



**Orange County Transportation Authority**

# **Final Report**

## **2013 OC Fair Express Service**

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

April 25, 2014

## **OC Fair Express Service Final Report**

### **Orange County Transportation Authority**

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/MS14002, 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**

Thanks to the sponsorship of the MSRC, the OC Fair Express bus service returned for the 2013 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 for the fair exits. The traffic congestion not only results in harmful emissions from idling autos, but also poses safety concerns resulting from autos cueing 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, hourly bus service to the Orange County Fair on Friday, Saturday and Sunday from July 12, 2013 through August 11, 2013, 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 anticipated demand and in response to customer feedback received, the service was expanded from seven to nine routes serving the nine transit facilities identified below. The new added routes serve the Village at Orange (Line 642) and the Newport Transportation Center (Line 657).

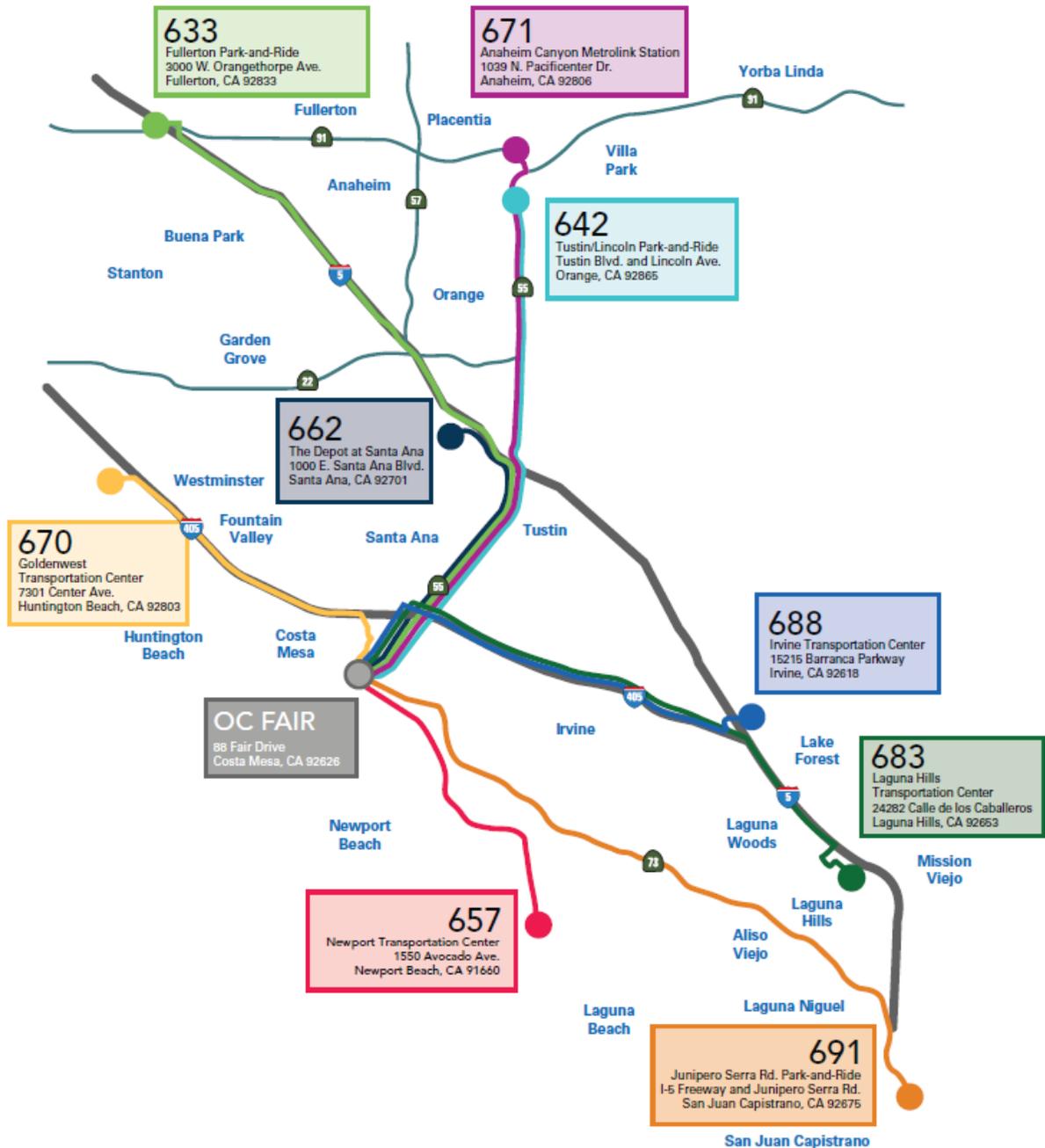
 A promotional graphic with a yellow background. On the right side, there is a large, stylized illustration of a person with red hair, wearing large round glasses and a red bow tie. The text on the left reads:
 

- \$3 ADMISSION TO THE 2013 OC FAIR**
- RESTRICTIONS APPLY**  
One coupon per paid fare to the OC Fair on OC Fair Express only. Not valid with any other offer. Non-transferable. Original coupons only - no copies.
- COUPON VALID:**  
Friday: 3 pm - Midnight  
Saturday: 10 am - Midnight  
Sunday: 10 am - Midnight
- CODE: N-OCTA**

 At the bottom, there are three logos: the OC Fair logo with the tagline "COME & GET IT", the OCTA logo, and the Clean Transportation logo with the text "Funding from the MSRC".



# 2013 OC Fair Express System Map



The Orange County Fair Express deployed two (2) additional transit buses this year for a total of 23 buses deployed, including ten (10) 2001 model NABI Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) buses, seven (7) 2008 model New Flyer Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses, and six (6) 2007 model New Flyer CNG buses. The 2001 model NABI LNG buses are powered with 2007 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 buses are powered by 2007 Cummins ISCG engines with 2.2 grams-per-brake-horsepower/hour of combined nitrogen oxide (NOx) plus non-methane hydrocarbons (NMHC). Each vehicle can accommodate a total of 36 seated passengers and 25 standees, and are fully accessible with two wheelchair positions available. All vehicles are equipped with an exterior two-position bicycle rack as well.



The buses were made available for boarding on an hourly basis from 3:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. on Fridays, and were offered an additional hour this year on Saturdays and Sundays, starting at 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. 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.

### **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 \$8.00 discount off the \$11.00 fair admission price. The marketing campaign targeted both current OCTA customers as well as those who were not current or frequent transit users.

The comprehensive marketing program included community outreach, radio, print and bus advertising, a door-hanger program, and a proactive media relations campaign.

This outreach effort resulted in over 19 million impressions with additional highlights of the OC Fair Express marketing campaign are presented below.

- Bus advertising included the installation of 11 exterior ads and over 1,300 interior bus cards provided in both English and Spanish.
- Station banners including 40 light pole banners at bus stops and stations, as well as fence banners placed at 16 Metrolink rail stations.
- Newspaper advertising included online banner ads on OCRegister.com, along with print ads on the OC Register, Excelsior, and 14 local city newspapers.
- Printed material also included the distribution of over 60,000 bilingual brochure route schedules.

In addition, digital communications such as social media and e-mail communications were also provided to bolster awareness. OCTA’s OC Fair Express web page alone received over 155,000 hits, with more than half of the hits coming from referring sources such as OCFair.com, OCRegister.com, Facebook.com, and Yelp.com. A total of 34 posts posted on OCTA’s Facebook page generated more than 62,000 impressions.

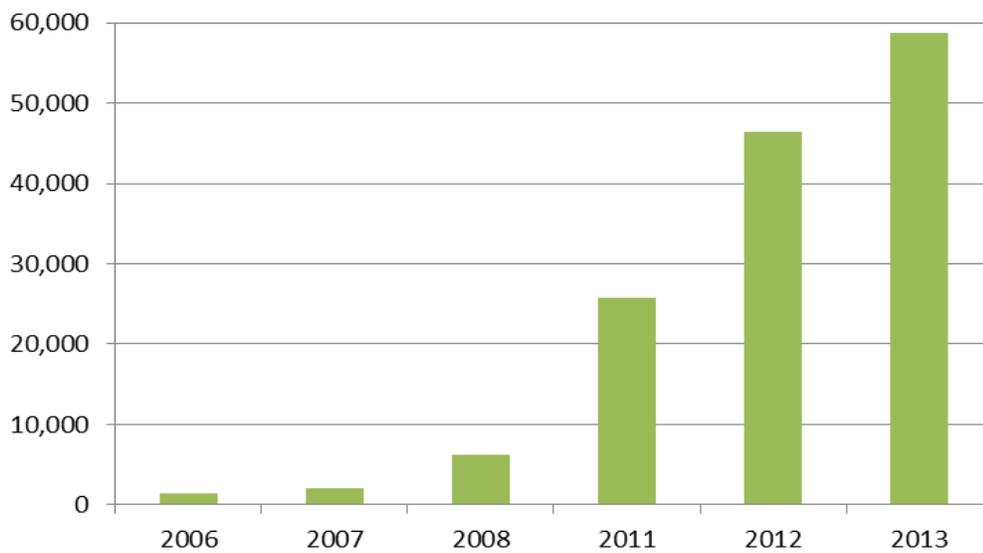
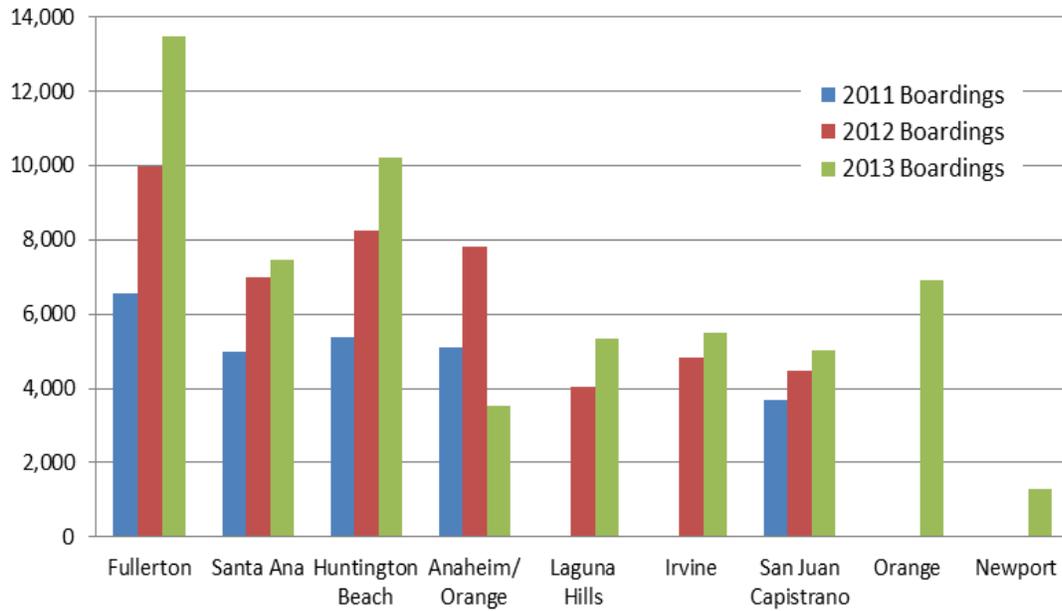
### Ridership & Service Performance

The year-over-year success of the 2013 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 record high of nearly 59,000 boardings over the 5-week fair season, which is an 26.6 percent improvement over last year’s total ridership of 46,000. Ridership along the 7 routes operated last year also increased by 9 percent to 50,537 boardings, which is a more direct comparison between the services provided in 2012. More detailed information about the performance of the service is provided below.

OC Fair Express Routes	2011 Boardings	2012 Boardings	2013 Boardings	2012-2013 Change
633 Fullerton	6,563	9,985	13,466	34.9%
662 Santa Ana	4,983	7,010	7,455	6.3%
670 Huntington Beach	5,380	8,235	10,233	24.3%
671 Anaheim/ Orange	5,099	7,824	3,540	-54.8%
683 Laguna Hills	-	4,030	5,338	32.5%
688 Irvine	-	4,814	5,497	14.2%
691 San Juan Capistrano	3,674	4,467	5,008	12.1%
642 Orange	-	-	6,894	n/a
657 Newport	-	-	1,275	n/a
	25,699	46,365	58,706	26.6%

OC Fair Express Mileage	In Service Miles	Out of Service	Total Miles
Scheduled Service	63,315	7,493	70,808
Contingency	981	137	1,118
	64,296	7,630	71,926

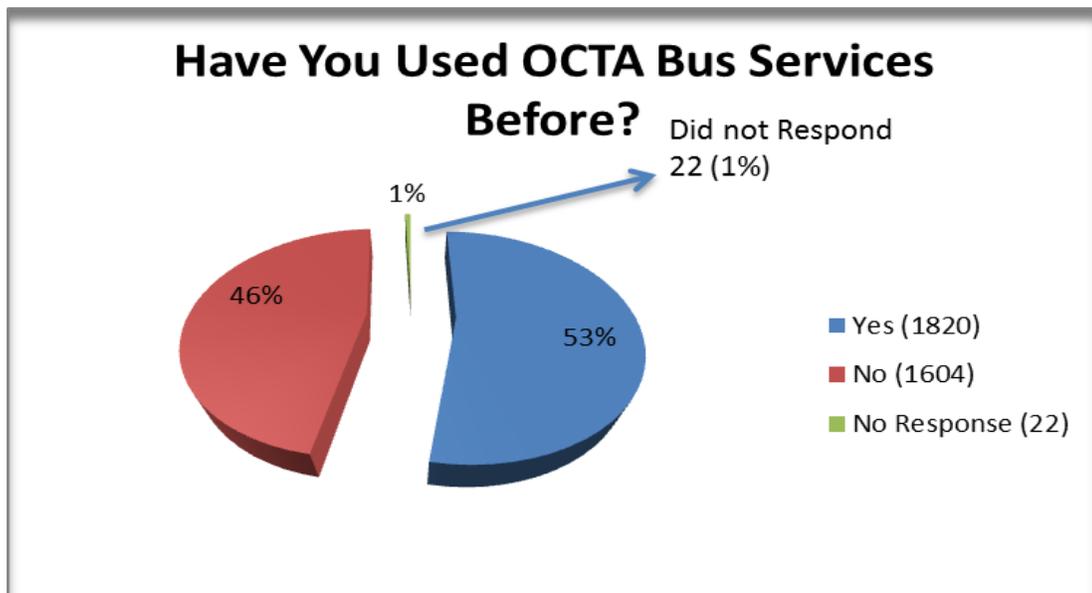


*\*The service was not provided in 2009 & 2010 due to budget constraints*

## 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 3,446 were completed and returned, which provided the following information about the performance of the service:

- 46 percent of OC Fair Express riders were first time bus riders.
- 87 percent arrived at their departure location by car, 13 percent by train, and 6 percent by bus.
- 95 percent of OC Fair Express customers were satisfied or very satisfied with the service.



## Lessons Learned & New Ideas for 2014

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. The problems encountered were primarily related to the growth of the program, specifically station selection. Updated station selection plans have been developed for the next year.

Presented below are examples of service improvements that were a proven success during the 2013 season.

- Addition of Route 642 at the Village of Orange offering more connectivity to the Riverside Transit Agency Route 216.

- Better analysis of past and weekly usage of passenger overloads buses to more effectively coordinate use of contingency buses and resources.
- More efficient deadhead scheduling.

The list below is a sampling of lessons learned and the new ideas that will be considered for the 2014 season.

- Better analysis of past and weekly usage of passenger overloads buses to more effectively coordinate use of contingency buses and resources.
- Better line control at Fairgrounds to expedite boarding and mitigate wrong line boarding.
- Proof and review materials extensively before distributing.

### 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 door-hanger program, and 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.





**The OC Fair is here!**  
**And, the best way to get their**  
**is the OC Fair Express!**

Take OCTA's non-stop OC Fair Express bus from the Village at Orange directly to the gates of the OC Fair for only \$2 each way. And, when you ride the OC Fair Express, you will receive a coupon for \$3 admission into the fair - that's an \$8 savings! The OC Fair Express runs hourly from Friday - Sunday. Catch it this weekend on Canal St, behind Sears.

**Free Gift Bags!**  
 This Saturday, July 20, The Village at Orange will have special gift bags for OC Fair Express riders full of great coupons and free offers from the businesses at The Village at Orange.

For full list of schedules and locations, visit [octa.net/ocfairexpress](http://octa.net/ocfairexpress).  
 For location addresses and schedules, click here!

**LEARN MORE**



## Summary and Conclusions

The growth and success of the 2013 OC Fair Express has been 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 encouraging new ridership and furthering the goals of the MSRC Event Transportation Program. A



better understanding of what the communities participating in the OC Fair Express need to accomplish their transportation goals has led to improvements that have benefited all parties involved in the program. Additional routes and more efficient planning have led to a growth in OC Fair Express ridership by 228 percent over the last two years, furthering the goals of the MSRC to provide the community with a convenient transit alternative to automobiles and reduce harmful emissions.

An anticipated increase in ridership for the 2014 OC Fair Express will prove challenging but essential for a successful event. Additional resources and earlier start times will be vital to ensuring the quality of the project grows along with the quantity of the ridership. The OCTA looks forward to accommodating an even greater participation in the OC Fair Express program in 2014.