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'Micro Transit' concept successful congestion-reliever at summer hot spots

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**Orange
County**
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A record number of people took advantage of local shuttle and trolley services this summer as cities worked with the Orange County Transportation Authority on innovative ways to relieve congestion at popular spots around the county.

As OCTA continues its effort to reinvent transit through the OC Bus 360° program, these positive results demonstrate that there is a demand for service if it matches the needs of the public.

The number of people utilizing shuttles and trolleys is encouraging to city leaders and officials at the Orange County Transportation Authority, which provides funding for such transportation services, known as micro-transit.

“There’s nothing worse than being stuck in traffic on a summer day and with services like these we’ve found a unique way to provide transit options that fit best with the varying needs of each community,” said OCTA Chair Michael Hennessey.

For the past two years, OCTA has led the OC Bus 360° effort to redistribute existing bus resources to areas of higher demand and launch innovative new services to more efficiently provide public transportation to existing riders and attract new riders.

This year, summer services ran in Laguna Beach, Huntington Beach, Dana Point, Newport Beach on the Balboa Peninsula, San Clemente and San Juan Capistrano. In addition, OCTA again operated the OC Fair Express from throughout the county.

Most of the transit services are funded through Measure M, which voters overwhelmingly renewed in 2006. Through the measure, cities can apply for competitive grants to develop local bus services to complement regional bus and rail services. In June 2016, \$26.7 million was approved by OCTA to improve city-specific transit needs.

By the numbers

The OC Fair Express delivered a total of 87,500 riders to the Orange County Fair, a 33 percent increase from last year's Saturday and Sunday service. The buses ran from July 15 to Aug. 13 from nine different locations for \$4 round trip, which included a coupon for discounted admission to the fair. The OC Fair Express is funded through a grant by the Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee.

The Laguna Beach Summer Breeze, which ended after Labor Day, had a total of 9,700 riders, during its two months of service. The Summer Breeze service operated Saturdays and Sundays from 11 a.m. to midnight from July 1 through Sept. 3. The service, which ran every 30 minutes from a free parking lot at the I-405/SR-133 interchange in Irvine, stopping at several popular destinations for locals and tourists. This year's Summer Breeze ran two more weekends than last year, and overall ridership was up by almost 80 percent.

The Laguna Beach Trolley runs 42 weekends per year, providing riders with a coastal route from North Laguna to the Ritz-Carlton in Dana Point. Ridership topped 162,000 people from January through June, with an average of at least 35 people boarding per hour.

The Huntington Beach Shuttle service runs annually on the Fourth of July and four days during the U.S. Open of Surfing. This year a total of almost 3,000 riders took advantage of the special service during the busy summer events.

Dana Point had two services this summer that ran from June 9 through Labor Day, the Dana Point Trolley and the Harbor Shuttle. The Dana Point Trolley and Harbor Shuttle had combined 87,244 boardings.

The Newport Beach, Balboa Peninsula Trolley ran for 10 weeks during the summer with a total ridership of 23,560. The trolley was available Saturdays and Sundays for approximately 10 hours per day and featured special service on the fourth of July.

The San Juan Capistrano Summer Trolley service ran every weekend between June 9 and Sept. 4, recording a total of 11,153 riders. The Friday through Sunday service ran every 20 minutes and connected with the Dana Point's shuttles.

The San Clemente Summer Trolley proved extremely popular this summer and was extended to run until Oct. 1. The service started in late May and has recorded nearly 84,000 riders. The trolley has sixteen stops including, the San Clemente Pier, Avenida Del Mar, the Outlets at San Clemente and the Metrolink station.

The article above was released by the Orange County Transportation Authority.

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