

Meeting of April 25, 2016

Employees of the month for April honored

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

Resolutions of appreciation were presented to:

- Lauro Rubalcava, coach operator
- Antonio Gallegos from maintenance
- Michael Beerer from administration

Measure M keeps its promises to voters for 25th year

The Measure M Taxpayer Oversight Committee has determined that Measure M continues to be delivered as promised for the 25th consecutive year.

The independent, 11-member oversight committee unanimously found that OCTA is proceeding in accordance with Measure M, the county's half-cent sales tax, which was first approved by voters in 1990 and renewed in 2006. The committee monitors OCTA's use of Measure M funding, approves all changes to the Measure M plan and holds annual public hearing on Measure M spending.

Measure M has funded hundreds of local projects that help residents and visitors travel through the county every day. These include improvements to freeways, widened streets, synchronized signals and improved intersections. Measure M also made Metrolink commuter-rail service possible in Orange County.

Measure M is expected to generate nearly \$15 billion to fund transportation improvements through 2041.

Board receives vanpool program update

The OCTA board received an update on the vanpool program, which outlined ways the service can be used in the future.

A vanpool is a group of five to 15 people who regularly commute to work in a shared van. OCTA's existing program has 504 active vanpools serving 143 worksites in Orange County. The average vanpool trip length is 35 miles each way, with each rider paying an average of \$125 per month.

Since vanpool costs are lower than fixed-route bus service, vanpools could potentially serve unmet needs as bus service is restructured later this year. Staff will conduct a targeted marketing campaign to riders on impacted routes to promote the vanpool program as an alternative.

Staff is also looking at the possibility of college students using vanpool services to commute to classes.

OC Streetcar project rolls forward

The OC Streetcar project took another step forward, with the board approving an approach to acquiring vehicles for the project.

The OC Streetcar, now in project development, is intended to provide easy connections for people traveling from trains and buses to employment, retail and recreational areas in the heart of Orange County.

OCTA will work to take advantage of exercising unassigned options on another agency's existing contract, rather than initiating its own procurement. This will allow OCTA to financially benefit from a larger-sized order, as well as reduced procurement and design costs and a shorter timeline for the procurement and contract award.

Staff has identified three contracts that meet OC Streetcar vehicle requirements. These are held by the city of Cincinnati, the Tri-County Metropolitan District of Oregon and the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County.

The board is scheduled to approve a contract in the fall. Construction will begin in 2018 with operations planned to start in 2020.

Preliminary Traffic and Revenue Forecast for the 405 Express Lanes

The board heard the initial traffic and revenue forecast findings for the 405 Express Lanes, which will ultimately determine the toll structure.

The I-405 freeway near the county line is the most heavily traveled freeway in the nation and both the regular lanes and carpool lanes are congested daily during rush hour and on weekends.

The I-405 Improvement Project, set to begin in 2018, includes constructing express toll lanes from the SR-73 to the I-605 and one regular lane in each direction. The 405 Express Lanes will closely mirror the policies of the 91 Express Lanes through its intermediate access, use of channelizers to separate traffic and the initial requirement of transponders for toll collection.

The study analyzed several different toll options. Despite the desire to have two-plus carpools use the Express Lanes for free or at a reduced cost, the study found that if they are free during rush hour, the express lanes would fail to provide a free-flowing reliable commute.

The board is expected to vote on a toll policy and financing plan by the end of May.