

# ORANGE COUNTY MAINTENANCE FACILITY PROJECT FAQ (OCMF)



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. What is the Orange County Maintenance Facility?

The Orange County Maintenance Facility is a rail yard where Metrolink passenger trains will be serviced, cleaned, and housed to help meet long-term public transportation needs by accommodating current and future operations.

The OCMF represents a significant step in helping to enhance public transportation in the City of Irvine and throughout Orange County and it will support greenhouse gas reduction efforts to ensure healthier communities.

### 2. Who will use the rail maintenance facility?

Metrolink maintenance staff and crews will use the maintenance facility.

### 3. Where will the OCMF be located?

The OCMF will be located off an extension of Ridge Valley west of Marine Way in the City of Irvine. The facility will be located east of I-5/SR-133 and west of the Great Park adjacent to the existing railroad tracks and less than 1.5 miles from the Irvine Transportation Center. The extension of Ridge Valley is part of the OCMF project. Since 2003, the City of Irvine has designated this site as the future home of the Metrolink maintenance facility.

### 4. What type of activities will occur at the facility?

Servicing at the site will include cleaning and washing trains, inspecting brakes and other parts, fueling locomotives, and conducting minor repairs such as oil changes and brake pad replacements. Trains will continue traveling to facilities in other counties for major repairs, including engine overhauls and wheel truing.

The site will also include a train washing facility similar to a car wash station, as well as office space for crews and maintenance staff, parts storage and management, on-site water treatment, parking, access roads and security.

### 5. What are the project's benefits?

The project has multiple environmental benefits, including:

- Getting vehicles off the road and reducing congestion.
- Ensuring that Metrolink service continues to run efficiently and accommodate current and future operations.
- Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by eliminating the need to move trains without passengers long distances to other facilities in surrounding counties.
- Assisting the City of Irvine with reaching its climate goals by reducing GHG emissions associated with driving vehicles. On-road transportation accounts for more than half of the City's GHG emissions, according to the 2019 City of Irvine Community GHG Emissions Inventory.

The OCMF will also improve public transportation by:

- Supporting future expansion of the Metrolink system serving Irvine and all of Orange County by meeting rail vehicle servicing and storage needs.
- Allowing for more frequent passenger rail service and reducing operating costs by eliminating the daily need to move trains to less convenient facilities.
- Improving on-time train performance by allowing trains to be stored and repaired locally.

### 6. What is the project status and schedule?

The OCMF has been planned by OCTA, Metrolink and the City of Irvine for two decades on this site. The project is required to go through an environmental process to determine if there are any impacts to the surrounding community and environment, what those impacts may be and how to address them.

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There are state requirements related to this process as outlined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Because no significant impacts were found during the project's environmental study, work to complete a Mitigated Negative Declaration was finalized in October 2023. The Mitigated Negative Declaration states there would be no significant impacts to the surrounding community or environment through the construction and operation of the OCMF.

### **7. Is the project subject to other planning permits or approvals?**

The project is located in the City of Irvine Planning Area 51. It is a conditionally allowable use under zoning defined by the City's 2015 General Plan. The project will require a Conditional Use Permit from the City of Irvine. For two decades, OCTA has been coordinating with the City of Irvine on the planned maintenance facility.

### **8. What sound levels will the maintenance facility will create during construction and operations?**

The analysis conducted through the project's environmental study found no significant impacts to noise from construction or operations of the facility.

As part of the environmental review process, a monitor was set near the closest residential community to measure the existing ambient noise in the neighborhood. Currently, ambient noise near the corner of Marine Way and Ridge Valley ranges from 63 to 68 decibels due to its close proximity to both the SR-133 toll road and I-5.

The loudest construction activities are expected to occur during daytime hours and analysis indicates that the noise levels if you are standing at the construction site will range from 56 to 74 decibels, under the Federal Transit Administration's construction noise criteria limits. During the project's construction, the nearby homes are not expected to experience noise above 68 decibels, which is no louder than the current noise in the neighborhood from the adjacent SR-133 toll road and I-5 freeway.

The results of the operational noise analysis indicate that noise from operations at the OCMF are projected to be approximately an average of 52 decibels, which is also less than the current ambient noise experienced by the nearby residential community.

### **9. Will train horns be tested or used in the evening?**

The train horns are not sounded during day-to-day facility operations. If the locomotive is involved in an accident after returning to the facility, the horn will be sounded to ensure its functionality and that it meets the federal horn operations requirements (49 CFR 229.129). Additionally, horns are tested for functionality on a 92-day interval to ensure it works. Horns are tested and measured on 4-year interval inspection.

### **10. What hours of the day/night will there be sound, if any?**

Construction activities are planned only between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Saturday. Operation of the facility would be 24 hours. While noise analysis results indicate that the project is not expected to exceed maximum allowable noise levels or cause noise impacts, it is still possible that residents may occasionally hear sound from the facility, similar to the way sound can be heard from nearby freeways, streets or other activities in and around the Great Park.

### **11. Can the facility wall be made higher? And, what is the proposed landscaping around the facility?**

Technical studies show that sound, visual, and lighting impacts from the project are insignificant. A higher wall on top of the retaining wall could be included, within reason, balancing the need to screen versus the visual mass of a wall. Height can be adjusted in the final design of the walls. While a higher wall would increase visual screening of the property and perhaps provide some additional acoustic shielding, it's unlikely to eliminate view of the top of the later, second phase II, maintenance building's maximum height of 48 feet. OCTA is committed to work with the County to provide a landscape tree barrier and vine planting in front of the retaining wall at the west end of the facility. Landscaping would be further developed and coordinated with the City during final design. The landscape screening of the wall combined with future development on the currently vacant County of Orange property along Marine Way will further screen the OCMF from residential areas.

### **12. Will the project activities produce air emissions? Will air quality be monitored? Will Southern California Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) be involved?**

The OCMF operation activities are not anticipated to significantly affect air emissions. The train locomotives would be the primary source of air quality emissions. These emissions have been accounted for in the detailed air quality dispersion modeling conducted as part of the environmental analysis. Air quality is not anticipated to be monitored at the site regularly, however, SCAQMD conducts regional monitoring to determine regional air quality status and to implement mitigatory measures on a regional basis in addition to potential spot inspections. Other chemicals used in servicing the trains will be stored in drums and hauled off-site in accordance with regulatory requirements. Air quality monitoring is not proposed as part of the project description or required to mitigate any identified impacts, however, during final design and permitting, OCTA/MetroLink would coordinate with SCAQMD to determine any specific requirements associated with issuance of required permit(s).

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The sand, fuel, and lubricating fluids used at the facility are all in a designed sealed system. SCAQMD regulates overall regional air quality based on specific criteria pollutants including Ozone, Particulate Matter, Carbon Monoxide, Oxides of Nitrogen, Oxides of Sulfur, Lead, and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs). The criteria pollutants cover elements of the sand, fuel, and lubricating fluids, but these would not be considered primary sources for these pollutants especially due to the sealed system. Air quality analysis, including air quality dispersion modeling, conducted for the construction and operation of the OCMF demonstrates that all criteria pollutants will be below SCAQMD regional and localized thresholds except for VOCs associated with building surface painting during construction, which are proposed to be mitigated using low VOC paint. A SCAQMD permit would be required for specific elements of the facility, such as a backup generator, sand silo, fuel storage tanks, and dispensing. OCTA/Metrolink would coordinate with SCAQMD during the final design to determine any specific requirements associated with the issuance of required permits.

### **13. How many people will work at the OCMF and what will traffic impacts be on Marine Way?**

The analysis conducted through the project's environmental process found no significant impacts to traffic.

The total number of vehicle trips in and out of the facility each day is expected to be 220. That represents vehicles arriving at and departing from the OCMF throughout a 24-hour period. Included in the daily estimated total are:

- 80 employees (160 daily trips traveling to and from the site)
- 10 fleet vehicles (20 daily trips traveling to and from the site)
- 20 other vehicles including deliveries and visitors (40 daily trips traveling to and from the site)

For comparison, Sand Canyon Avenue carries 30,000 total daily trips and Marine Way carries 17,400 total daily trips.

### **14. Where can I find more project information?**

More information can be found at [octa.net/OCMF](http://octa.net/OCMF).

### **15. Who can I contact if I have additional questions?**

You can contact the project team by email at [ocmf@octa.net](mailto:ocmf@octa.net).