



February 3, 2020

To: Regional Planning and Highways Committee
From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer
Subject: Amendment to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways

Overview

The Orange County Transportation Authority administers the Master Plan of Arterial Highways, including the review and approval of amendments requested by local agencies. The City of San Clemente has requested an amendment to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways that is recommended for approval. An update on active Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendments is also provided.

Recommendations

- A. Approve the amendment to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways for South El Camino Real between Avenida Mendocino and the southern city limits from a secondary (four-lane, undivided) arterial to a divided collector (two-lane, divided) arterial. The proposed amendment will become final, contingent upon the Orange County Transportation Authority receiving documentation that the City of San Clemente has amended its general plan and has complied with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.

If the City of San Clemente does not update its general plan within three years to reflect the Master Plan of Arterial Highway amendment, the contingent amendment will expire, but can be returned to the Orange County Transportation Authority's Board of Directors for reconsideration and action.

If the original proposed Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendment is modified as a result of the California Environmental Quality Act and/or general plan amendment process, the modified Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendment shall be returned to the Orange County Transportation Authority's Board of Directors for consideration and action.

- B. Direct the Executive Director of Planning, or his designee, to file a Notice of Exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act in support of the Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendment.

- C. Receive and file a status report on the active Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendments.

Background

In 2019, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) awarded the City of San Clemente (City) Bicycle Corridor Improvement Program funding for the South El Camino Bicycle Improvement Project. This project proposes to restripe South El Camino Real to provide buffered bicycle lanes, consistent with the OCTA District 5 Bikeways Strategy Report. The installation of the proposed bikeway facilities would support completion of the regional bikeways network and help expand travel choices.

To implement this project, the City submitted a letter (Attachment A) requesting to reclassify South El Camino Real on the Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) from a secondary (four-lane, undivided) arterial to a divided collector (two-lane, divided) arterial between Avenida Mendocino to the southern city limits (Attachment B). The proposed MPAH amendment has been reviewed by OCTA prior to being submitted to the Board of Directors (Board) for approval. Details on the requested amendment and an update on active MPAH amendments are provided below.

Discussion

Existing traffic volume on South El Camino Real is approximately 7,700 average daily traffic (ADT). Future volume is forecasted to be approximately 10,200 ADT, which is within the divided collector level of service “C” capacity of 15,000 ADT. Based upon the data provided by the City, future traffic volumes are expected to be accommodated with the proposed changes and are forecasted to remain at acceptable levels of service. Therefore, the requested MPAH amendment is appropriate from a long-range planning perspective and is generally consistent with the MPAH. As such, staff believes that the City has satisfied MPAH amendment requirements and recommends approval of the MPAH amendment request.

California Environmental Quality Act

Amendments to the MPAH are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review. As such, if the Board approves the recommendations, OCTA will file a Notice of Exemption from CEQA in support of the proposed amendment to the MPAH.

MPAH Status Update

As indicated in the status report in Attachment C, there are currently 26 active amendments proposed for the MPAH. In December 2019, the City of Placentia finalized Board-conditionally approved amendments on Crowther Avenue and Golden Avenue. The City of San Juan Capistrano decided not to pursue the Board-conditionally approved amendment on Ortega Highway, and the City of Newport Beach requested to remove their previously requested MPAH amendments related to the Banning Ranch development as they updated their general plan. Many of the remaining amendments 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 status report includes an update regarding the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) C-6-0834. This MOU was established in 2006 to address the designation of the proposed Garfield-Gisler Bridge (Bridge) as a right-of-way reserve facility. Per the MOU, the cities of Costa Mesa, Fountain Valley, and Huntington Beach are responsible for implementing strategic improvements to offset the need for the Bridge through 2020. To date, reasonable progress has been made on implementation of the improvements; however, the cities agreed to continue monitoring the need for remaining improvements in lieu of the Bridge. Therefore, at the request of the cities, the MOU will be extended, and the designation of the Bridge will be determined by the end of 2026.

Summary

The City has requested an amendment to the MPAH. Based upon the information provided by the City, the requirements of the MPAH have been satisfied, and Board approval of staff's recommendations is requested. A summary of active MPAH amendments is also provided for Board review.

Attachments

- A. Letter from Tom Bonigut, Public Works Director/City Engineer, City of San Clemente, to Kurt Brotcke, Director, Strategic Planning, Orange County Transportation Authority, Dated October 29, 2019, RE: Request for an Interim Approval to Amend the Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) for South El Camino Real (Avenida Mendocino to southern City limit)
- B. City of San Clemente, MPAH Amendment Request
- C. Status Report on Active Master Plan of Arterial Highways Amendments

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