

Meeting of June 22, 2020

OCTA Continues to Fulfill Measure M Promises to Voters

The Measure M Taxpayer Oversight Committee has determined for the 29th consecutive year that Measure M is being delivered as promised to the voters of Orange County.

The committee held its annual Measure M public hearing on June 9 – this year by teleconference for safety amid the coronavirus pandemic – and the results and findings of that hearing were provided to the Orange County Transportation Authority board.

In addition, the OCTA board conducted a lottery to select two new members to serve on the Taxpayer Oversight Committee. Harry Stephen Sloan from Newport Beach was selected to represent the second district and Joseph McCarthy from Villa Park was selected to represent the third district.

Both new members will begin their terms in July and will serve for three years.

The independent, 11-member Taxpayer Oversight Committee monitors OCTA's use of Measure M funding, approves all changes to the Measure M plan and holds an annual public hearing on the expenditure of funds generated by the half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements.

Board Approves Plan to Transition to All Zero-Emission Buses

The OCTA board approved a draft plan outlining how the agency will convert its OC Bus fleet to 100 percent zero-emission technology by 2040, an important step toward a balanced and sustainable transportation future for Orange County.

OCTA has already gradually transitioned its fleet over the years to clean-burning compressed natural gas buses with near-zero-emission engines. But the plan helps align the agency with California's Innovative Clean Transit Rule, which requires public transit agencies to transition to full zero-emission bus fleets by 2040.

OCTA has already taken steps to pilot zero-emission bus technology. Earlier this year, OCTA unveiled 10 hydrogen fuel-cell electric buses, along with a hydrogen fueling station. The agency also released a request for quotes in April to purchase 10 plug-in battery-electric buses.

Testing both hydrogen fuel-cell and plug-in battery-electric buses will allow OCTA to collect valuable data on how the buses perform on local streets and to determine which technology – or the best mix of technologies – to pursue moving forward.

I-5 Project in South Orange County Advances

The OCTA board approved a request for proposals to prepare a project report and environmental document for improvements to I-5 between Avenida Pico and the San Diego County line, an important step toward a vital transportation project for South Orange County.

The improvement project would extend the I-5 carpool lane from Avenida Pico to the San Diego County line, completing the carpool lane network in Orange County.

It is one of three near-term projects identified by OCTA, the Transportation Corridor Agencies and Caltrans to help relieve traffic and meet travel demand over the next decade. The other two projects are a non-tolled extension of Los Patrones Parkway from Cow Camp Road to Avenida La Pata and the widening of Ortega Highway between Calle Entradero and Reata Road.

The project approval and environmental phase of the I-5 project is expected to begin next year.