

Meeting of June 8, 2015

OCTA board approves \$1 billion balanced budget

The OCTA board approved a \$1 billion balanced budget at its meeting on Monday.

The 2015-16 budget encompasses all services, projects and programs that are administered by OCTA. Major initiatives for the budget include maintaining bus and rail operations, increasing bus ridership, continuing Measure M improvements and operating the 91 Express Lanes.

Funding allocation for the budgets include:

- \$371 million for bus operations
- \$187 million for streets and roads improvements
- \$129 million for freeway projects

This balanced budget reflects OCTA's mission to deliver long-term sustainable transportation solutions for residents and businesses of Orange County.

Board receives quarterly Measure M update

The OCTA board received a Measure M progress report for the period of January through March.

Measure M is the half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements that was approved by Orange County voters in November 1990 (M1) and renewed in November 2006 (M2).

M1 concluded collecting sales tax revenue in April 2011 and is on track to close out nearly all of its open contracts by June 30. Currently, it has an estimated balance of \$113 million that will be used for M2 projects that are related to the original M1 plans.

Significant M2 accomplishments include:

- In February, construction began on the San Diego Freeway I-5 from Avenida Pico to Avenida Vista Hermosa.
- In February, the Taxpayers Oversight Committee found OCTA has acted in accordance with the Measure M Ordinance for the 24th year in a row.
- In March, community-based transit in Laguna Beach expanded, doubling its weekend service and providing more frequent summer festival trolley service.
- In March, the Santa Ana/Garden Grove Streetcar Project completed its environmental phase after the Federal Transit Administration issued a Finding of No Significant Impact.

The board will hear the final M1 report and another M2 report in the fall.

Board approves purchase of ACCESS buses

The OCTA board approved the purchase of up to 132 buses for ACCESS paratransit service for nearly \$15 million.

ACCESS is OCTA's shared-ride service for people who are unable to use the fixed-route bus service because of functional limitations caused by a disability.

OCTA currently operates a fleet of 248 ACCESS buses, 132 of which exceed their federal minimum useful life of five years and, on average, exceed the useful mileage of 150,000 miles by 57 percent. This has contributed to rising maintenance costs.

The board approved Creative Bus Sales, Inc. to provide the 132 buses, with an option to purchase 25 additional buses if needed to respond to growth in ACCESS service.