

Meeting of April 14, 2020

Board Receives COVID-19 Update

The Orange County Transportation Authority's Board of Directors received an update on how the agency is responding to the coronavirus pandemic.

Beginning the first week of April, OCTA – like other transit agencies across the nation – temporarily implemented rear-door boarding for passengers in an additional effort to reinforce social distancing and help ensure the health of coach operators and the public. OCTA continues to operate its regular OC Bus routes on Sunday service levels every day of the week and continues enhanced nightly bus cleaning. No changes have been made to OC ACCESS paratransit service.

OCTA is currently monitoring any financial impacts and expects that Orange County will receive approximately \$230 million in transit funding from the CARES Act, with more than \$157 million for OCTA bus operations and about \$65 million for Metrolink commuter rail.

Construction on the I-405 Improvement Project, OC Streetcar and I-5 improvements continue because highway and rail infrastructure projects have been designated a critical service. Efforts are being made to expedite work during this time because of low traffic, including through daytime lane closures and extended overnight closures.

OCTA is continuing to communicate to the public in English, Spanish and Vietnamese to provide updates related to bus service and capital projects. Efforts include eblasts, riders' alerts, website update, press releases and social media posts.

Three Projects Advancing to Address South County Traffic

The OCTA board approved moving forward on an effort to relieve traffic in South Orange County in conjunction with the Transportation Corridor Agencies (TCA) and Caltrans.

TCA and Caltrans are concluding the South County Traffic Relief Effort and based on technical work, public input and policy direction, three near-term projects are proposed to move forward:

- A non-tolled extension of Los Patrones Parkway from Cow Camp Road to Avenida La Pata
- The widening of Ortega Highway between Calle Entradero and Reata Road
- The extension of the I-5 carpool lane from Avenida Pico to the San Diego County line area

OCTA will work with TCA, the county and cities to prepare a project development plan for the Los Patrones Parkway project. OCTA will also work with Caltrans and San Juan Capistrano to advance funding for the final design of the Ortega Highway widening and with Caltrans and the San Diego Association of Governments to advance funding for the environmental process of the I-5 HOV improvements.

These three projects are focused on meeting travel demand over the next decade. Other future projects in south Orange County will be considered as part of OCTA's comprehensive South Orange County Multimodal Transportation Study. The board will receive an update on that study this summer.

\$9.2 Million Awarded to Local Transit

The OCTA board awarded \$9.2 million to nine cities across the county to operate or plan community transit services.

The funding comes from Project V, a competitive program under Measure M, Orange County's half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements. The goal of the program is for cities to develop and implement transit services that complement regional bus and rail services and better suit local needs in areas not adequately served by regional transit.

Approximately \$9 million will be used to launch or extend transit services in Anaheim, Dana Point, Huntington Beach, La Habra, Laguna Beach and San Clemente. An additional \$178,000 will be allocated to Irvine, Newport Beach and Orange to help fund transit planning studies. OCTA will work with the cities on project implementation and issues related to the state's stay-home order.