




**February 4, 2019**

**To:** Regional Planning and Highways Committee  
**From:** Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer   
**Subject:** Master Plan of Arterial Highways Status Report

### **Overview**

The Orange County Transportation Authority is responsible for administering the Master Plan of Arterial Highways, including the review and approval of amendments requested by local agencies. The status of pending Master Plan of Arterial Highways actions and projects is presented for the Board of Directors' review.

### **Recommendation**

Receive and file as an information item.

### **Background**

The Orange County Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) was initially established in 1956 to provide consistent standards to local roadways in Orange County. This goal is reinforced through Measure M funding eligibility requirements for local jurisdictions.

As part of the MPAH consistency requirement, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) must approve changes to MPAH facilities that are proposed by local jurisdictions. The MPAH Guidelines include amendment procedures that ensure a consistent planning process. Procedures are summarized as follows:

- The local agency submits a proposed change to OCTA, including documentation to support the basis for the request, such as a transportation impact analysis.
- Upon receiving the request and supporting documents, OCTA meets with the requesting agency and, if necessary, adjacent jurisdictions.

- If there is agreement to proceed, OCTA submits the request to the OCTA Board of Directors (Board). Upon Board approval, the requesting agency amends its general plan to reflect the change.
- If there is no agreement, a cooperative study is initiated to reach consensus between OCTA, the requesting agency, and affected jurisdictions prior to seeking Board approval.

There are currently 33 active amendments proposed for the MPAH (Attachment A). Many of these amendment requests are awaiting local action to amend their respective general plans. Others are either under review, are in the cooperative study process, are pending resolution of issues with other agencies, or are awaiting refinement of development plans. The discussion below focuses on the status of two issues that may impact the MPAH:

- The ongoing circulation element update by the City of Santa Ana (City),
- The 2006 memorandum of understanding (MOU) between OCTA and the cities of Costa Mesa, Fountain Valley, and Huntington Beach regarding the Garfield-Gisler Santa Ana River crossing.

### ***Discussion***

#### **Santa Ana Circulation Element Update**

The City is considering modifications to their circulation element related to their 2016 Safe Mobility Santa Ana Plan. This plan focuses on enhancing safety on the City's roadways, with the goal of eliminating severe and fatal injuries by implementing best practices in traffic safety. The City has been coordinating with OCTA and neighboring jurisdictions to review potential MPAH amendments, related traffic impacts, and mitigation.

The City has developed three scenarios that implement traffic safety treatments. Concerns were raised by OCTA and the neighboring jurisdictions with the first scenario shared by the City. The concerns focused on traffic impacts within the neighboring jurisdictions and on OCTA transit routes. In response, the City prepared two additional scenarios that are currently being reviewed. OCTA will complete a technical review and coordinate with the City and neighboring jurisdictions to discuss next steps. If all agencies agree to proceed, staff will likely request the OCTA Board to consider a conditional MPAH amendment. This request would require the City to implement defined measures to mitigate impacts to the satisfaction of OCTA and the neighboring jurisdictions.

### Garfield-Gisler MOU

The Garfield-Gisler Santa Ana River crossing was included in the MPAH as one of four Santa Ana River crossings south of Interstate 405 (I-405). The implementation of the planned crossing would have primarily allowed traffic traveling between the coast and I-405 access to the Harbor Boulevard/I-405 interchange in the City of Costa Mesa (Costa Mesa). Without the crossing, traffic generally flows through the City of Fountain Valley (Fountain Valley) to access I-405. Therefore, to minimize traffic impacts, Fountain Valley favors the crossing or mitigations, whereas Costa Mesa opposes a bridge due to right-of-way (ROW) impacts, but supports mitigations.

Attachment B includes a 2006 Board-approved MOU that reclassifies the Garfield-Gisler crossing as “ROW reserve” (removing it from the modeled arterial network). Further, it identifies a series of improvements to be advanced by each of the three cities (Costa Mesa, Fountain Valley, and Huntington Beach) by 2020. Once the improvements are complete, traffic levels are to be re-evaluated to determine if the Garfield-Gisler crossing should be removed from the MPAH.

One of the Fountain Valley improvements involved reconstructing the southbound I-405 on-ramp at Ellis Avenue to include a free right-turn lane for westbound traffic and a new slip ramp for eastbound traffic. Through the development of the I-405 Improvement Project, these were determined to be too impactful. Equivalent alternative improvements have been identified, but Fountain Valley is concerned they may not provide the same benefit.

Since the 2020 deadline is quickly approaching and the influence of the I-405 Improvement Project will not be realized for several years, it seems appropriate to extend the MOU until after the I-405 construction is complete. OCTA staff recently met with the cities individually to discuss the status of the MOU, and there is general agreement on the extension. As a next step, OCTA will bring all parties together to develop a consensus on specific revisions to the MOU. Any revisions that are agreed to will be brought to the OCTA Board for approval by summer 2019.

### ***Summary***

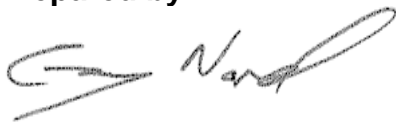
The City is planning an update to their circulation element that is intended to reduce severe and fatal injuries from traffic incidents. This update is anticipated to require MPAH amendments as well as mitigation measures to be implemented by the City. Additionally, it is likely that the existing MOU with Costa Mesa, Fountain Valley, and Huntington Beach regarding the Garfield-Gisler Santa Ana River crossing will need to be extended to allow for completion of the

I-405 Improvement Project prior to re-evaluating traffic patterns. Staff is currently engaged in these processes to preserve the integrity of the MPAH and support coordinated planning of local roads.

***Attachments***

- A. Status Report on Active Master Plan of Arterial Highways Amendments Memorandum of Understanding C-6-0834 Among Cities of Costa Mesa, Fountain Valley and Huntington Beach and the Orange County Transportation Authority Regarding Agency Responsibilities for Implementing the Consensus Recommendation for the Garfield-Gisler Bridge Crossing Over the Santa Ana River

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