

Meeting of Oct. 13, 2014

Transit Services Exceeds Standards in Fourth Quarter

The Transit Division performance measurements report showed safety, reliability and overall quality of service exceeded standards.

The report serves to gauge the safety, reliability, cost-effectiveness and overall quality of the public transit services operated. A few highlights include:

- All bus services exceeded courtesy standards.
- Contracted fixed-route and ACCESS service exceeded safety standards and directly-operated fixed-route accident frequency declined during the fourth quarter. Improvements can be partially attributed to safety campaigns and mandatory training courses.
- Local, community, express and StationLink fixed-route services, as well as ACCESS, exceeded reliability standards and on-time performance expectations.
- There were 49 million boardings for all fixed-routes, which was within 2 percent of projected ridership.
- New buses are on the way. Twenty new articulated compressed natural gas vehicles have been deployed, and additional 40-foot CNG buses will soon replace the liquefied natural gas fleet. In addition, 199 CNG vehicles will receive mid-life engine replacements.

Active Transportation Program Continues to Move Forward

According to the most recent active transportation update, OCTA's regional bikeway planning, the OC Loop project and the bike safety program continue to make progress.

OCTA and the Orange County Council of Governments are working on a countywide process to build consensus on regional bikeway corridors and to support the implementation of bikeways projects along key corridors. To date, 30 regional bikeway corridors have been identified.

These corridors serve significant connections such as freeway crossings and accessing major attractions, and are comprised of over 350 miles, 50 percent of which have already been locally implemented.

OCTA is working with cities along the OC Loop, a 66-mile bikeways network, to close the remaining gaps and complete the bike trail.

In September, a ribbon cutting event was held to celebrate the completion of a 2-mile stretch of the Coyote Creek trail along the OC Loop. Public awareness of the Loop will continue with a bicycle ride and festival along Coyote Creek in late October.

When complete, the OC Loop will be a primarily off-street path that will utilize the existing trails along the San Gabriel River, Coyote Creek and Santa Ana River. The trail will provide seamless connections to some of the most scenic beaches and the inland reaches of Orange County.

Finally, the active transportation program continues to promote its bike safety campaign through posters, bus wraps, videos and the OCTA website.

The active transportation efforts support OCTA's mission and help to achieve the goals of the 2014 Long-Range Transportation Plan and Commuter Bikeways Strategic Plan.

Measure M Tax Forecast

The board received an update on the long-term forecast for Measure M sales tax as determined by university estimates.

OCTA contracts with three universities to provide a 30-year long-range forecast of Measure M taxable sales revenues through 2041. All three universities have recently updated their forecasts, and the new information has been incorporated to develop the current long-range forecast of Measure M.

The growth rate this year is projected to be 7.79 percent. As part of the budget process, the board approved a more conservative growth rate of 6.7 percent for FY 2014-15, which was the rate determined by last year's blended forecast.

The blended forecast projects that the total Measure M sales tax revenues over the 30-year period will be approximately \$15.8 billion. When Measure M passed in 2006, prior to the recession, it was expected the half-cent sales tax would generate \$24 billion.

\$34.5 Million Target Approved for Management of Land Preserves

The board approved a non-wasting endowment target of \$34.5 million for environmental mitigation to off-set impacts of Measure M freeway projects.

The OCTA Freeway Environmental Mitigation Program allocates at least 5 percent of the Measure M freeway program budget for environmental mitigation. The program purchases open space from willing sellers and through agreements with state and federal wildlife agencies, it allows for the acceleration of environmental permitting for the 13 freeway improvement projects as part of Measure M2.

Approximately 1,150 acres of open space have been acquired and approximately 400 acres of habitat restoration projects have been funded. The preserves and restoration projects are part of The Natural Community Conservation and Habitat Conservation Plans.

The multi-year deposits to the endowment, which will total approximately \$34.5 million, provide funds to pay for the long-term management and maintenance costs of the land preserves. These preserves will complement other existing preserved lands within Orange County.