

Meeting of Dec. 14, 2015

Board recognizes Employees of the Month for December

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

Resolutions of appreciation were presented to:

- Aurora Ibarra, coach operator
- Rogelio Gutierrez from maintenance
- Gary Hewitt from administration

Measure M amendment to boost transit programs

The OCTA board voted to approve an amendment to the Measure M2 Transportation Investment Plan that would reallocate funds between programs in the transit portion of the plan.

Measure M, the county's half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements, was renewed by Orange County voters in 2006. A comprehensive review of the program, which is required at least once every 10 years, was presented to the board in October. It identified a need to move funding between transit programs.

Project T of Measure M was designated to convert Metrolink stations to regional gateways that connect the county with high-speed rail systems. Some of this funding was used for the construction of ARTIC, which is already in operation, and the remaining funds will be reallocated to address the needs of two other transit programs:

- The Fare Stabilization Program that provides fare discounts for seniors and people with disabilities
- The Metrolink Service Expansion that supports ongoing capital improvement requirements and operations of Metrolink service

A public meeting about the proposed amendment was held on Nov. 19.

O.C. drivers needed for California Road Charge Pilot Program

The OCTA board is encouraging Orange County drivers to participate in the California Road Charge Pilot Program to ensure that the county has a voice as state officials explore transportation funding alternatives.

The California Road Charge Pilot Program will allow the state to weigh the advantages, disadvantages, challenges and opportunities of road charging – where drivers are taxed based on the miles they drive rather than the gallons of fuel they consume.

To effectively evaluate the program, the state is looking for at least 5,000 volunteers from throughout the state to participate in the 9-month study scheduled to begin in the summer of 2016.

Currently, highway and road repairs are funded through a gas tax. With vehicles becoming more fuel efficient, this has been a declining source of revenue to fund maintenance of existing highways and provide funds for additional improvements.

Board approves February bus service changes

The OCTA board approved the February 2016 Bus Service Change Program.

OCTA develops and implements revisions to bus schedules and routes to improve service quality by focusing on on-time performance, passenger loads and new service initiatives. Bus service changes are implemented in February, June and October of each year.

Twenty-seven OCTA bus routes and 40 schedules will be affected, including:

- An Xpress route will be added to Route 64.
- Stationlink Route 410 will be discontinued due to low ridership but Stationlink Route 411 will be modified to improve access to employment areas.
- The first phase of the Bus Stop Spacing Efficiency Program will be implemented on Route 53 and Route 64. The pilot program will test how bus travel times may improve by reducing the number of bus stops along the route.

Measure M continues to deliver on promises

The OCTA board received a Measure M progress report for the period of July through September.

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

Significant Measure M accomplishments in the quarter include:

- The I-5 Ortega Highway bridge construction activities were completed.
- OCTA staff began implementing I-405 right-of-way acquisitions through an incentive payment program that encourages all property owners to execute an agreement within 60 days of the first written offer.
- The board approved the release of the Regional Capacity Program 2016 call for projects which made about \$38 million available to fund additional road improvements throughout the county.
- The board selected a consultant for the OC Streetcar project to prepare the plans, specifications and estimates.

A Measure M triennial performance assessment is also underway and will be presented to the board in early 2016.