

Meeting of Feb. 23, 2015

Streetcar project rolls forward with selection of management consultant

The OCTA board approved the selection of HDR Engineering, Inc. as the project management consultant for the Santa Ana/Garden Grove Streetcar project.

The contract to manage the streetcar project is for five-year, with two two-year options. Funding for the project comes from Measure M, the county's half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements and from the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program. The majority of funding – nearly 89 percent – is expected to come from federal funds.

Monday's action was another important step forward for the Santa Ana/Garden Grove streetcar project. Earlier this year, the project's environmental impact report won approvals from city councils in both cities, clearing the way for OCTA to take the lead on implementing the project.

The streetcar project will provide "last-mile" transportation for people traveling from transportation hubs to major employment, retail and recreational centers. It will make stops at the Santa Ana Regional Transportation Center, traveling through Downtown Santa Ana and the Civic Center. It will operate along Fourth Street and Santa Ana Boulevard, continuing along the Pacific Electric right-of-way to connect with a transit hub at Harbor Boulevard and Westminster Avenue in Garden Grove.

In all, the streetcar will operate on a route more than four-miles long and will include 12 stops, carrying an estimated 6,000 riders daily by 2035. Construction is planned to start in 2017 and streetcars are expected to begin operating in 2019.

A vast majority of riders satisfied with OCTA bus service

The board reviewed results of the 2014 Fixed Route Bus Services Customer Satisfaction Survey, which showed that 90 percent of bus riders in 2014 said they were satisfied with OCTA's fixed-route bus services.

OCTA's goal is to create a balanced transportation system supporting the diverse needs of travelers while improving mobility, reducing emissions and ultimately enhancing the quality of life for Orange County. OCTA's fixed-route bus system is an integral part of that goal, with 77 routes operating throughout the county, serving about 160,000 riders per day on weekdays.

OCTA performed the customer satisfaction survey to measure how it is serving riders and to identify potential areas of improvement. More than 2,500 bus riders from a sampling of routes were surveyed. They were allowed to complete the survey on their own in English, Spanish or Vietnamese. Among the findings:

- Nearly half of riders surveyed indicated that OCTA's fixed-route bus service had improved over the last 12 months, and about 40 percent indicated it remained the same.
- When asked to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of the bus service, the highest level of satisfaction (86 percent) were riders who said they were satisfied with the proximity of their bus

stop to their final destination. Bus driver courtesy ranked a close second with 84 percent saying they were satisfied, and 83 percent saying they were satisfied with safety on the bus.

- 81 percent of those surveyed said they were satisfied with the driver's knowledge of the service, while 81 percent also said they were satisfied with the cleanliness of the bus.
- At least three-quarters of riders indicated they were satisfied with information provided in the Bus Book (78 percent) and on the www.octa.net website (77 percent).

The survey also indicated potential areas of improvement. Riders expressed lower levels of satisfaction with information provided at bus stops (72 percent), the cost of riding the bus (68 percent), on-time performance of the bus (67 percent) and frequency of buses/wait times at bus stops (62 percent).

Board members requested additional information about on-time performance of the bus system to gauge what possible improvements could be considered.

When asked to rate the importance of various aspects of the bus service, riders indicated that buses running on-time is the most important (94 percent rated as extremely or very important), followed by safety of the bus (92 percent), safety of bus stops (92 percent) and travel time for their trip (91 percent).

Oversight committee finds Measure M in compliance for 24th straight year

The board received a report from Eric Woolery, Orange County's auditor-controller and the chairman of the Measure M Taxpayers Oversight Committee, who said that the committee determined that Measure M is being delivered as promised to Orange County voters for the 24th consecutive year.

The 11-member oversight committee held its annual public hearing for Measure M on Feb. 10, looking at how Measure M, the half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements, was being delivered in 34 cities and in the county. Woolery said the committee looked at a variety of factors, including freeway improvement projects, pavement management, signal synchronization and overall expenditures.

In the end, the committee unanimously determined that the Orange County Transportation Authority is proceeding in accordance with the ordinances that were approved by voters in 1990 and renewed in 2006.

Cavecche honored for work on Metrolink board

Former OCTA director and former Orange Mayor Carolyn Cavecche received a special presentation and accolades from OCTA board members for her work on the Metrolink Board of Directors.

Cavecche, who stepped down from the Metrolink board in January after four years of service, was lauded by OCTA board members as a dedicated public servant, a tireless advocate and a strong voice for transportation.

Cavecche ended her term on the OCTA board in 2012, but continued to serve on the Metrolink board at a time when it faced significant financial and organizational challenges.

OCTA board members who served with Cavecche said that her leadership will be missed but that the contributions she made will forever benefit the millions of commuters who rely upon Metrolink.