



May 4, 2020

To: Regional Planning and Highways Committee
From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer
Subject: Interstate 405 Improvement Project Update

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Overview

The Orange County Transportation Authority is currently underway with the implementation of the Interstate 405 Improvement Project. This report provides a project update.

Recommendation

Receive and file as an information item.

Background

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), in cooperation with the California Department of Transportation, and the cities of Costa Mesa, Fountain Valley, Huntington Beach, Seal Beach, and Westminster, is implementing the Interstate 405 (I-405) Improvement Project between State Route 73 (SR-73) and Interstate 605 (I-605) (Project). The Project will add one general purpose lane in each direction from Euclid Street to I-605, consistent with Measure M2 Project K, and will add an additional lane in each direction that will combine with the existing high-occupancy vehicle lane to provide dual express lanes in each direction of I-405 from SR-73 to I-605, otherwise known as the 405 Express Lanes.

On November 14, 2016, the OCTA Board of Directors (Board) awarded the design-build (DB) contract to OC 405 Partners (OC405), a joint venture. OCTA executed the DB contract with OC405 and issued Notice to Proceed (NTP) No. 1 on January 31, 2017. NTP No. 1 was a limited NTP for mobilization, design, and administrative activities. On July 26, 2017, the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan agreement was executed between OCTA and the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT). On July 27, 2017, OCTA issued NTP No. 2 to OC405. NTP No. 2 was a full NTP for all activities, including construction.

Discussion

A number of activities are ongoing as the final design, right-of-way (ROW) acquisition, utility relocations, and construction activities continue to advance. The following provides a more detailed status of Project activities.

Financing and TIFIA Loan

On July 26, 2017, OCTA executed a TIFIA loan agreement with the USDOT for up to \$628.93 million. Pursuant to the terms identified in the loan agreement, OCTA staff submits periodic reimbursement requisitions to the USDOT Build America Bureau and Federal Highway Administration. OCTA has received two TIFIA loan disbursements to date and anticipates receiving the third disbursement later this year.

Tolling Contracts

On February 26, 2018, the Board selected Kapsch TrafficCom USA, Inc., (Kapsch) to provide toll lanes system integration services for design, installation, operation, and maintenance of the electronic toll and traffic management (ETTM) system on both the 405 and 91 Express Lanes. Kapsch is currently under contract and is working closely with the design-builder to deliver fully functional express lanes upon opening in 2023. Kapsch has submitted the ETTM infrastructure final design to be used for the 405 Express Lanes, including equipment types and configurations. Kapsch has also reviewed the design-builder's plans and provided input on requirements for the Toll Operations Center (TOC) improvements. The TOC will be located at OCTA's Santa Ana Bus Base and will be staffed by Kapsch for 405 Express Lanes operations.

Staff has initiated the development of a request for proposals for the back office support and customer service center contract for the 405 Express Lanes, and plans to seek Board approval for its release in the summer of 2020.

Design

The final design is substantially complete at this time. The DB process allows for design refinements, and that process will continue throughout the remainder of construction.

ROW Acquisition

Construction of the Project impacts 288 properties, including 179 residential properties, 71 commercial/industrial properties, 37 public properties, and one railroad property. There are 287 properties identified as partial acquisitions

and one property identified as a full acquisition at the owner's request. The real property requirements for the partial acquisitions are comprised of a combination of fee acquisitions, permanent easements, temporary construction easements (TCE), permanent and temporary ground lease reductions, and access control rights needed to construct the proposed highway and express lane improvements for the Project. The full-fee acquisition, partial-fee acquisitions, permanent easements, and TCEs are required for roadway and bridge construction, soundwalls and retaining walls, drainage systems, and for the installation of above-ground and underground facilities, including electrical, telecommunication, water, sewer, gas, and storm drain systems.

The ROW acquisition program is currently on schedule. Of the 288 total properties impacted, the following summarizes the status of the ROW acquisition:

- 288 offers presented,
- 283 parcels in OCTA's possession for construction,
- 60 resolutions of necessity (RONs) approved.

No additional RONs are anticipated at this time.

Utility Relocations

There are currently 107 utilities that require relocation to accommodate the Project. OCTA is coordinating with 22 impacted utility owners to identify and resolve conflicts and relocation issues. To date, OCTA has executed 80 utility agreements, or over 75 percent of the agreements for utilities requiring relocation, and is in the process of finalizing the remaining utility agreements. There are several potential utility relocation risks, including a Southern California Gas transmission line and several Southern California Edison (SCE) facilities for which staff continues to develop and implement mitigation plans, as utilities are a shared risk between OCTA and OC405. Critical utility relocations that had once been considered to pose some risk, such as facilities owned by Frontier Communications, Chevron USA, Crimson Pipeline, and SCE, have been successfully completed.

Construction

OC405 began construction on March 6, 2018. Initial construction activities included restriping portions of the freeway and setting up concrete barriers on the outside of the freeway to protect work areas for activities such as tree removals and grading. These initial construction activities are complete. Clearing and grubbing, including tree and ground cover removal, and rough grading activities are also substantially complete at this time.

Significant roadway construction activities, including installation of drainage systems, retaining walls and soundwalls, and paving operations began in earnest in 2019 and will continue through 2020. Construction at Oceanview Channel and East Valley Channel, two major drainage facilities that cross under the freeway, is well underway. Additionally, over 50 walls are under construction or complete.

After the opening of the Slater Avenue overcrossing bridge in late August 2019, demolition and construction activities commenced on Bushard Street and Talbert Avenue. The Bushard Street and Talbert Avenue overcrossing bridge construction is actively progressing, and the bridges are anticipated to be open to traffic in late 2020 and early 2021, respectively. Construction on the McFadden Avenue overcrossing bridge also continues, and the bridge is anticipated to be open to traffic in late summer of 2020. Bushard Street, Talbert Avenue, and McFadden Avenue are all one-stage bridges, which means the bridges are closed to traffic on both sides of I-405 during demolition and reconstruction.

Significant bridge construction also continued at Fairview Road, Magnolia Street, Goldenwest Street, Westminster Boulevard, and Bolsa Chica Road overcrossings. These are two-stage bridges, which means traffic will be maintained on the remaining portion of the bridge while the first half of the new bridge is constructed. The first half of the new Magnolia Street overcrossing bridge opened in late March, and construction began on the second half of the bridge immediately thereafter. The opening of the first half of the other two-stage bridges noted is anticipated in 2020.

This past quarter, the widening of existing freeway bridges continued over Harbor Boulevard, Santa Ana River, Beach Boulevard, Bolsa overhead railroad crossing, and an old Navy railroad crossing.

Looking ahead, the remainder of 2020 will remain busy related to bridge, wall, and pavement construction.

Project Challenges

As would be expected on a project of this magnitude, certain challenges have been encountered, including the following:

- Oversight and approvals from many different agencies and third parties
- Cost and availability of construction resources in this active construction market
- Dispute resolution and change management
- Minimizing impacts and disruptions to the public
- Timely performance of third-party utility work
- Project schedule impacts and mitigations

OCTA has worked closely with its partners and OC405 to mitigate schedule delays when identified. Schedule mitigations implemented to date include building the Slater Avenue and Edwards Street overcrossing bridges in one stage instead of two stages, improvements to the construction staging at Oceanview Channel, and the long-term closure of one of the two off-ramps from northbound I-405 to Westminster Boulevard. More recent schedule mitigations that have been implemented include extended overnight and daytime freeway lane closures to take advantage of the significantly reduced traffic volumes on the freeway the past two months related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The objectives of the schedule mitigations are to minimize impacts to the original Project completion date while balancing the minimization of traffic impacts.

Additionally, in September 2019, there was a discovery of archaeological resources within the Project site. OCTA is following established state procedures for this type of discovery and is working with the appropriate parties to ensure appropriate and respectful procedures are followed. This discovery has impacted construction at a specific location. Recently, a mitigation was implemented to minimize the impacts to the overall Project schedule.

Project Cost/Contingency

The overall Project cost remains \$1.9 billion, and the Project contingencies have been approximately 38 percent expended to date. This is in line with the percent complete for the Project from both a time and earned value standpoint.

Public Outreach

Over the past few months, the public outreach team has shifted strategies as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. All meetings with residents, business owners, and key stakeholders have become virtual discussions, and outreach is being conducted primarily through electronic means.

As work is ongoing on a large number of walls, the public outreach team is coordinating with approximately 150 residents due to the residents' backyard walls being rebuilt as part of the Project. Residents are advised of initial activities such as installation of safety fencing and ongoing work that may be of impact, such as wall demolition and pile installation. In addition, the public outreach team is facilitating preconstruction surveys prior to pile installation activities at bridges.

The public outreach team has conducted three virtual neighborhood meetings since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The first was with Fountain Valley, Huntington Beach, and Westminster residents near the Magnolia Street bridge as work there began on the second half of the bridge. In addition, virtual

meetings have been held with Leisure World and College Park East residents in the City of Seal Beach for activities along North Gate Road and Almond Avenue, respectively. The meetings were attended by an average of 50 residents, and the format, a webinar during which residents were able to comment and ask questions, has been well received.

The virtual meetings are among several tools the public outreach team has begun using in lieu of face-to-face briefings and meetings, tactics that are currently on hold. Other tools include targeted social media ads; addressable geofencing to deliver information through mobile music, games, and news apps; connecting with and sharing information to community-specific social media groups within each corridor city; creating 30- to 60-second videos for social media; and tagging local traffic reporters on social media.

In the coming months, the public outreach team anticipates conducting at least two additional virtual neighborhood meetings to notify communities of the next phase of activities beginning for the Bolsa Chica Road and Goldenwest Street bridges. Typically, the team also participates in community events throughout spring and summer, however, all events have been canceled. Meanwhile, the team continues to brief key community stakeholders through conference calls and have partnered with city staff to provide updates through each city's respective communication channels.

Constituent comments and questions have dropped slightly, averaging approximately 130 per month this past quarter, down from an average of 140 per month in the last quarter of 2019. An increase in activities has driven a rise in construction emails, with an average of 12 per month going to more than 12,000 recipients. In addition, targeted social media ads continue to be a cost-effective tool while the Project interactive map and mobile app use remains steady.

Next Steps

Staff will continue to work closely with the design-builder to continue construction. This involves completing the ROW acquisition, obtaining permits, utility relocation coordination, and coordinating construction activities.

Summary

Construction continues to advance. Currently, ROW acquisition, utility relocations, public outreach, and other activities are in process to continue the construction phase of the Project.

Attachment

None.

Prepared by:



Jeff Mills, P.E.
Senior Program Manager
(714) 560-5925

Approved by:



James G. Beil, P.E.
Executive Director, Capital Programs
(714) 560-5646