OCTA

October 5, 2026

To: Regional Transportation Planning Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

Subject: Comprehensive Transportation Funding Programs – Project X Tier 1 2026 Call for Projects Programming Recommendations

Overview

The Orange County Transportation Authority issued the 2026 annual Measure M2 Comprehensive Transportation Funding Programs Environmental Cleanup Program Tier 1 call for projects in March 2026, which provides funding for water quality improvement projects to address transportation-generated pollution. Project applications were due in May 2026. A list of projects recommended for funding is presented for Board of Directors' review and approval.

Recommendations

A. Approve the award of $3,870,044 in Tier 1 Environmental Cleanup Program funding for eight projects.

B. Approve an exception to the Comprehensive Transportation Funding Programs guidelines to allow the City of Huntington Beach to (1) be recommended for a Measure M2 funding allocation while the City of Huntington Beach is temporarily ineligible to receive Measure M2 funds, and (2) proceed with the project, at its own risk, prior to the issuance of a letter agreement. If the City of Huntington Beach regains Measure M2 eligibility and all applicable requirements are satisfied, the Orange County Transportation Authority shall enter into a letter agreement and provide the awarded Measure M2 funds for the project.

Background

In May 2010, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Board of Directors (Board) approved a two-tiered approach to fund the Measure M2 (M2) Environmental Cleanup Program (ECP), Project X. The Tier 1 grant program is designed to mitigate the more visible forms of pollutants, such as litter and debris, which collect on roadways and in catch basins prior to being deposited

in waterways and the ocean. The Tier 2 grant program provides funding for larger, multi-jurisdictional, capital-intensive structural treatment best management practice (BMP) types of projects.

Tier 1 funding, which is the focus of the most recent call for projects (call), is available for Orange County local jurisdictions to purchase and install equipment and other related BMPs that supplement, not supplant, current water quality programs. Examples include screens, filters, and inserts for catch basins, as well as other devices designed to remove the above-mentioned pollutants. Proposed projects must demonstrate a direct nexus to the reduction of transportation-related pollution, as developed and defined by OCTA's Environmental Cleanup Allocation Committee (ECAC).

To date, the Board has approved funding for 241 Tier 1 projects, totaling approximately $43.4 million. It is estimated that nearly 92 million gallons of trash have been captured since the inception of the ECP in 2011. On March 9, 2026, the Board approved the issuance of the current 2026 ECP Tier 1 call. Based on cash flow assumptions available at that time, the funding target for the call was estimated at $3.5 million, with additional funding possible subject to availability. The deadline to submit projects for consideration for the 2026 call was May 7, 2026.

Discussion

OCTA received nine applications from nine local jurisdictions. During the evaluation process, one application was withdrawn by the County of Orange due to existing commitments to other obligated BMP upgrades, which limited the County's available resources to complete the proposed project. The remaining eight applications were reviewed and evaluated by an application review committee consisting of OCTA staff and two ECAC members. Project applications were evaluated based on Board-approved selection criteria, which included the following:

- Effectiveness at removing trash and debris;
- Cost/benefit analyses;
- Pollution-reducing benefits;
- Project readiness;
- Adequacy of proposed operations and maintenance plans; and
- Submission of clear and detailed work plans with specific implementation timing documented.

On August 13, 2026, the ECAC met and endorsed the application review committee's recommendation that eight projects totaling $3,870,044 be considered by the Board for funding (Attachment A). While the recommended award amount is higher than the Board-authorized target of $3.5 million, the recommended funding amount is within the Project X funding capacity.

The Tier 1 projects being recommended for funding primarily consist of various catch basin debris screen devices including 935 connector pipe screens (CPS), 344 automatic retractable screens (ARS), 28 full trash capture (FTC) units, four grated inlet trash screens (GITS), 339 brush inlet screens (BIS), two bioretention basins, and two in-line trash trap systems.

More detailed project descriptions and visual samples are provided in Attachments B and C, respectively. A brief overview of these project types is also provided below.

- Catch basin debris screen devices: these devices prevent debris from entering the storm drain system through catch basins and primarily consist of CPS, ARS, FTC, GITS, and BIS type devices.
- Bioretention basins are landscape depressions or shallow basins used to slow and treat stormwater runoff. Stormwater is directed to the basin and then percolates through the system where it is treated by a number of physical, chemical, and biological processes. The cleaned water is then able to infiltrate native soil or can be directed to nearby stormwater drains or receiving waters.
- An in-line trash trap unit is a precast concrete structure designed to treat pollutants present in stormwater and urban runoff through the capturing of trash, solids, and other debris in disposable mesh nets from incoming flows. The design of the trash trap unit effectively uses the energy of water flow to drive pollutants into nets in order to capture and separate trash, debris, and sediment, including all particles larger than one millimeter. Oil absorbing material can also be placed inside or outside the nets to absorb oil sheen and grease.

As part of the Tier 1 program, local jurisdictions agree to contribute a minimum cash match of 20 percent of total project costs. All recommended projects meet or exceed this requirement.

Exception to the Comprehensive Transportation Funding Programs (CTFP) Guidelines:

The ECP Tier 1 program is one of several competitive funding programs through the M2 program that are guided by the CTFP guidelines. The guidelines outline the general requirements for the individual programs as well as overarching requirements that apply to all competitive funding programs.

One of the projects recommended for funding was submitted by the City of Huntington Beach (City) and requires an exception to the CTFP guidelines. The CTFP guidelines state that local jurisdictions must fulfill the annual eligibility process and be deemed eligible by the Board to apply for and receive funding through any of the competitive CTFP programs. On May 12, 2025, the Board found the City ineligible to receive M2 net revenues for a period of five years; however, as part of that action, the Board specifically permitted the City to apply for competitive CTFP grants while the City takes steps to restore its eligibility. Accordingly, staff is requesting an exception to the guidelines to allow the City to receive a Tier 1 funding award. Any awarded funds would be withheld and would not be disbursed to the City until after the Board takes a future separate action to reestablish the City's eligibility to receive M2 net revenues. The City would also remain subject to all applicable project requirements of the CTFP guidelines, and any future disbursement would be contingent upon the City's adherence with those terms. The City would start and potentially complete the project at risk as funds would only be available in the future if the City is found eligible again. If the City is not found eligible in the future or does not otherwise satisfy the applicable CTFP requirements, OCTA would not be required to provide the funding to the City.

Next Steps

Upon Board approval, each funded jurisdiction will be required to execute a letter amendment (to their existing M2 Master Funding Agreement with OCTA). Unless pre-award authority is requested, an executed letter amendment must be in place prior to project implementation. Once this process is complete, OCTA will initiate project monitoring and Board reporting through the CTFP semi-annual review and M2 quarterly reporting processes.

Summary

The OCTA ECP provides grant funding to local jurisdictions for projects that support water quality improvements related to transportation infrastructure. The 2026 Tier 1 call has concluded, and staff is recommending Board approval to program $3,870,044 in ECP funds to eight local jurisdiction projects. Also, an exception to the CTFP guidelines is required to award funding to the City.

Attachments

A. 2026 Project X Tier 1 Call for Projects – Programming Recommendations
B. 2026 Project X Tier 1 Call for Projects – Project Summaries
C. Visual Samples of Recommended Best Management Practice, Tier 1 Project Types

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