

## **Meeting of July 25, 2016**

### **Employees of the month for July honored**

The Orange County Transportation Authority board honored three employees of the month for July.

Resolutions of appreciation were presented to:

- Ruben Rodriguez, coach operator
- Allan Nguyen from maintenance
- Marlon Perry from administration

### **Nearly 450 miles of street lights in synch**

The OCTA board received an update on the Measure M Regional Traffic Signal Synchronization Program, which aims to improve traffic flow by synchronizing signals throughout the county.

OCTA and local agencies have completed 38 signal synchronization projects since 2008, totaling 1,682 intersections over 436 miles. These projects have reduced travel times by 13 percent, reduced the number of times drivers have to stop by 31 percent and improved speed by 15 percent. The program has also helped drivers save money on fuel and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

OCTA is currently funding an additional 49 signal synchronization projects that are in various stages of implementation. Once completed, these projects will synchronize an additional 1,326 signals over 347 miles.

### **Board approves revised OC Streetcar funding plan**

The OCTA board approved a revised funding plan for the OC Streetcar project, paving the way for its entry into the engineering phase.

The OC Streetcar, now in project development, is planned to travel along a 4.1-mile route from the Santa Ana Regional Transportation Center, through Downtown Santa Ana and the Civic Center, along the Pacific-Electric right of way, and connect to a new multimodal transit hub at Harbor Boulevard and Westminster Avenue in Garden Grove.

The cost estimate was revised to \$297.91 million after completion of 30 percent design, 3 percent higher than the September 2015 estimate. Elements contributing to the cost increase include higher professional construction management and design service costs and the addition of two project elements—a new section of track along Ross Street to enhance operational flexibility and safety, and an in-ground wheel truing machine for the benefit of long-term maintenance.

In addition, the board approved the selection of PGH Wong Engineering, Inc. as the firm to provide construction management services for the project. The firm was selected based on its qualifications, staffing and project organization and work plan.

OCTA is the lead agency developing the project with funding coming from various federal, state and local sources, including Measure M, the county's half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements.

On the current schedule, construction for the OC Streetcar would begin in late 2017, with service beginning in 2020.

### **Alternative added to SR-55 Improvement Project**

The board received an update on the State Route 55 Improvement Project and agreed to add an alternative to be studied.

The Measure M project proposes to add new lanes in each direction of the heavily congested section of SR-55 between I-405 and I-5, generally within the existing right of way.

In November 2015, the project's draft initial study was approved and released by Caltrans for public review. The study included four options:

1. Add auxiliary lanes between interchanges
2. Add one general purpose lane in each direction
3. Add auxiliary lanes between interchanges and one general purpose lane in each direction
4. Add auxiliary lanes between interchanges and one high occupancy vehicle lane in each direction

Caltrans is now proposing to modify the third option by adding one HOV lane in each direction, which could significantly improve traffic flow. The additional two lanes would be accommodated by reducing the standard shoulder and lane widths where necessary to minimize additional right of way impacts and cost increases.

Caltrans estimates that the project will be delayed approximately 12 months if the modified option is included in the environmental studies and public review process.