

Meeting of June 9, 2025

OCTA Approves 2025-26 Fiscal Year Budget

The Orange County Transportation Authority's Board of Directors approved a \$1.74 billion balanced budget for the 2025-26 fiscal year.

The approved budget makes significant investments in public transit – totaling approximately half of the overall budget – and makes improvements to Orange County's freeways and streets to keep the county moving safely and efficiently. The budget accounts for focusing on coastal rail resiliency and will continue to fulfill the promises of Measure M, the county's half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements.

Overall, the fiscal year 2025-26 budget is approximately a \$20 million decrease compared to the previous year's budget, reflecting OCTA's commitment to fiscally conservative and prudent planning.

Key highlights of the budget include:

- Expanded transit offerings, including additional OC Bus service to meet increasing demand, the start of OC Streetcar service and continued support for Metrolink rail service
- Delivering on Measure M commitments, including programs and projects outlined in the Measure M Next 10 Delivery plan, and continuing programs that support the needs of cities and the county
- Sustainable and resilient priorities, including continued investment in a zero-emission bus fleet and ongoing coastal rail resiliency planning and project implementation
- Consistent 91 and 405 Express Lanes operations
- A guarded economic outlook, including the preservation of healthy reserve balances to mitigate potential revenue fluctuations

Board Receives Update on Measure M 10-Year Review

As part of its commitment to transparency and long-term planning, the OCTA Board received an update on the ongoing 10-year review of Measure M2, the county's voter-approved half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements.

Required by the Measure M2 Ordinance, the 10-year review is conducted at least once every decade to evaluate the overall performance of the plan, which is expected to generate \$14

billion through 2041. The review helps ensure that projects and programs remain aligned with Orange County's evolving transportation needs.

The current review, OCTA's second since the plan was renewed by voters, includes a comprehensive assessment of progress to date, identification of performance issues or constraints and an evaluation of stakeholder and public support.

Outreach efforts are ongoing and are designed to increase awareness, gather community feedback and assess support for Measure M. Engagement strategies include focus groups, surveys, community events, pop-up booths, public meetings, a dedicated project webpage, social media campaigns and briefings with stakeholders and elected officials.

Public outreach is scheduled to continue through September, and the final report is expected to be presented to the OCTA Board in early 2026.

For more informatio