



December 2, 2019

To: Regional Planning and Highways Committee
From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer
Subject: Active Transportation Update

Overview

The Orange County Transportation Authority coordinates regional active transportation efforts in Orange County. An update on recent and upcoming activities is provided for review.

Recommendation

Receive and file as an information item.

Background

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Board of Directors (Board) receives updates on regional active transportation actions regularly. These efforts support the OCTA vision for a multimodal system. This report provides an update on regional bicycle and pedestrian planning, educational efforts, collaboration with law enforcement agencies, and success in funding pursuits.

Discussion

A status update is provided on active transportation topics led by OCTA addressing education, enforcement partnerships, school engagement, infrastructure funding, OC Loop status, and a recent Go Human event.

Education

Over the past four years, OCTA has secured grant funding from the California State Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) Highway Safety Program. OCTA has used these funds to create educational safety videos, develop campaigns to distribute safety equipment, and host bicycle and pedestrian skills classes.

In 2016-17, OCTA utilized OTS funding for preparation of the two Play it Safe safety videos. The videos have been highly successful with nearly 400,000 views and were leveraged with an interactive game in early 2018 by the OCTA Marketing Department. The videos and interactive game are posted at the following OCTA website: <https://www.octa.net/Bike/Play-It-Safe/>.

For years 2018 and 2019 activities, OCTA utilized OTS funding to host 14 bicycle skills classes open to the public and two train-the-trainer courses to certify local instructors for future classes. The programs also included distribution of over 10,000 pedestrian safety lights to patrons riding on OCTA buses, as well as 600 helmets and 1,400 lights distributed to bicycle riders.

A program similar to the 2018-19 program activities is planned for implementation again in 2020 using a subsequent year 2019-20 grant from OTS. OCTA will continue working directly with OTS to address safety needs within Orange County.

Enforcement

Throughout 2019, OCTA completed the Partnerships with Police (PWP) Project. The PWP Project included presentations directly to law enforcement officers throughout Orange County addressing the following topics:

- Recommended actions to reduce bicycle crashes,
- Recommended actions to reduce pedestrian crashes, and
- Understanding new and relevant laws.

Presentation modules were developed based on review of local collision data and identification of dangerous behaviors leading to crashes affecting people walking and bicycling. The PWP Project established a forum for open dialogue with law enforcement staff to clarify and address common issues and questions related to active transportation. The project was funded using Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) funding.

A total of 20 training sessions were conducted at seven police departments throughout Orange County, reaching over 320 police officers. Additionally, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) invited OCTA to present to officers in Sacramento. This presentation was recorded on video for review by CHP officers statewide. The project received positive responses from CHP officers and established a strong rapport between transportation professionals and public safety representatives.

Safe Routes to School

OCTA has received two grants related to Safe Routes to School (SRTS) efforts consisting of a planning study, as well as a program to lead educational activities at 25 schools countywide. These multi-pronged efforts will help demonstrate SRTS activities and increase the reach of SRTS programs countywide:

- The SRTS Action Plan (Action Plan) will evaluate ongoing SRTS efforts countywide and develop a list of action items with a clear definition of lead agencies and organizations. The Action Plan aims to improve safety for youth who walk and bike to school. This will be done through collaborative efforts, promotion of transportation safety education, strengthening of education and enforcement partnerships, and advancing encouragement programs that will benefit families throughout the County of Orange (County).
- The Safe Travels Education Program campaign will engage with 25 state-designated disadvantaged public elementary schools to lead education and encouragement activities for walking and biking. A range of activities will be offered based on local interest and time availability for school assemblies, walk/bike to school day events, and training activities. These student activities will be held during and after school, as well as with families on nights or weekends.

Both studies will continue to foster collaboration and partnership between OCTA, the Orange County Health Care Association, the cities, the County, law enforcement agencies, and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

The Citizens Advisory Committee Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee will be involved in advancement of both projects. Staff will provide regular updates to the Board during the projects, which will be in progress for the next two years.

Recent events included designated Walk to School Day events at three schools, with additional partner schools being sought in the upcoming year:

- October 2, 2019 – Clinton-Mendenhall Elementary School in the City of Garden Grove,
- October 9, 2019 – Orangethorpe Elementary School in the City of Fullerton, and
- October 23, 2019 – Brywood Elementary School in the City of Irvine.

Active Transportation Grant Success

Over the past five years, OCTA staff have pursued and secured approximately \$2.1 million in active transportation grant funding. The topics covered by the grants include planning, evaluation, and education. OCTA has been able to leverage approximately \$200,000 of local planning funds to secure an additional \$1.9 million in funds from ten grants (Attachment A).

In 2018, state and regional funding opportunities were made available to local jurisdictions. The California Transportation Commission awarded approximately \$27 million in funding to Orange County agencies from the state Active Transportation Program (ATP) Cycle 4 for seven projects. In June 2019, the OCTA Board awarded \$25 million in the 2019 Bicycle Corridor Improvement Program to 17 projects countywide.

Local jurisdictions will have an opportunity to pursue ATP Cycle 5 funding when the grant funding program is published next year, with an expected application deadline in June 2020. As part of this process, Orange County projects are estimated to receive \$14 million through the SCAG Regional ATP Program. Orange County also has the opportunity to receive additional funds through the statewide ATP program.

OC Loop

The OC Loop envisions a 66-mile regional bikeway network serving the north and central portions of Orange County. It is comprised of the regional bikeway corridors identified in the OCTA-prepared regional bikeways strategies. Over the past few decades, multiple agencies have worked independently to implement portions of the OC Loop, completing approximately 70 percent. When complete, the OC Loop will primarily be an off-street system that will utilize the existing off-street trails along Coyote Creek, San Gabriel River, Santa Ana River, The Tracks at Brea, and the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) corridors.

In 2015, the County completed a feasibility study that provides recommendations and cost estimates on closing gaps along the OC Loop. Based on these recommendations, OCTA worked with the County to prepare the OC Loop 70/30 Plan, which provides an executive level summary fact sheet with estimated improvement costs for each segment of the OC Loop. Additional information can be found on the OC Loop website at www.octa.net/ocloop.

County staff has continued to pursue funding to advance OC Loop segments, with recent completion of Segment F in the City of Yorba Linda, and funding secured to construct segments D and H, serving residents in the cities of Anaheim, Brea, Placentia, and Yorba Linda. The status of the OC Loop, which is now over 80 percent complete, is provided in Attachment B.

OCTA is also facilitating negotiations between UPRR and the cities of Brea and La Habra to secure an easement for the OC Loop segments A and B. OCTA is coordinating the plan reviews and approvals with the California Public Utilities Commission and UPRR. Staff will continue to coordinate with the County and local cities to advance projects to complete the OC Loop.

Meet on Beach

Since 2015, OCTA has partnered with SCAG to develop the marketing campaign and encouragement events for the Go Human campaign. Go Human is the SCAG-sponsored campaign to improve safety and encourage more active transportation travel. SCAG has worked with local agencies to host the following demonstration events within Orange County:

- City of Westminster – Experience Hoover (2016),
- City of Garden Grove – Re: Imagine Garden Grove (2017),
- City of Brea – Experience the Tracks at Brea (2017),
- OC Parks, cities of Anaheim and Yorba Linda – Connect the Loop (2017),
- City of Santa Ana – 18th Annual Cinco de Mayo Festival (2017),
- OC Public Works, cities of Garden Grove and Westminster – Redefine Hazard Avenue (2017), and
- City of Costa Mesa – Explore Merrimac (2018).

Go Human events have provided temporary demonstrations of separated bikeways, celebrated new trails, and supported open streets events, such as the third annual RE:Imagine event conducted by the City of Garden Grove. Attendance varied as marketing for each Go Human event was in scale with available agency resources. Each event had a set of goals developed by the local agency, such as exhibiting a new design concept or bringing a large number of people to a community festival. Based on the respective event goals, local agencies have expressed support with the SCAG collaboration and for Go Human events.

An additional Go Human demonstration has been coordinated by SCAG and the Beach Boulevard Coalition for the cities along Beach Boulevard. Branded “Meet on Beach,” the event occurred on November 17, 2019. Meet on Beach included a day filled with family activities in the cities of Anaheim, Buena Park, Garden Grove, Huntington Beach, La Habra, Stanton, and Westminster. The project website www.meetonbeach.com provided details promoting the event. OCTA provided a free OC Bus day pass using the OC Bus mobile application to those who pledged to ride the bus on November 17.

Summary

OCTA has advanced planning, education, encouragement, and enforcement efforts to improve active transportation throughout Orange County. Coordination and collaboration will continue between SCAG, Caltrans, and stakeholders to encourage and support people walking and bicycling within Orange County.

Attachments

- A. Recent Orange County Transportation Authority Active Transportation Grant Success
- B. OC Loop, Bike. Walk. Connect.

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