



Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA)
Contract No. MS18102

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

Acknowledgments

The completion of the OC Flex Pilot project required collaboration between OCTA, Keolis Transit Services, LLC, Via Transportation, Inc., cities of Huntington Beach, Westminster, Aliso Viejo, Laguna Niguel and Mission Viejo, and Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee.

This report was submitted in fulfillment of MS18102 and OC Flex Pilot project by the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) under the partial sponsorship of the Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee (MSRC). Work was completed as of October 31, 2019.

Disclaimer

The statements 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 herein is not to be construed as either an actual or implied endorsement of such products.

Project Description

In October 2018, OCTA introduced OC Flex, a new on-demand, curb-to-curb shuttle service in two zones of the county where transit demand does not support traditional fixed-route service.

The two zones included in the pilot program service areas are referred to by color. The Blue Zone represents the OC Flex service operated in parts of Huntington Beach and Westminster. The Orange Zone represents the OC Flex service operated in parts of Aliso Viejo, Laguna Niguel, and Mission Viejo.

OC Flex does not run on a fixed route like regular bus service or use surge pricing to charge more during busier times. OC Flex picks up and delivers riders to their destination on demand.

Within each zone and during the hours of operation, riders have the flexibility to choose their destination such as restaurants, malls, movies, medical offices, music lessons, bus stops, train station.



Travel easily from curb to curb with OC Flex.

Ride all day for \$4.50.

Unlimited local rides all day are only \$4.50 when paid on the OC Flex Mobile App or \$5 cash onboard.

Share your ride.

OC Flex is a shared-ride service. Great for group rides! Other customers may be picked up or dropped off while you are onboard.

Professional drivers.

Ride with confidence knowing your drivers have undergone rigorous background checks and safety training.



Problems Encountered

While OCTA did not encounter any problems, there were several lessons learned related to:

- Direct/indirect contractual relationships
- Vendor-specific limitations on software (promotions)
- Time needed to make adjustments to the service
- Identifying specifications in the scope of work that outline vendor reporting requirements
- Ridership trends
 - Ridership is heaviest during the weekday peak periods (a.m./p.m.); lower on Saturdays; and light on Sundays
 - Low ridership was experienced on Holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.
 - A strong commuter base exists in the Orange Zone as many trips begin and/or end at the Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo (LN-MV) Metrolink Station during the weekday peaks.

Additional details regarding the 12-month pilot's performance and proposed changes from lessons learned can be found in the OC Flex Micro Transit Pilot Project: 12-Month Update (**Attachment A**).

Benefits

The Board approved five primary goals and performance metrics to evaluate the pilot program. These goals and metrics are to:

- Provide public transit mobility in lower-demand areas: to be measured by ridership and productivity.
- Reduce total operating and capital costs: to be measured by subsidy per boarding.
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled: to be measured by shared rides occurring
- Extend the reach of OC Bus and Metrolink services: to be measured by connecting transit trip.
- Meet customer needs: to be measured by customer satisfaction.

Details of the performance outcomes for each goal are included in the OC Flex Micro Transit Pilot Project: 12-Month Update (**Attachment A**).

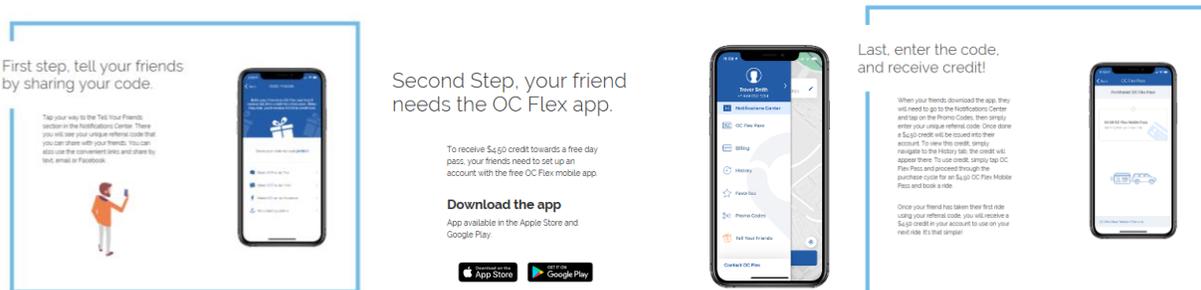
In addition, OCTA used Ford Transit Connect vans classified as Low-Emission Vehicles II by the state of California, to provide services in both zones.

Photographs & Outreach



To create awareness of and interest in riding OC Flex, OCTA has conducted ongoing, targeted marketing and outreach campaigns since the service inception. Highlights of the marketing programs included a comprehensive launch campaign including direct mail, business and community outreach, special events, and digital and outdoor advertising that reached nearly 200,000 people.

OCTA also partners with 25 businesses which offer discounts to OC Flex customers. Targeted promotions have included incentives to induce ridership during lower-demand time periods such as holidays and weekends. This included a holiday promotion to students, shoppers, and families, as well as a discounted fare promotion for groups with two or more riders during weekends. OCTA introduced the OC Flex Referral Program that gives \$4.50 in credit toward a free day pass for the introduction:



In addition to participating in community events to promote OC Flex, OCTA continues to market the OC Flex to area businesses such as hotels, auto dealerships, and medical complexes to encourage their patrons to use the OC Flex as a transportation option to and from their businesses. More than 80 of the free ride codes were redeemed from these marketing efforts.

Additional details on OCTA’s continuous marketing and promotional efforts are included in **Attachment A** and **Attachment B**.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the OC Flex Pilot Program performance has been positive. The OC Flex micro transit project has been well received and customer satisfaction is high. A total of 89 percent of respondents to a January 2019 customer satisfaction survey reported that they were “likely to extremely likely” to recommend OC Flex to a friend or colleague (127 respondents).

In a following August 2019 survey, those “likely to extremely likely” to recommend OC Flex had increased to 91 percent of the 197 survey respondents. In addition to overall service feedback, OC Flex riders are also prompted to rate each OC Flex trip on a “five-star” score. Of the more than 8,700 ride ratings received from October 2018 to October 2019, 95 percent of the trip scores received have been five stars.

Of the five Board-approved performance metrics, three have reached the respective targets, and the remaining two, though below their respective targets, are trending in the right direction. In January 2020, the OCTA Board approved an extension of the OC Flex micro transit pilot program to October 2020 to implement strategies to improve performance and allow for greater service establishment and awareness. Staff reviews performance regularly, seeking opportunities to promote the service and make adjustments that meet customer needs within existing resources.

Attachments

Attachment A: OC Flex Microtransit Pilot Project: 12-Month Update Staff Report

Attachment B: OC Flex Microtransit Pilot Project: Six-Month Project Update Staff Report