

## **Meeting of Dec. 9, 2019**

### **December Employees of the Month Recognized**

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

The honors went to:

- Martin Lubus, coach operator
- Coung Dang, maintenance
- Tamara Warren, administration

### **Director Moreno Honored for Service to OCTA**

The OCTA staff and board bid farewell to Director Jose Moreno and recognized him for his contributions to improving transportation in Orange County.

Moreno, who also serves on the Anaheim City Council, served on the OCTA board for a year. Also serving on the Transit Committee, he played a valuable part in the continued implementation of OC Bus 360° to find ways to enhance transit service countywide and make the system more efficient. He is a strong advocate for OCTA's college pass program, which allows students enrolled at Fullerton, Golden West, Santiago Canyon and Santa Ana colleges to ride the bus for free with their student ID card.

### **Local Sales Tax Funds Working to Preserve the Environment**

The Orange County Transportation Authority board received an update on the agency's Freeway Environmental Mitigation Program.

The program is a comprehensive effort to offset the environmental impacts of freeway construction projects by preserving large swaths of valuable habitat to protect the plants and wildlife that live on the land and provide connectivity to other natural lands.

The program allocates funds from Measure M – the county's half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements, also known as OC Go – to acquire land and fund habitat restoration projects in exchange for streamlined approvals from environmental agencies for freeway improvement projects throughout Orange County.

OCTA has purchased seven open space properties through the program, totaling 1,300 acres. The land will be preserved in perpetuity. A total of 12 restoration projects have also been funded throughout the county to return existing conservation lands to their native state.

OCTA has started developing fire management plans for its preserves in consultation with the local fire authority. The plans will provide guidelines for decision-making at all stages, including fire prevention, vegetation management and fire suppression activities, that are consistent with goals to preserve the lands.

For more information on OCTA's open space properties, visit [preservingourlegacy.org](https://www.preservingourlegacy.org).

## **Options Explored for Future Express Lanes**

The board received an update to an OCTA study looking at the possibility of adding express lanes to Orange County freeways to help manage expected traffic increases as the county continues to grow.

The study, still in its early stages, aims to look at where and when it may make sense to put in tolled express lanes and will, among other things, look at where there is the highest demand, whether they would help improve traffic in the regular lanes and if the community supports them. The study will look at prioritizing projects and implementing them around 2030 and beyond.

OCTA's most recent Long-Range Transportation Plan shows that Orange County's population is expected to grow by 10 percent, employment is anticipated to grow by 17 percent and the number of people commuting into the county is going to increase by 25 percent by 2040. The plan calls for an investment of \$43 billion through 2040 in all modes of transportation, including highways, tolled express lanes, commuter and light rail, bus transit, city streets and active transportation.

OCTA staff is expected to return to the board with an update in the spring.