

Description of Procedures for Public Outreach

Pursuant to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulations, the Orange County Planning Department has established the following written procedures for public outreach when fare increases and/or major service changes are proposed by transit operators receiving federal assistance.

Transit providers are required to submit written documentation to the Orange County Planning Commissioner detailing the intent, reasoning, and potential impacts associated with a fare increase and/or major service change¹.

1. Upon receipt of this notification Orange County planning staff will conduct an service and fare equity analysis (following FTA's *Fare and Service Equity Guidance* documentation) to determine whether the proposed changes will have a discriminatory impact. The findings from the analysis will be sent to the Regional Civil Right Officer (RCRO) and the soliciting transit provider.
 - a. If the requested changes are acceptable and/or non-discriminatory, Orange County Planning staff will submit a letter approving the requested changes and the transit operator can begin the formal public outreach process.
 - b. If the requested changes are found to be un-acceptable and/or discriminatory, Orange County Planning staff will submit a letter denying approval and recommend fare and/or service changes that are acceptable. The transit provider will then be required to begin the process again by re-submit a letter of intent to Orange County Planning staff.

2. A public meeting shall be scheduled to occur no sooner than 30 days upon the receipt of an approval letter from Orange County Planning staff. The public meeting announcement will be published as a legal notice in:
 - a. One (1) of the "official county newspapers"(contact County Planning staff for a listing); and in addition
 - b. One (1) local newspaper with circulation in the area(s) being affected by the proposed fare increases and/or major service reductions.

¹ A major service change is any major service reduction or improvement. A major service reduction event shall be defined as any time a route or schedule (or combination thereof) is reduced 25% by both total Vehicle Revenue Hours (VRH) and total Vehicle Revenue Miles (VRM). This criteria is intended to identify instances where there are true reductions in service. Not included are those circumstances where one indicator may be reduced, but not the other, or where there are temporary changes or emergencies. A major service improvement event is defined as any time a route or schedule or any combination thereof is increased.

All legal notices shall be posted at least 20 days prior to the public meeting date. Additionally, the operator should inform the public (to its best ability) through, media coverage, sign postings on all buses, in municipal halls, libraries, key bus shelters and on its web site (if available).

3. The transit provider is responsible for making a presentation at the public meeting explaining the proposal and the reasoning behind the intended changes. Minutes of the meeting will be maintained and recorded, and statements from the public will be entered into a formal record and summarized.
4. All public meeting/comment materials and a memorandum outlining the proposed fare increases and/or major service reductions shall be submitted to the Orange County Planning Commissioner no more than 30 days after the public hearing is held.
5. Transit providers are required to notify the New York State Department of Transportation, Passenger Transportation Division of the intended changes in writing no later than 14 days after submitting notice (Item Number 5) to the Orange County Planning Commissioner.
6. Transit providers are responsible for submitting a public announcement of the intended fare increases and/or major service changes to local newspapers in the form of a press release. Public notification must be distributed and posted through the same outlets as the legal notice (Item Number 3). Fare increases and/or major service changes shall not go into effect until at least 30 days have lapsed following the publication of the public announcement.