

Meeting of Dec. 8, 2014

Warm Welcomes and Fond Farewells

The board welcomed two new directors and bid farewell to Director John Moorlach and longtime legal counsel Ken Smart.

Fifth District Supervisor Lisa Bartlett and Costa Mesa Mayor Jim Righeimer were welcomed and given their Oath of Office, and after serving on the OCTA board for eight years, Moorlach received an outgoing salute.

Ken Smart also said his goodbyes. Smart began working with OCTA in 1972, and has provided general counsel for more than 40 years. CEO Darrell Johnson presented Smart with a resolution of appreciation as a final farewell.

91 Percent of Customers are Satisfied with 91 Express Lanes

The board reviewed the 91 Express Lanes Customer Satisfaction Survey that showed 91 percent of users are satisfied with their overall experiences.

More than 1,300 randomly selected Express Lanes customers participated in the survey. The survey was designed to determine travel behavior, identify customer concerns, measure satisfaction and evaluate the Orange County Transportation Authority's communication efforts regarding the 91 Express Lanes.

The survey showed that 91 percent of customers were satisfied with travel experiences on the 91 Express Lanes and nearly half were very satisfied. Customers surveyed identified saving time, faster travel, accurate billing statements and a well-maintained road as the most important performance standards measured, and 90 percent of customers agreed that OCTA has done a good job communicating with them about the lanes.

The top areas for improvement identified by the survey are improving reliability of travel times, completing the extension of the 91 Express Lanes to Interstate 15, building a direct connection between the 91 Express Lanes and the SR-241 toll road and improving the relationship between perceived convenience and cost of lanes.

Overall, customers expressed high levels of satisfaction regarding the 91 Express Lanes and have indicated positive opinions of the performance in nearly all areas.

Environmental Mitigation Program Update

The Environmental Mitigation Program has reached several milestones between June and December 2014.

The program provides Measure M funding for environmental restoration or acquisition to offset impacts of 13 freeway projects and allow for streamlined permitting of the projects. The program will be administered through a Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan that is in the final stages of development.

A number of the restoration projects have received resources and regulatory agency approvals and are well underway, while some are still in the planning phase.

In November, an environmental study prepared for the conservation plan was released to the public for a three-month public comment period. This process provides an opportunity to gather feedback from stakeholders and address public concerns. Stakeholders were notified of the public release and community meetings, which were held in November and December, and all of the documents are available online.

In addition, property acquisition and restoration activities have begun and future funding priorities are being determined.