

Mitigation Land Needed for 13 M2 Freeway Projects



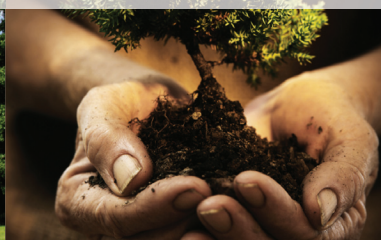
Acquire and/or Restore Land for Mitigation



Complete Conservation Plans to Address Long-term Operations and Management



Build 13 M2 Projects



## Program Description & Objectives

The Orange County Transportation Authority's (OCTA) Mitigation and Resource Protection Program (Mitigation Program) provides for allocation of at least five percent of the total Renewed Measure M (M2) freeway budget for comprehensive environmental mitigation for the impacts from freeway improvements. The Mitigation Program was approved by Orange County voters under the M2 half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements in 2006.

In August 2007, the OCTA Board of Directors (Board) approved a five-year M2 Early Action Plan, covering the years 2007 to 2012, to advance the implementation of several key M2 projects, including the freeway mitigation program.

A master agreement between OCTA, the California Department of Transportation and state and federal resource agencies was approved in January 2010. This will offer higher-value environmental benefits such as habitat protection, connectivity and resource preservation in exchange for streamlined project approvals for the 13 M2 freeway projects.

## Environmental Oversight Committee

The Environmental Oversight Committee (EOC) is responsible for making recommendations to the Board on matters related to the Mitigation Program. Comprised of 12 members, the EOC has been meeting on a monthly basis since November 2007.

In January 2010, the EOC and the Board approved the Master Agreement and Planning Agreement to establish the process,

roles, responsibilities and commitments for the preparation of the Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP). The NCCP/HCP process examines habitat resources within broad geographic areas and identifies conservation and mitigation measures to protect habitat and species. This process started in July 2010 and could take 18 to 24 months to complete, however, the Master Agreement includes an "advance credit" provision that could allow funds to be allocated prior to completion of the NCCP/HCP.

## Acquisition and Restoration Milestones

The following steps outline the implementation process for land acquisition and restoration and the integration into the NCCP/HCP. These milestones were completed in 2009/10.

- Independent assessment of all eligible properties that may be available for acquisition or restoration
- A property ranking system and acquisition approach established and approved by EOC and Board in March 2010
- List of priorities for acquisition/restoration funding established
- Board approved expenditure of M2 environmental mitigation funds
- Board approved program funding priorities during first half of 2010 (e.g. acquisition, restoration, and management)
- Board approved suite of restoration projects for funding in September 2010.

## Next Steps for 2010/11

- Advanced mitigation credits determined by California Dept. of Fish and Game (CDFG) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) via assurance letters during second half of 2010 and early 2011
- Land appraisals and economic assessment of properties conducted second half of 2010 and early 2011
- Align property purchases with commitments of NCCP/HCP
- Acquisition offers/grant recommendations made and reported to EOC, T2020, and approved by Board
- Hold public meeting for NCCP/HCP planning process
- Restoration project sponsors to prepare and complete restoration plan and secure grants agreement
- Reconciliation of CDFG, USFWS, OCTA, and community priorities in coordination with Caltrans
- List of priorities for acquisition/restoration funding established
- Land appraisals and economic assessment of properties conducted
- Offers/grant recommendations made and reported to EOC, T2020, and approved by Board
- Align property purchases with commitments of NCCP/HCP

## Contact us

To learn more, visit the OCTA website at [www.octa.net/environmental](http://www.octa.net/environmental) or contact Marissa Espino at (714) 560-5607 or [mespino@octa.net](mailto:mespino@octa.net).