

Meeting of July 26, 2021

Board Recognizes July Employees of the Month

The Orange County Transportation Authority's board of directors recognized three employees of the month for July.

The honors went to:

- Sharika Papillion, a coach operator at the Santa Ana base who started her career with OCTA in 2013. In February, Sharika achieved five years of safe driving, and she also serves as a Behind the Wheel trainer, working with new coach operators.
- Ross Zieke, a journeyman mechanic working out of the Santa Ana base who joined OCTA in 1991. Ross is a knowledgeable mechanic who shares his expertise by volunteering as a mentor for both mechanic helpers and apprentice mechanics.
- Cleve Cleveland, the project manager of OC Streetcar. Cleve joined OCTA in 2017 and is responsible for all aspects of operations for the OC Streetcar. He has successfully overcome several challenges working with the contractor on the manufacturing of the vehicles.

Board of Directors Receives State Legislative Status Report

The OCTA board received an update on the state's legislative status report, which covers an overview of the state's budget process and legislation that OCTA has supported to authorize transit agencies to use camera technology to discourage illegal parking in transit-only lanes and at transit stops.

Specifically, the bill AB 917 would expand state law to authorize transit agencies statewide to install or utilize existing cameras on their transit vehicles to obtain images of parking violations. These parking citations do not negatively impact a driver's record, carry the same fine as a parking ticket, and can be appealed. AB 917 also contains privacy protections and sets noticing requirements for this new program.

In the face of an unprecedented budget year, the state legislature has been in extensive negotiations with Governor Gavin Newsom after projecting higher-than-anticipated revenue forecasts. OCTA has been actively engaged in budget conversations to ensure investments in transportation are effective in creating jobs and providing mobility improvements.

It is expected that this year's budget negotiations could continue into late summer and early fall.

Board of Directors Receives Federal Legislative Status Report

The OCTA board received an update on a potential infrastructure package, efforts to reauthorize federal surface transportation programs, and the annual federal funding process.

OCTA staff worked with Representative Alan S. Lowenthal (D-Garden Grove) to craft an amendment to the Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation (INVEST) in America Act – which authorizes \$592 billion for highway, rail, transit, and safety programs – that would improve the

bill's new tolling policy. The amendment clarified that the bill would not overly burden future congestion management projects and was adopted as part of a package of amendments.

The Senate Finance Committee has not taken up the Surface Transportation Investment Act, which would provide \$78 billion for rail, freight, and safety programs. By Sept. 30, Congress must either pass a reauthorization bill or another extension to prevent an interruption in federal transportation funding. OCTA continues to closely monitor reauthorization proposals and provide updates, as necessary.

The Biden Administration and Congress have started to work on the annual appropriations process. National debt, which is projected to reach the highest level in our nation's history over the next decade, will play a part in the ongoing discussions about an infrastructure package and surface transportation reauthorization legislation. OCTA continues to monitor significant federal funding developments and provide updates.