



September 21, 2017

To: Legislative and Communications Committee
From: Darrell Johnson, Chief Executive Officer
Subject: Consideration of Measure M Identity Enhancements

Overview

In an effort to increase awareness of Orange County's local transportation sales tax measure and avoid confusion with Los Angeles County's Measure M, it is recommended to enhance the Measure M identity by incorporating a new name and logo into signage and communications materials. The Legislative and Communications Committee reviewed the proposed identity modification to OC Go and offered suggestions on the signage design, which since has been updated for review.

Recommendation

Approve renaming Measure M and incorporate the OC Go logo into updated signage and communications materials.

Background

In November 2006, nearly 70 percent of Orange County affirmatively voted on Measure M, the half-cent local sales tax for transportation improvements. Measure M, administered by the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), will provide nearly \$14 billion to improve transportation in Orange County over a 30-year period that began in spring 2011.

Research indicates a low public awareness of Measure M. According to the OCTA 2015 Attitudinal & Awareness Survey, nearly three-quarters of those surveyed (72 percent) had never heard of Measure M. Focus groups conducted in the summer of 2016 also indicated low awareness of Measure M and the specific types of projects and programs it funds. After being informed about Measure M, the majority of focus group participants indicated that they valued knowing that their local tax funds help deliver Orange County transportation projects. With this in mind, staff began looking at ways to better communicate the projects and programs that are funded with Measure M.

Within the Measure M program, as projects are implemented, signs are posted to inform the public that Measure M funding is responsible for the improvement or service. For example, funding signs with the OCTA and Measure M logos are posted during construction for freeway, street and road, and transit station projects. Services funded by Measure M, such as community and senior transit circulators, include logos on the vehicles. Currently, each funding sign has a different look and color scheme.

To address the lack of Measure M awareness, staff began creating a consistent look across all of the signage to visually demonstrate a connection to the funding from Measure M for all of the different services and improvements. Future funding signs will all have a consistent and recognizable visual identity, color scheme, and message.

Discussion

In November 2016, Los Angeles County voters approved Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (LA Metro) transportation sales tax, also called Measure M. LA Metro's Measure M became widely known following significant print and television media coverage.

In order to avoid confusion, to differentiate between the two counties, and to increase public awareness of Orange County's taxpayer-funded transportation investments, staff has recommended the renaming of Orange County's Measure M for public communication purposes and developing a new visual logo identity.

The 2016 focus group participants indicated that the name should clearly communicate transportation. Since the current identity does not presently do so, a new name and look have been developed that fit within the existing OCTA Board of Directors (Board)-approved family of OCTA logos - OC Bus, OC Streetcar, OC Vanpool, and OC Bike. The recommended name is OC Go. The new identity incorporates a local focus, fits within the OCTA family of logos, and clearly communicates transportation in an appealing manner.

Funding signs posted on the state highway system must adhere to specific standards and rules as per the State Highway Manual. Prior to finalizing a new look for the program, OCTA submitted the proposed highway improvement funding sign to the California State Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for review. Caltrans reviewed the sign and gave preliminary approval with the understanding that it would be brought to the OCTA Board for review before being finalized.

At the July 20, 2017 Legislative and Communications Committee, Committee members reviewed the proposed OC Go identity and provided suggestions to simplify the freeway signage design. Based on this feedback, staff made revisions to the sign to include an updated tagline that emphasizes “local” tax dollars and condensed messaging to enhance readability.

Caltrans reviewed the revised sign mockup and gave preliminary approval, with one exception. The exception is that, based on the Caltrans State Highway Manual, the wording must say “Highway Improvements” rather than simply “Improvements,” which is what the Legislative and Communications Committee had suggested. If the Board chooses to move forward with the new name and logo for OC Go, as well as the new project signage, staff will work with Caltrans to seek an exception to the highway manual to reduce the wording. If it is not possible, the sign will be redesigned with the full “Highway Improvements” wording incorporated into the design.

After final approval, staff will begin installing signs to enhance awareness in the proximity of local sales tax funded projects as they begin the construction phase. The production and installation of signage is included in construction contracts as part of the normal process, and the proposed design would be used only for new projects going forward. In addition, the application of a style guide to signage across transportation modes will ensure a consistent and recognizable visual identity, color scheme, and message for projects and services funded by the local sales tax.

Summary

To enhance awareness of Orange County's local sales tax measure and avoid confusion with Los Angeles County, staff developed a new identity for Measure M, called OC Go. The proposed logo fits within the family of OCTA logos, clearly communicates transportation, and incorporates the preferred tagline supported by market research. If approved, the new identity would be rolled out in a public awareness campaign and in new signage for projects that go into construction.

Attachment

None.

Prepared by:

Ryan J. Armstrong
Manager, Digital and Creative Services
(714) 560-5834

Approved by:

Lance M. Larson
Executive Director,
External Affairs
(714) 560-5908