



January 4, 2021

To: Regional Planning and Highways Committee
From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer
Subject: Amendments 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 jurisdictions. The County of Orange and the City of San Clemente have requested amendments to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways that are recommended for approval. An update on pending Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendments is also provided.

Recommendations

- A. Conditionally approve the following amendments to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways to reclassify the facilities listed below in the unincorporated area of the County of Orange and/or the City of San Clemente:

County of Orange

- Reclassify Chiquita Canyon Drive between north of Fauna Drive and Esencia Drive from a secondary (four-lane, undivided) arterial to a divided collector (two-lane, divided);
- Reclassify Fauna Drive between Chiquita Canyon Drive and Esencia Drive from a secondary (four-lane, undivided) arterial to a collector (two-lane, undivided) arterial; and
- Reclassify Esencia Drive between Andaza Street and Fauna Drive from a secondary (four-lane, undivided) arterial to a collector (two-lane, undivided) arterial.

County of Orange and City of San Clemente

- Delete planned Cristianitos Road south of Cow Camp Road and replace with Los Patrones Parkway extension from south of Cow Camp Road to Avenida La Pata as a primary (four-lane, undivided) arterial.

City of San Clemente

- Reclassify Camino Vera Cruz between Camino De Los Mares and Carreterra from a secondary (four-lane, undivided) arterial to a divided collector (two-lane, divided); and
- Reclassify Camino De Los Mares between Camino Del Rio and the City of San Clemente's eastern limit from a secondary (four-lane, undivided) arterial to a divided collector (two-lane, divided).

Each of the proposed amendments will become final, contingent upon the Orange County Transportation Authority receiving documentation confirming that the respective agency or agencies have amended their general plans accordingly and have complied with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.

If a general plan is not updated within three years to reflect the proposed Master Plan of Arterial Highways 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 proposed Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendment is modified as a result of the California Environmental Quality Act and/or general plan amendment processes, 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 staff 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

The County of Orange (County) submitted a request to amend the Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) to reclassify Chiquita Canyon Drive, Fauna Drive, and Esencia Drive, and to replace the planned Cristianitos Road, south of Cow Camp Road, with the Los Patrones Parkway extension (Attachment A).

This MPAH amendment request originated from two concurrent efforts. Rancho Mission Viejo (RMV) and the County refined the Ranch Plan Planned Community land-use plan and determined that the internal street network and the location of key land-uses result in lower than previously estimated vehicle traffic on Chiquita Canyon Drive, Fauna Drive, and Esencia Drive. Concurrently, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), the Transportation Corridor Agencies (TCA), and the California Department of Transportation were coordinating on the South County Traffic Relief Effort and reached consensus on three key south Orange County transportation improvement projects. One of the key projects was a non-tolled Los Patrones Parkway extension from Cow Camp Road to Avenida La Pata. The OCTA Board of Directors (Board) directed staff to work with TCA, the County, and other stakeholders to prepare a project development plan for the non-tolled extension to Los Patrones Parkway. These working sessions identified adding the Los Patrones Parkway extension to the County's general plan and OCTA's MPAH. Due to the proximity of these arterial changes to one another, the County conducted a comprehensive traffic analysis of Chiquita Canyon Drive, Fauna Drive, Esencia Drive, and Los Patrones Parkway extension.

Separately, the City of San Clemente (City) submitted letters requesting reclassifications to the MPAH for (1) Camino Vera Cruz from Camino De Los Mares to Carretera and (2) Camino De Los Mares from Camino Del Rio to the eastern city limit (attachments B and C). Both facilities are currently classified as secondary (four-lane, undivided) arterials. The City is requesting to reclassify these arterials as divided collector (two-lane, divided) arterials. The reclassifications will provide right-of-way necessary to improve safety with buffered bicycle lanes while maintaining compliance with the MPAH.

The requested amendments are illustrated in Attachment D.

Discussion

Staff reviewed the traffic analyses provided by the County and City and concluded that the requested MPAH amendments are appropriate from a long-range planning perspective. Additionally, future traffic volumes appear to be accommodated with the proposed changes and are forecast to remain at generally acceptable levels of service (LOS).

County – RMV reclassifications and Los Patrones Parkway Extension

The County's traffic analysis of the four arterial reclassifications evaluated the impacts on 48 roadways and 17 intersections within the study area for weekday AM peak hour, PM peak hour, and daily traffic volumes.

The average daily traffic (ADT) volumes for existing (2019) conditions and the future (2045) forecast with reclassifications are provided below:

Roadway	Existing (2019) ADT	Future (2045) with Reclassifications ADT
Chiquita Canyon Drive	4,150 - 6,100	3,600
Fauna Drive	2,200	4,400
Esencia Drive	2,500	2,000
Los Patrones Parkway extension	Not Applicable	22,000

Chiquita Canyon Drive, Fauna Drive and Esencia Drive are located in Planning Area 2 of the Ranch Plan Planned Community, which is nearly built out. The MPAH roadway capacity values indicate that a divided collector (two-lane, divided) can accommodate 15,000 ADT, and a collector (two-lane, undivided) can accommodate 10,000 ADT while still maintaining favorable performance conditions. As such, future ADT volumes can be accommodated with the proposed reclassifications, while supporting acceptable LOS.

The Los Patrones Parkway extension is primarily within the jurisdiction of the County but terminates within the City at the intersection of Avenida La Pata. Therefore, the County is serving as the lead agency for this MPAH amendment and implementation with support from the City, as indicated in the attached letter (Attachment E). Both the County and City will need to update their general plans to include the Los Patrones Parkway extension before the MPAH amendment is finalized.

The future (2045) forecast ADT volume is approximately 22,000 on the proposed Los Patrones Parkway extension, which would operate at a segment link LOS A for a primary (four-lane, divided) arterial. The addition of the Los Patrones Parkway extension causes a redistribution of traffic from existing roadways, such as La Pata and Ortega Highway, to the proposed extension. The traffic analysis showed that nearly all study intersections are projected to operate at an acceptable LOS D or better. One future year deficient intersection is projected not to meet the MPAH performance standard. However, the proposed MPAH amendment does improve the projected conditions from LOS F in the no project case to LOS E with the proposed extension.

City – Camino Vera Cruz and Camino De Los Mares

The existing (2018) traffic volume is below 10,000 ADT on Camino Vera Cruz and Camino De Los Mares. Assuming the proposed reclassifications, the future (2045) traffic model forecasts traffic volumes to be under 14,000 ADT. The MPAH roadway capacity values indicate that a divided collector (two-lane, divided) can accommodate 15,000 ADT while still maintaining acceptable performance conditions. Therefore, the proposed lane reconfigurations can support existing and future traffic volumes in the project vicinity while meeting MPAH performance requirements.

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 F, there are currently 23 active amendments proposed for the MPAH. 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.

Summary

The County of Orange and the City of San Clemente submitted requests to amend the Master Plan of Arterial Highways. Staff reviewed the traffic data supporting the amendment requests and has concluded that the proposed changes are appropriate from a long-range planning perspective. Based upon the provided traffic analyses, the requirements of the Master Plan of Arterial Highways have been met, and Board of Directors' approval of the reclassifications is recommended. A summary of pending Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendments is also provided for Board of Directors' review.

Attachments

- A. Letter from Khalid Bazmi, P.E., Chief Deputy Director/County Engineer, OC Public Works, to Mr. Kurt Brotcke, Director, Strategic Planning, Orange County Transportation Authority, Dated September 15, 2020, Subject: MPAH Amendment Request for Chiquita Canyon Drive, Fauna Drive, Esencia Drive, and Los Patrones Parkway Extension
- B. Letter from Tom Bonigut, P.E., Public Works Director/City Engineer, City of San Clemente, to Kurt Brotcke, Director of Strategic Planning, Orange County Transportation Authority, Dated December 1, 2020, Re: Follow Up to Request to Modify the Lane Configuration on Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) Segment – Camino Vera Cruz
- C. Letter from Tom Bonigut, P.E., Public Works Director/City Engineer, City of San Clemente, to Kurt Brotcke, Director of Strategic Planning, Orange County Transportation Authority, Dated December 1, 2020, Re: Request to modify the lane configuration on Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) Segment – Camino De Los Mares (Camino Del Rio to Eastern Terminus)
- D. County of Orange and City of San Clemente MPAH Amendment Requests
- E. Letter from Laura Ferguson, Mayor Pro Tem, City of San Clemente, to James Treadaway, Director of OC Public Works, County of Orange, Dated October 21, 2020, Subject: Los Patrones Parkway Extension Project – 2021 M2 Regional Capacity Program
- F. Status Report on Active Master Plan of Arterial Highways Amendments

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