

# Ocean Ride Service Bulletin

August 2010

## Important Changes For Ocean Ride System

This Ocean Ride Service Bulletin provides important information regarding changes to the Ocean Ride transportation system. **Due to continuing budget cuts, these changes are needed to preserve and sustain the core elements of the system which includes Bus Routes, Reserve-A-Ride, Veterans and DETS transportation.**

The service changes have been formulated through months of study, assessment and discussion with a citizen advisory committee. Please review the enclosed information carefully to learn about the specific service adjustments and fare increases planned for the particular service you ride.

Final system changes are scheduled to take effect on **August 2, 2010.**

Visit the Ocean Ride website at [www.ocean.nj.us/Transportation](http://www.ocean.nj.us/Transportation) to view updated information as it becomes available. We will continue to provide you with up-to-date information once changes have been finalized.

As always, we look forward to serving your transportation needs in the future and we appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we work to make the system strong and solvent for the future.

### State Transportation Funding Declines for 3 Consecutive Years

*Dear Valued Rider:*

*Like many transit agencies across the nation, Ocean Ride is confronting a major challenge in sustaining transportation service levels in light of three consecutive years of funding cuts from the state's casino revenue program. The Board of Freeholders continues to provide the dominant funding source to the Ocean Ride program, this year placing even higher emphasis on CORE services.*

*During these difficult economic times, the Board is unable to fully cover the annual shortfalls of state and federal grants. Rather, Ocean Ride has conducted an overall review of their programs and services and developed a series of recommendations to scaleback services in line with declining budget levels. We have a responsibility to operate county services in a fiscally responsible manner. Our goal is to maintain core services and maximize the use of existing resources. Over the past two years, Ocean Ride has experienced a 10% workforce reduction due to attrition.*

*Ocean Ride serves an extensive area covering 638 square miles, which includes thirty-three (33) towns and 91 adult communities within our boundaries.*

*Ocean Ride is committed to providing safe, reliable and dependable transportation service to our residents. Now in our 33<sup>rd</sup> year of operation, the county transit system has grown and evolved into a multi-faceted system that last year provided over 435,000 passenger trips.*

*Our focus is to stabilize and sustain this essential system given the budgetary constraints we face.*

*Ocean Ride*



Ocean Ride

## Bus Route Summary

Ocean Ride conducted a comprehensive system analysis to review fixed route performance and fare revenue. The intent of the effort was to develop a service plan in response to declining operating funds and develop a sustainable plan to reduce operational costs. As a result, Ocean Ride is reducing the current 17 bus routes to 14 bus routes. This recommendation was developed with advisory committee involvement.

Route Number & Name	Current Day(s) Served	New Day(s) Served	Service Recommendation
<b>OC 1 Whiting</b>	Monday to Friday	Mon, Wed, Fri	Reduce service days. Includes 1 inbound and 2 return trips a day
<b>OC 1 A Whiting Express</b>	Monday to Friday	Mon, Wed, Fri	Reduce service days. Maintain 2 round trips a day
<b>OC 2 Manchester</b>	Monday to Friday	Tuesday & Thursday	Reduce service days. Includes 1 inbound and 2 return trips a day
<b>OC 3 Brick</b>	Monday to Friday	Mon, Wed, Fri	Reduce service days. Maintain 2 round trips a day. <b>Restructure portion of route with OC 29</b>
<b>OC 4 Lakewood</b>	Monday to Friday	Consolidation	Merge OC 4 with Brick Link, <b>Rename as OC 4 Lakewood-Brick Link</b>
<b>OC 5 Lacey</b>	Monday to Friday	Tuesday & Thursday	Reduce service days. Provide 2 inbound & 1 return trips a day. Route deviations (5A & 5B) eliminated due to low ridership.
<b>OC 6 Little Egg Harbor</b>	Monday to Friday	Mon, Wed & Thursday	Reduce service days. Maintain 2 round trips a day
<b>OC7 Eastern Berkeley</b>	Monday to Friday	Tuesday & Thursday	Reduce service days Add OC Mall trips
<b>OC 8 Western Berkeley</b>	Monday to Friday	Tuesday & Thursday	Reduce service days. Provide 1 round trip a day
<b>OC 9 Barnegat</b>	Wednesday	Tuesday	Shift service day to Tues.Reduce trips to OC Mall, boarding at central location.
<b>OC 10 Plumsted</b>	Tuesday & Thursday	Tuesday	Modify route to include Jackson coverage. (2 routes into 1). Reduce # trips to OC Mall. <b>Rename as OC 10 Plumsted-Jackson</b>
<b>OC 11 Jackson</b>	Tuesday & Thursday	Consolidation	Merge with OC 10. OC 11 designation to be retired
<b>OC 29 Point Pleasant</b>	Tuesday & Thursday	No Change	Incorporate portion of OC 3 service area. Maintain 1 round trip. <b>Rename as OC 3A</b>
<b>LBI North &amp; South</b>	Monday	Tuesday	Shift to Tuesday, avoids service interruption by frequent Monday holidays.



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## Fares for OC Bus Routes

Bus Route Fares	Current	Aug 2 2010	Aug 1 2011	Aug 6 2012	Aug 5 2013
<b>Discount Fares</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seniors, age 60 +</li> <li>Persons with Disabilities</li> <li>College Students with valid ID</li> </ul>	.25¢	.35¢	.50¢	.75¢	\$ 1.00
<b>General Public</b>	.50¢ \$ 1.00	<b>\$ 1.00</b> <b>\$ 1.00</b>	\$ 1.25 \$ 1.25	\$ 1.50 \$ 1.50	\$ 2.00 \$ 2.00

Service provided by Brick Link and Toms River Connection differ from the regular OC routes by providing commuter trips.

Route Number & Name	Current Service Days	New Day(s) Served	Service Recommendations
<b>Brick Link</b>	Monday-Friday	Reduced operating schedule	Similar routing – merge with OC 4. Reduced operating schedule on 3/8/2010 due to State cuts. <b>Rename as OC 4 Lakewood-Brick Link</b>
<b>Toms River Connection</b>	<u>Monday-Saturday</u> Sunday-Saturday	No Change  Delay start of summer schedule	<u>Winter/Spring-No Change</u>  Summer Schedule – in effect in May

Toms River & OC 4 Fares	Current	Aug 2 2010	Aug 1 2011	Aug 6 2012	Aug 5 2013
<b>Toms River Connection</b>	Zone 1 -\$1.00 Zone 2 -\$1.40	<b>\$1.50</b>	\$1.60	\$1.70	\$2.00
<b>OC 4 – Lakewood-Brick Link</b>	Zone 1 -\$1.00 Zone 2 -\$1.40 Zone 3 -\$1.70	<b>\$1.50</b>	\$1.60	\$1.70	\$2.00
<b>Discount</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Seniors, age 60 +</li> <li>* Persons with Disabilities</li> <li>* College Students with valid ID</li> </ul>	45¢-60¢-75¢ (zones)	<b>75¢</b>	80¢	85¢	\$1.00
<b>Discontinue transfers</b>					



## Flex Route Changes

Route Number & Name	Current Day Served	New Day Served	Service Recommendation
Waretown (Flex Route)	Wednesday	Tuesday	Provide 1 round trip a day. Shift from Wed. to Tuesday. Eliminate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday of the month. Add OC Mall trips from central location.
<b>Fares - same as regular Fixed Route Fares</b>			

## Reserve-A-Ride

### Routine Appointments

Rider Eligibility: This service is available to senior citizens (age 60 and over) and persons with disabilities primarily to access local medical appointments. Open to eligible residents of the county's 33 municipalities. Riders must contact Ocean Ride to reserve their appointment in accordance with the current 2-week advance reservation procedure. Transportation appointments are subject to system availability. Customer demand levels remain high especially on Mondays, the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the reservation cycle. Transit vehicles are lift-equipped to accommodate riders who utilize mobility devices such as a wheelchair or scooter.

### Policy Recommendations

- Limit riders to **three (3) routine trips per week, per rider** (additional restrictions apply).
- Develop trip distance limits for transportation service. (Result – Promote shorter distance trips, which will lead to increased opportunities for shared rides).
- Maintain Next Day Trip feature not a guaranteed ride, most suitable for shopping, flexible trips.
- Establish eligibility criteria and application process for adults with disabilities.
- Convert current voluntary donation policy to **fare** (see chart below).
- Long term: explore cashless collection system – technology.

## New Fares

Riders will be billed on a monthly basis for actual ride(s) provided. No cash handling on-board Reserve-A-Ride vehicles. Riders with PAAD status must provide a copy of their ID card to Ocean Ride.

	Current Round Trip Fare	New Round Trip Fare
<b>Routine Appointments</b>	<b>Voluntary Donation \$ 2.00</b>	<b>\$ 4.00</b>
<b>Discount (50%) for PAAD</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>\$ 2.00</b>



## Standing Order Transportation

### (Dialysis, Chemotherapy & Radiation Transportation)

Dialysis transportation is a vital service and requires a high level of transportation resources on Ocean Ride's "Standing Order" system. A typical rider makes 300+ trips/year. Approximately 93% of the dialysis riders are senior citizens and 7% are non-seniors. Further, about 21% use mobility devices such as a wheelchair. There are eight (8) dialysis facilities in Ocean County, which are geographically distributed. From 1999 to 2009, dialysis transportation levels skyrocketed by 255% from 21,145 to nearly 54,000 trips. Given continued funding cuts, this service level is unsustainable.

- Dialysis transportation accounts for a significant share of the of daily Reserve-A-Ride trips (about 39% and will increase based on influx of "contract" riders).
- Ocean Ride does not receive reimbursement from Medicare for dialysis trips.
- The eight (8) Dialysis Facilities serving Ocean County do not contribute to transportation costs by Ocean Ride.
- Total Donations (2009) to Reserve-A-Ride system totalled nearly \$ 20,000. Reserve-A-Ride trips (2009) totalled nearly 145,000 trips. Had riders contributed the suggested voluntary donation amount of \$ 1.00 for each trip, the system could have generated \$ 145,000 to offset funding declines.

### Policy Recommendations:

- Discontinue Supplemental Dialysis Contract with private provider on June 30, 2010.
- Implement Dialysis Transition Plan to provide seamless transition of transportation service to nearly 75 "active" riders from contract provider to in-house, CORE SERVICE within Ocean Ride. Ocean Ride to begin service on July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Require attendant or family member to accompany persons with Alzheimer's condition.
- Limit time period to "hold" transportation service slots to 6 weeks.
- Riders must agree to abide by "Ocean Ride Rider Responsibilities" addresses compliance with transportation guidelines including payment/
- No new applicants for dialysis transportation or inclusion on wait list accepted.

When Ocean Ride reopens the Dialysis Transportation Wait List:

- Enforce travel to the **closest dialysis facility only** (active riders covered by "grandfather" clause).
- Prioritize service to PAAD riders only.

## Standing Order Fare

Riders will be billed for actual services, the month after their trip(s). No cash handling on-board the Reserve-A-Ride vehicles. Riders with PAAD status must provide a copy of their ID card to Ocean Ride.

	Current Round Trip	New Fares Round Trip
<b>Standing Order Service Dialysis, Chemotherapy &amp; Radiation</b>	Voluntary Donation \$ 2.00 round trip	<b>\$5.00 round trip</b> (3 round trips/week) \$15.00 per week
<b>Discount (50%) for PAAD</b>	- -	<b>\$2.50 round trip</b> (3 round trips/week) <b>\$ 7.50 per week</b>



## Veterans Transportation

Ocean Ride provides reliable and dependable transportation service to VA medical facilities located outside of Ocean County. Transit vehicles are lift-equipped to accommodate persons using mobility devices such as wheelchairs and scooters. Service requires 2 week advance reservation through the Ocean County Veterans Service Bureau at 732-929-2096.

### Policy Recommendations

- Work with Brick VA to maximize cooperative opportunities for transportation and access.
- Work closely with Vetwork to coordinate transportation service.
- Continue current service to out-of-county VA medical clinics by designated service day. Encourage travel from central pick-up locations to (East Orange, Lyons, Philadelphia & Fort Dix).
- Work cooperatively with Ocean County Veterans Service Bureau to update local veteran records to reduce the number of home pick-ups.
- Create Southern Veteran's Express route to increase efficiency of long distance trips from south county to Brick VA- Designated service day – **Thursdays**
  - Utilize central pick-up points for veterans to local "Park & Ride"
    - ▶ Freedom Fields, Route 539, Little Egg Harbor
    - ▶ SOCH, Route 72, Manahawkin
    - ▶ Food and Fuel (GSP MP 74), Forked River
- Recommend continuation of voluntary donation policy for veterans utilizing the transportation service to out-of-county VA medical facilities.

## DETS Transportation

This service provides critical transportation service to adults with developmental disabilities to access local jobs. Since its inception, riders contribute to cost of their ride, based on a graduated cost share scale, which reflects the number of years of participation in the program.

More than 11,000 trips were provided in 2009. Riders contributed more than \$ 38,000 in cost share revenue to support the continuation of the service. The service is operated by several private transportation providers under contract to Ocean County. Each provider serves a particular geographic service area within the county.

### Service Recommendation

*Increase cost share by \$ 1.00 for each one-way trip*

- 1<sup>st</sup> Year Participants from \$ 2.00 to \$ 3.00 each way
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Participants from \$ 3.00 to \$ 4.00 each way
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Participants from \$ 4.00 to \$ 5.00 each way



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**Visit our Website!**  
**[www.co.ocean.nj.us/Transportation](http://www.co.ocean.nj.us/Transportation)**



# The Public Process

Ocean Ride conducted monthly meetings of combined OC Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) & Stakeholder Committee to provide service information to discuss strategies and approaches to reshape and strengthen the system in light of decreased funding.

## Topic of the Month

- January**    *Overview Budget Issues, Planning Process, Workshop Sessions*
- February**    *Reserve-A-Ride, Dialysis*
- March**    *Veterans, DETS, Transportation Mini-Grants*
- April**    *Fixed Route Bus Study*
- May**    *Comprehensive Service and Fare Recommendations to Ocean Ride System. Proposed OC 2011 Casino Grant Application*
- June**    *PUBLIC HEARING*
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### **Proposed Service Adjustments & Fare Changes**

- Bus Route Service
- Reserve - A-Ride System
- Veterans Transportation
- DETS Disabled Employment Transportation Service