

Meeting of July 27, 2020

OCTA Proactively Responding to COVID-19

The Orange County Transportation Authority continues to proactively respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic to safely provide transportation services and deliver capital projects while promoting practices to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Face coverings are required onboard OC Bus for both passengers and coach operators as part of California's face-covering requirements to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Reusable cloth face coverings, donated by the Federal Transit Administration, are available in the OCTA Store for free to passengers who need one upon request.

In addition, OCTA has put in place a number of other measures for passenger and coach operator safety onboard OC Bus, including hand sanitizer onboard, requiring passes to be purchased before boarding, having passengers board through the rear doors and limiting the number of passengers onboard for social distancing. A pilot program also is underway aboard some of OCTA's busiest routes to provide face coverings for free. A new video with more information about OCTA's safety guidelines for OC Bus riders is available at www.octa.net/WelcomeBack.

Board Receives Update on Annual Rating Agency Meetings

The board received a summary report from OCTA's recent meetings with rating agencies and financial institutions that are held as part of OCTA's active investor relations program.

Each year, OCTA conducts a series of meetings in New York with several rating agencies and financial institutions to update them on the progress of OCTA's programs and services to ensure that its credit ratings remain strong. This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meetings were held in June via conference calls.

During the meetings, representatives discussed OCTA's programs and services, focusing on the pandemic's impact on OCTA's operations, Measure M sales tax revenues and the 91 Express Lanes toll revenues. OCTA also provided updates on Orange County's economy, the agency's fiscal year 2020-21 approved budget, the I-405 Improvement Project and OCTA's debt profile.

The meetings – with Moody's, S&P Global, Fitch Ratings and Bank of America – were well-received, with interest and questions focused on the effects of COVID-19 and several of OCTA's programs. The information provided by OCTA will be used by the rating agencies for their annual surveillance of OCTA.

OCTA Board Awards Contract for OC Bus Communications

The OCTA board approved a contract with Celtis Ventures, Inc. to help develop and implement public awareness and communication programs for OC Bus, the agency's countywide bus service.

OCTA requires consultant support to help effectively communicate with Orange County's diverse community about the benefits of riding OC Bus, as well as develop programs to retain current riders and attract new ones. In addition, efforts now also include communicating with the public about OCTA's ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Celtis Ventures, based in Redondo Beach, was selected based on its qualifications and previous experience, staffing and project organization, work plan and cost. The consultant will provide services including market and customer research, conducting online surveys, developing marketing plans and producing digital and print content.