

Meeting of Nov. 28, 2016

Employees of the month for November honored

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

Resolutions of appreciation were presented to:

- Erma Jones, Coach Operator
- Cuong Nguyen, Maintenance
- Paul Martin, Administration

Board OKs Revised OC Streetcar Stop Design

The OC Streetcar stop conceptual design was approved by the OCTA board after changes were made to the canopy and platform design, which are to provide protection from the sun and bad weather.

The OC Streetcar, now in the design and engineering phase, is planned to travel along a 4.1-mile route from the Santa Ana Regional Transportation Center, through Downtown Santa Ana and the Civic Center, along the Pacific-Electric right of way, and connect to a new multimodal transit hub at Harbor Boulevard and Westminster Avenue in Garden Grove.

OCTA is developing the project with funding coming from various federal, state and local sources, including Measure M, the county's half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements.

On the current schedule, construction for the OC Streetcar is expected to begin in late 2017, with service beginning in 2020.

Fare Policy Changes Aim to Boost Ridership and Improve Efficiency

The board approved several adjustments to its bus fares, including changes to the way express routes are categorized and priced.

The changes are a result of a fare policy evaluation conducted as part of OCTA's OC Bus 360° plan. The plan seeks to improve the bus system and increase ridership by 1.3 million riders over the next three years through a number of initiatives, including shifting service from low-performing routes to areas where there is higher demand.

The approved adjustments will start getting implemented in February and include:

- Increasing the fare for express routes that travel within Orange County from \$2 to \$4 and increasing the fare for intercounty express routes from \$6 to \$7. These changes will affect about 0.06 percent of total boardings
- Eliminating the 5 Ride Pass and 7 Day Pass, which account for less than 1 percent of pass usage
- Requiring proof of eligibility for reduced fare passes, including those for seniors and people with disabilities, when the pass is sold

The changes in fare prices are part of a larger plan that seeks to improve the bus system and increase ridership through a number of initiatives, including shifting service from low-performing routes to areas where there is higher demand.

In addition to these changes, OCTA's day pass fare has been reduced to \$4 from \$5 for a six-month promotional period that began Oct. 9. Before the promotional period ends on April 9, the OCTA board will consider extending the reduced day pass price based on the impact to ridership and the availability of funding. This was the first time that OCTA has reduced the price of a bus fare.

O.C Wilderness Preservation Plan Approved

The OCTA board approved a conservation plan that ensures more than 1,300 acres of wilderness will remain preserved and protected from future development.

The certification of the final conservation plans, known as the Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan and the associated Environmental Impact Report, is the culmination of a nearly 10-year effort that involved OCTA staff working closely with members of the public, environmental and community groups, and state and federal wildlife officials.

This is part of OCTA's Freeway Environmental Mitigation program and is funded through Measure M, the county's half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements. The program acquires land and funds habitat restoration projects in exchange for a streamlined approval process for 13 freeway improvement projects throughout Orange County.

Final approvals of the environmental documents came in cooperation with officials from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Board receives CEO's third quarter initiatives update

The board received a third quarter report of CEO Darrell Johnson's initiatives and action plan.

The action plan consists of 12 initiatives, implemented through 66 strategies and monitored through 90 milestones for the year. The milestones all fit into the agency's strategic plan goal areas of mobility, public service, fiscal sustainability, stewardship and organizational excellence.

From July 1 through Sept. 30, 10 of the milestones were completed, and nine were moved to the next quarter because of scheduling and coordination conflicts.

Accomplishments include:

- Meeting with federal Department of Transportation officials regarding the TIFIA loan for the I-405 Improvement Project.
- Completing 30 percent of the OC Streetcar design, and receiving a revised budget for the new design
- Expanding Active Transportation by awarding \$42 million from the Bicycle Corridor Improvement Program
- Protecting environmental resources through awarding \$2.8 million from the M2 Water Quality Program

- Selecting California Community Foundation as the endowment fund manager for the Measure M Freeway Environmental Mitigation Program