7%
662	Santa Ana	7,010	7,455	10,368	8,544	-17.6%
670	Huntington Beach	8,235	10,233	13,580	12,608	-7.2%
671	Anaheim/ Orange	7,824	3,540	5,559	5,197	-6.5%
683	Laguna Hills	4,030	5,338	8,158	8,934	9.5%
688	Irvine	4,814	5,497	7,231	7,257	0.4%
691	San Juan Capistrano	4,467	5,008	6,416	6,501	1.3%
642	Orange	-	6,894	8,312	7,978	-4.0%
650	ARTIC	-	-	-	6,228	N/A
		46,365	58,706	76,952	78,896	2.5%



OC Fair Express Service Annual Ridership



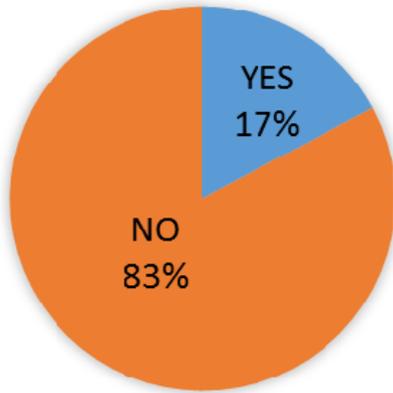
**The service was not provided in 2009 & 2010 due to budget constraints*

Customer Feedback

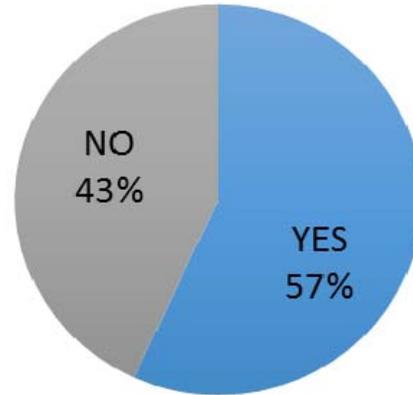
To obtain feedback from customers, surveys and comment cards were provided onboard OC Fair Express buses throughout the duration of the service. Over 8,450 were completed and returned, which provided the following information about the performance of the service:

- 57 percent of OC Fair Express riders were first time bus riders
- 87 percent arrived at their departure location by car, 9 percent by transit (bus or train), and 4 percent by active transportation (biking or walking)
- 27 percent were previous OC Fair Express riders (rode last year)
- 17 percent used the mobile app to purchase tickets
- 98 percent of OC Fair Express customers were satisfied or very satisfied with the service

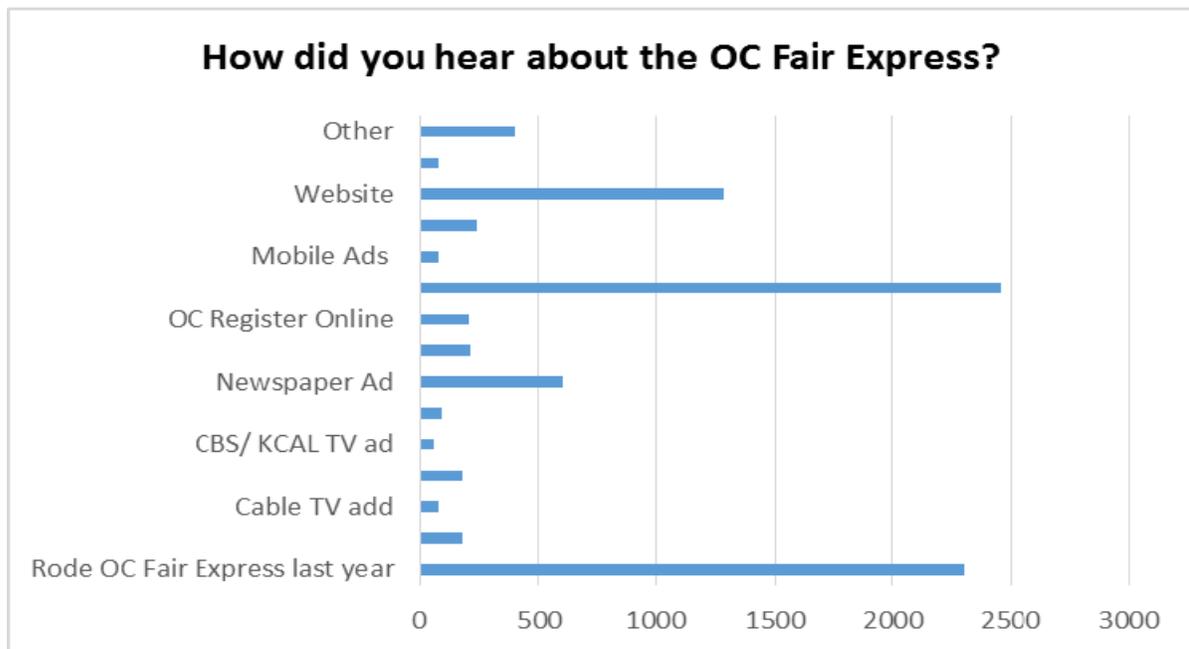
Did you use the OC Fair Express Mobile App?



Have you used OCTA bus service before?



How did you hear about the OC Fair Express?



Lessons Learned & New Ideas for 2016

The continuation of the valuable discount for admission to the fair, along with an encompassing marketing strategy and detailed operational planning have made for another successful year of the Orange County Fair Express.

Presented below are examples of service improvements that were a proven success during the 2015 season.

- Operation of new Route 650 serving the ARTIC proved successful.
- Deploy contingency buses to accommodate high demand routes serving Fullerton, Santa Ana, and the Goldenwest Transportation Center in Huntington Beach.
- Continuing the availability of the service by three hours on Fridays, starting at noon instead of 3:00 pm.
- Continuing the service-specific mobile fare payment application

The list below is a sampling of lessons learned and the new ideas that will be considered for the 2016 season.

- Maximize the potential of the OC Fair Express mobile application
- Explore opportunities for further cost savings, including the need for transit ambassadors at the pick-up locations
- Alleviate parking issues at some pick-up locations

Photographs & Outreach

To maximize ridership potential, OCTA undertook a joint messaging campaign in partnership with the Orange County Fair and Event Center. The comprehensive marketing campaign included community outreach, radio, print and bus advertising, a proactive media relations campaign, and targeted both current OCTA customers as well as those who were not current or frequent transit users. An example of the marketing and outreach materials are presented below and provided under separate cover. Higher resolution images can be made available upon request.

Kickoff Event at Irvine Station



Bus Exterior



Mobile App Facebook Ad



Coupon Ad



Web Article

OC Fair Express Finishes Season with Another Record-Breaker

Tuesday, August 18, 2015

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Despite two weekends of unseasonable weather, the OC Fair Express closed its five-week run on Sunday, Aug. 16 with another record-setting season. In the last weekend alone, nearly 16,000 riders took advantage of the non-stop service for a direct and cost-effective ride to the OC Fair.

This year's updates included an additional stop and more frequent service as passengers enjoyed boarding at nine convenient locations every 20, 30, or 40 minutes. In addition, the free OC Fair Mobile App was back for a second year of providing bus pass purchases, bus schedules, and maps from the convenience of a smartphone.

OCTA and the OC Fair have partnered for five years in a row to provide this important transportation service made possible through funding from the Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee (MSRC). The OC Fair Express reduces pollution by allowing riders to leave their cars home and enjoy the fair without the worry and hassle of traffic and parking.



Summary and Conclusions

The growth and success of the 2015 OC Fair Express was made possible because of the partnership created by the MSRC, the Orange County Fair and Event Center, and the OCTA. Satisfaction surveys have shown that the OC Fair Express has succeeded tremendously in promoting transit usage and encouraging new transit riders, which furthers the goals of the MSRC Event Transportation Program. Despite this summer's rain and extreme heat which lead to a 2.67 percent drop in fair attendance from last year, the OC Fair Express continued to prove successful with an increase in ridership of 2.5 percent. Additionally, the new ARTIC route proved successful in its first year of service with over 6,200 boardings and OCTA will continue to maximize the potential of the OC Fair Express Mobile App in the next year of service. The effective planning and delivery of the service has led to the growth of OC Fair Express ridership year after year, furthering the goals of the MSRC in providing the community with a convenient transit alternative to automobiles to reduce harmful emissions.

An anticipated increase in ridership for the 2016 OC Fair Express will prove challenging but essential for a successful event. The successful partnership between agencies and the outstanding value offered to OC Fair devotees provide a strong foundation for continued success. The OCTA looks forward to accommodating an even greater participation in the OC Fair Express program in 2016.