



Orange County Transportation Authority . 550 South Main Street . P.O. Box 14184 . Orange, California 92863-1584 . 714-560-OCTA (6282)

## Meeting of March 12, 2012

### 19<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Removed From Master Plan of Arterial Highways

In a one-time exception because of unique circumstances, the board voted to remove the 19<sup>th</sup> Street bridge from the Master Plan of Arterial Highways. The bridge was in the plan as a four-lane primary arterial.

The cities of Costa Mesa and Huntington Beach requested the removal of the bridge, which faced a number of challenges to being constructed including environmental impacts, community opposition, right-of-way impacts, challenging permitting processes and substantial costs.

The board supported the removal of the 19<sup>th</sup> Street bridge because of the unlikely possibility that it would ever be constructed.

### Board OKs Working With High-Speed Rail on Blended Approach

The board voted to work with the California High-Speed Rail Authority in its pursuit of a blended approach to implementing its project, which would expedite early investment in locations outside of the Central Valley.



The goal of the blended approach is to connect the High-Speed Rail system to existing rail systems in Orange County and elsewhere in advance of the full rail system's completion. Primarily, the blended approach would take place at the "bookends" of the system; from Anaheim to the San Fernando Valley and from San Jose to San Francisco.

The board also asked to review and comment on the revised High-Speed Rail Authority's Business Plan, which is expected to be released in the coming weeks.

### United States Fish and Wildlife Service to Maintain M2 Environmental Program Property

OCTA awarded a long-term contract to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for upkeep of the Saddle Creek South property, purchased in April 2011 as part of the M2 Freeway Environmental Mitigation Program.

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The agency will be responsible for maintaining the biological resources of the property including the conservation of the federally-threatened California gnatcatcher.

The Saddle Creek South property is 83 acres in the Trabuco Canyon area and was purchased for \$3.2 million.

Working closely with the environmental community, OCTA is purchasing open space as part of the M2 Freeway Environmental Mitigation Program. The program advances the environmental permitting process for 13 freeway improvement projects to save taxpayer dollars and speed up project delivery.

## Fuel Crisis Contingency Plan Update

OCTA has developed a Fuel Crisis Contingency Plan to respond to the significant increase in gas prices and the potential for commuters turning to the public transportation to beat the cost at the pump.

Implementing the plan could include one or more of the following: The Fuel Crisis Contingency Plan is based on the following components:

- Putting reserve buses into operation
- Monitoring service capacity and potentially adding buses if funding is available
- Promoting alternative travel modes including van pools and carpools
- Work with Metrolink to promote train service as an alternative to driving



Since August 2011, oil prices have risen 15 percent to 27 percent and industry analysts believe that gasoline prices could reach \$5 per gallon or higher. Although it is too soon to conclude that demand for transit will increase significantly, the contingency plans are a way to remain prepared for any outcome.