

Meeting of Oct. 12, 2015

Measure M delivering as promised 10 years after voter renewal

Measure M, the county's half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements renewed by Orange County voters in 2006, requires that its project and program elements be reviewed at least once every 10 years.

While Measure M is early on its 30-year span, every program in the plan has been initiated, with some already complete.

Highlights from the comprehensive review include:

- Every freeway project listed in the plan is in some stage of project implementation, with more than \$900 million already being allocated to freeway improvements.
- More than \$1 billion has been invested in streets and roads projects.
- About \$1 billion has been allocated for transit.
- A commitment to sustainability has been shown through environmental programs like the freeway mitigation program and the water cleanup program.

Participants of public outreach efforts generally felt that OCTA should continue to develop and expand transportation options, which include transit services, street and freeway improvements and active transportation investments.

I-5 Improvement Project in South County takes next step

The board approved a cooperative agreement between OCTA and the California Department of Transportation to establish roles and responsibilities for right-of-way acquisition and utility relocation for the I-5 Improvement Project between SR- 73 and El Toro Road.

The project scope includes:

- Adding general purpose lanes in each direction on the I-5 between Avery Parkway and Alicia Parkway
- Extending the second high-occupancy vehicle lane from Alicia Parkway to El Toro Road
- Reestablishing existing auxiliary lanes and constructing new auxiliary lanes
- Reconstructing the Avery Parkway and La Paz Road interchanges
- Improving several existing on- and off-ramps
- Converting existing and proposed carpool lanes to continuous access

The agreement names Caltrans as the lead agency acquiring right-of-way for the project, with OCTA's assistance.

Metrolink ridership in Orange County on the rise

The board received an annual report on Metrolink's ridership and revenue for the fiscal year 2014-15.

Three of Metrolink's seven lines serve Orange County. These three lines serve 11 Orange County stations and carry an average of more than 16,500 daily passengers.

Ridership on Metrolink's Orange County lines have increased compared to fiscal year 2013-14. Total ridership for the three lines was up 3.8 percent at more than 4.5 million passengers during the year. In addition, an average of 6,275 people rode the Orange County lines each weekend, a 13.3 percent increase.

The Orange County Line, which runs between Oceanside and Los Angeles Union Station, continued to have the highest farebox recovery rate at 67.5 percent, exceeding the system-wide average of about 43 percent. The three lines serving Orange County averaged 92.3 percent on-time performance.

Other significant Metrolink updates include:

- The special Angels Express service recorded its highest ridership ever during the 2015 season with more than 54,000 boardings, nearly 24 percent more than last year.
- Mobile ticketing is being developed and is expected to be deployed by the end of 2015 or early 2016.
- Metrolink staff is currently evaluating potential fare policy changes to increase revenue and ridership.
- Metrolink launched positive train control technology before Congress' end-of-year deadline.

OC Streetcar project rolls forward with second MOU

The OC Streetcar project marked its latest milestones as the Orange County Transportation Authority board agreed to a memorandum of understanding with the city of Garden Grove, outlining the roles and responsibilities associated with the development, implementation, operations and maintenance of the project.

The streetcar is planned to operate along a route just longer than 4 miles through the cities of Santa Ana and Garden Grove. It's intended to provide easy connections for people traveling from trains and buses to employment, retail and recreational areas.

Highlights in the MOU include:

- OCTA is responsible for the design and construction of the project and the operations, maintenance and ownership of the streetcar system once operational.
- OCTA is responsible for project procurements and right-of-way acquisition activities with the city's assistance.
- Both OCTA and the city of Garden Grove will develop and participate in a public outreach program for the project.

On the current schedule, construction for the OC Streetcar will begin in 2017, with service beginning in 2020. A similar MOU between OCTA and the city of Santa Ana was approved in July.