



**November 13, 2023**

**To:** Members of the Board of Directors

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

**Subject:** Public Hearing for the 2023 Orange County Congestion Management Program Report

### **Overview**

The Orange County Transportation Authority is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the Orange County Congestion Management Program. In accordance with state law. The Orange County Congestion Management Program Report has been updated for 2023 and all requirements have been fulfilled. A public hearing is required prior to the Board of Directors' adoption of the biennial Congestion Management Program Report.

### **Recommendations**

- A. Consider public hearing comments received on the 2023 Orange County Congestion Management Program Report.
- B. Adopt the 2023 Orange County Congestion Management Program Report.
- C. Direct staff to forward the 2023 Orange County Congestion Management Program Report to the Southern California Association of Governments for a finding of regional consistency.

### **Background**

In June 1990, the passage of Proposition 111 required urbanized areas to designate a Congestion Management Agency (CMA) and establish a Congestion Management Program (CMP) to continue receiving state gasoline tax funds. The purpose of the CMP is to coordinate land use and transportation decisions, and to assess how traffic congestion is being managed.

As Orange County's designated CMA, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) is responsible for monitoring Orange County's CMP and

preparing a biennial report. The Orange County CMP report is a composite of data submittals, such as traffic counts and capital improvement programs that are developed in accordance with state legislation and in coordination with local jurisdictions. Specific CMP elements are also linked to the Measure M2 (M2) eligibility process for Orange County cities and the County of Orange.

The draft 2023 Orange County CMP Report was presented to the OCTA Board of Directors (Board) on September 25, 2023, and was subsequently released for public review. A notice of availability was forwarded to local jurisdictions, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 12. The cities of Anaheim and Laguna Woods noted their review of the draft 2023 CMP and that they had no comments to submit. SCAG and Caltrans District 12 have submitted comments, included as attachments A and B, that are summarized below.

- SCAG confirmed that the draft 2023 CMP effectively addresses statutory requirements.
- Caltrans District 12 recommended that the 2023 CMP include language to address equity, recommended minor language updates, and that OCTA continue to coordinate planning efforts with Caltrans District 12. It was also recommended that the 2023 CMP consider including additional technical data, such as a vehicle miles traveled assessment and vehicle queuing data, although this data is not required by state legislation to meet CMP conformance.

In accordance with state law, the final 2023 Orange County CMP Report (Attachment C) is now being presented at a noticed public hearing prior to adoption. Public hearing notices were posted as follows:

- OCTA.net on September 26, 2023,
- Nguoi Viet on October 12, 2023,
- OC Register on October 8, 2023, and
- Excelsior on October 12, 2023

### ***Discussion***

The 2023 Orange County CMP Report has been developed in compliance with state law and includes the elements discussed below.

#### **Traffic Level of Service Standards**

In 1991, OCTA implemented an intersection capacity utilization (ICU) monitoring method. This was developed with technical staff from local and state agencies

for measuring the level of service (LOS) at CMP intersections and assigning an LOS grade as reflected in the table below. This method is consistent with the Caltrans Highway Capacity Manual. The first CMP intersection LOS measurement (taken in 1992 for most CMP intersections) established a baseline for comparing future measurements. CMP intersections are required to maintain an LOS grade of 'E' or better, unless the baseline LOS was lower than E. If the baseline LOS is lower than E, the ICU rating cannot increase by more than 0.10. If the minimum LOS is not maintained, the intersection will be considered deficient. The responsible agency must identify improvements necessary to bring deficient intersections back into conformity with the LOS standards. This can be achieved through existing plans in current capital improvement programs, or through development of deficiency plans. There are no deficient intersections identified in the 2023 Orange County CMP Report.

LOS Grade	ICU Rating	General Description
A	0.00 – 0.60	Free flow, no delays
B	0.60 – 0.70	Mostly free flow, minimal delays
C	0.70 – 0.80	Acceptable delays
D	0.80 – 0.90	Approaching instability or delays with some backups forming
E	0.90 – 1.00	Vehicle volume nearing capacity with increased delay and backups
F	> 1.00	Volume exceeds capacity resulting in significant delays and backups

#### Performance Measures

LOS is measured at 101 CMP intersections in Orange County. Between 1992 and 2023, the average LOS conditions have improved by approximately 18 percent for the morning average ICU rating and over 19 percent for the evening average ICU rating. The LOS improvements reported through the CMP consistently demonstrate the value of the investments made in the transportation system. Orange County's population and employment has increased by approximately 26 percent and 19 percent, respectively since 1992. However, the effective use of M2 funds, as well as other local, state, and federal resources has helped manage the related traffic implications. It should also be noted that the 2023 data also indicates that CMP LOS levels are returning to pre coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels. Due to lower traffic volumes during the COVID-19 pandemic, data for the 2021 CMP Report showed much higher improvements from baseline conditions, consisting of 36 percent for the morning average and 28 percent for the evening average.

Additionally, transit system performance is reported to track the effectiveness and efficiency of Orange County's fixed-route bus and commuter rail services. In March 2020, federal and state emergency declarations were issued to help reduce the spread of the COVID-19. This resulted in reduced demand for public transit and led to a ridership decline. However, ridership has been steadily recovering since the stay-at-home order was lifted. In response, the Making Better Connections (2022) study outlines a service plan to restore services to pre-pandemic levels. This equates to 390 weekday bus trips (+13 percent above 2021 service levels) and 275 weekend bus trips (+five percent on Saturday and +nine percent on Sunday above 2021 service levels). In addition, OCTA is currently preparing the 2024 OC Transit Vision, a 30-year plan to further improve transit services in Orange County. The 2024 OC Transit Vision will analyze previous transit studies, update post pandemic ridership trends and travel patterns, explore emerging transit technologies, and travel modes, and recommend next steps for long-term transit service improvements in Orange County.

#### Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

Various demand management strategies are implemented throughout Orange County that help address congestion on the CMP highway system by supporting and promoting alternatives to driving alone. These methods and strategies often include incentives for utilizing carpools, vanpools, transit, bicycling, flexible work hours, remote working, and parking management programs. OCTA is currently developing a countywide TDM strategy (Strategy), which will provide local jurisdictions with clear goals and guiding principles to encourage the advancement of TDM initiatives. The Strategy will include a toolbox of TDM initiatives and an action plan that will support the goals of the CMP.

#### Land-Use Analysis Program

The CMP Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) Guidelines define a process for local jurisdictions to measure and mitigate impacts of proposed development projects on the CMP highway system. All local jurisdictions have adopted this process, or a process consistent with the CMP TIA Guidelines. Compliance with the Land-Use Analysis Program is a requirement of the M2 eligibility process for local jurisdictions.

#### Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

The CMP report includes a seven-year capital improvement program of projects for each Orange County local jurisdiction. The CIP includes projects that help maintain or improve traffic conditions on the CMP Highway System and other

local facilities. Local jurisdictions submit CIPs to OCTA as part of the CMP conformity requirements and the M2 eligibility process.

#### CMP Conformance

As the designated CMA, OCTA determines if local jurisdictions are in conformance with the CMP by monitoring the following:

- Consistency with LOS standards,
- Adoption and implementation of deficiency plans when traffic LOS standards are not maintained,
- Adoption and implementation of a program to analyze the impacts of land-use decisions, and
- Adoption and submittal of CIPs.

No deficient intersections are identified in the 2023 Orange County CMP Report. In addition, local jurisdictions completed a set of checklists, developed by OCTA, that guide them through the CMP conformity requirements. These checklists ensure the legislative requirements of the CMP are addressed, including land-use coordination, CIP preparation, and TDM strategies utilization. Based on the LOS monitoring and the completed CMP checklists, all local jurisdictions are in compliance with the CMP (Attachment D).

#### Next Steps

Following the noticed public hearing, and upon Board approval, the 2023 Orange County CMP Report will be forwarded to SCAG to make a final determination of consistency with the current Regional Transportation Plan, as required by state law.

#### **Summary**

The 2023 Orange County CMP Report has been prepared in accordance with statutory requirements and has been developed through cooperative efforts involving local jurisdictions and public agencies. Monitoring efforts have determined that all requirements have been fulfilled, and Board approval of the 2023 Orange County CMP is requested.

***Attachments***

- A. Letter to Mr. Kia Mortazavi, Orange County Transportation Authority, Executive Director, Planning, from Annie Nam, Deputy Director, Transportation, Southern California Association of Governments, re: Draft 2023 Congestion Management Program, dated October 11, 2023
- B. Letter to Mr. Angel Garfio, Orange County Transportation Authority, from Scott Shelley, District Branch Chief, Regional-Local Development Review – Climate Change – Transit Planning, California Department of Transportation District 12, re: OCTA Congestion Management Program Report, dated October 16, 2023
- C. 2023 Orange County Congestion Management Program Report
- D. 2023 Congestion Management Program, Summary of Compliance

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