



**October 3, 2022**

**To:** Executive Committee

**From:** Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer 

**Subject:** Orange County Transportation Authority Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan

### **Overview**

As part of a comprehensive emergency management program, the Orange County Transportation Authority has developed a Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan evaluates natural hazard impacts to the Orange County Transportation Authority's operations and provides mitigation strategy recommendations to reduce or eliminate risks from those identified hazards.

### **Recommendations**

- A. Adopt the Orange County Transportation Authority Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, as approved by the California Office of Emergency Services and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- B. Direct staff to implement the annual Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan review to ensure the plan remains accurate and in compliance with state and federal regulations.
- C. Direct staff to update the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan every five years to maintain compliance with the state and federal agency requirements.

### **Background**

Hazard mitigation planning reduces risks to people and property and improves organizational resiliency by minimizing the impact of disasters. Effective hazard mitigation planning also reduces the cost of recovering from a disaster. Hazard mitigation plans identify a comprehensive list of regional hazards that can occur and define a list of mitigation measures related to those hazards. Additionally, for the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) to receive pre- and post-disaster mitigation funds from the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) or the California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES),

OCTA must have a current FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plan (Plan). This Plan must be updated annually and re-approved by CalOES, FEMA, and OCTA's Board of Directors (Board) every five years. With approval by the Board, this will be the first version of the Plan (Attachment A).

### ***Discussion***

Hazard mitigation planning can help reduce loss of life and property by minimizing the impact of disasters and is the cornerstone of every community's approach to reducing vulnerabilities to disasters. The Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, Title 44 Code of Federal Regulations 201.6, requires states and local entities to adopt this approach to reduce losses, become more resilient, and qualify for pre- and post-disaster mitigation funding by way of grants.

The proposed Plan outlines a five-phase approach to developing mitigation recommendations: establishing a Hazard Mitigation Planning Steering Committee comprised of internal and external stakeholders, conducting an inventory of OCTA assets and risk assessment against known natural hazards in the OCTA operating area, engaging OCTA customers and community, development of recommended mitigation strategies to address risks, and the Plan adoption, implementation, and maintenance.

In all, 12 categories of hazards were identified and prioritized. The top four hazards include wildfire, earthquake, epidemic/pandemic, and severe weather. Each hazard section of the Plan details magnitude, frequency, and the potential impact to OCTA operations and its ridership.

From this detailed analysis, 24 mitigation strategies are recommended, spanning several OCTA service areas and in some cases, involving governmental and agency partners throughout the planning area. These strategies address the following eight areas:

- Public education
- Pandemic after-action reports
- Protection of infrastructure from flooding/erosion
- Climate change
- Earthquake/seismic risks
- Multi-hazard protection
- Employee education
- Wildfire mitigation

On May 27, 2022, this Plan was reviewed and approved by both FEMA and CalOES and now qualifies OCTA to pursue pre- and post-disaster mitigation funding following Board approval and promulgation of the Plan. The Plan must be reviewed annually by the Hazard Mitigation Planning Steering Committee, revised in 2026, and resubmitted to FEMA and CalOES for approval for OCTA to remain eligible to receive pre- and post-disaster mitigation funding.

### ***Summary***

The California Office of Emergency Services and the Federal Emergency Management Agency encourage local agencies to develop and maintain a Hazard Mitigation Plan that can help to reduce the loss of life and property by minimizing the impact of disasters. With the adoption of the Orange County Transportation Authority Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan and direction from the Board of Directors to fully implement the plan, the Orange County Transportation Authority will be eligible to apply for pre- and post-disaster grant funding.

### ***Attachments***

- A. Orange County Transportation Authority Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan
- B. Orange County Transportation Authority Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan – Appendix D. Planning Process and Public Outreach

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