

**Orange County Transportation Authority
Low Carbon Transit Operations Program – Project Descriptions**

“Welcome Back” Fare Reduction Program for OC Bus Riders

As part of a coordinated customer comeback program following coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic ridership reductions, the proposed Welcome Back fare discount promotion will encourage new riders and previous riders to return to using the service, along with a campaign highlighting the benefits and safety of public transit. The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) proposes to provide the fare reduction program for a promotional period of up to 12 months, subject to rider demand and funding availability. The promotional period is planned to be divided into two-to-three-month phases, not a continuous period.

Through the intermittent promotional periods, one of the fare reduction models that was developed is anticipated to provide up to 44,267 30-day passes at the discounted price of \$29 (regular price \$69) for a total value of \$1,283,743 and up to 184,572 packs of five one-day passes at the discounted price of \$10 (regular price \$25) for a total value of \$1,845,720. Though the fare reduction model used may be modified, OCTA plans to expend all Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) funds. In addition, \$249,999 in marketing and outreach costs will be included for a total of \$3,379,462.

College Pass Program at Orange Coast College

OC Bus 360°, OCTA’s comprehensive plan to improve bus service from all angles, identifies college students as a key audience for bus service growth. According to OCTA’s bus customer satisfaction surveys, work and school are the top trip purposes for bus riders.

Beginning in fall 2017, OCTA provided Santa Ana College (SAC) full- and part-time enrolled students with a one-year free pass program funded through LCTOP. In May 2017, SAC students voted to pass a per semester student transportation fee to fund the program from fall 2018 through summer 2020. Using a cost-sharing approach to raise sufficient revenue to cover lost fare revenues, SAC established the per semester student fee at \$6.75 for each full-time student and \$5.75 for each part-time student, which is then provided to OCTA to support the estimated cost of ridership. The cost is established based on an analysis of the existing transit service and assumptions about current and future ridership.

As a result of this program, OCTA has seen significant ridership increases over the estimated ridership for this cohort before the incentive project. Based on this success, fiscal year (FY) 2018-19 LCTOP funds were programmed for Fullerton, Golden West, and Santa Ana colleges, and \$749,243 in FY 2019-20 LCTOP funds were programmed for Coastline, Cypress, Irvine Valley, and Saddleback colleges. Staff is recommending that

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\$716,152 in FY 2020-21 LCTOP funds be used to replicate this model for Orange Coast College.

Metrolink Service Expansion Project

In June 2020, the California Department of Transportation approved \$2.1 million in FY 2018-19 LCTOP funds for Metrolink Service Expansion Project. Due to the impacts of COVID-19, the proposed 2020 service expansion in Orange County has been delayed indefinitely. To use these funds within the eligible four-year period, it is proposed to use these funds for a shortfall in the Ten Battery-Electric Bus Pilot Project (\$1,940,715) approved in FY 2019-20 and towards the proposed FY 2020-21 Welcome Back Fare Reduction Program (\$159,285) for OC Bus Riders described above.

Ten Battery-Electric Buses

As detailed in the table below, to date, OCTA had previously programmed \$14,003,962 in funding for battery-electric buses and the associated infrastructure upgrades, including \$5,597,171 in FY 2018-19 and FY 2019-20 LCTOP funds and interest. Two of the expected state sources (Hybrid and Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Program and Volkswagen Settlement) are no longer available for the project and it is proposed that an additional \$1,940,715 in FY 2018-19 LCTOP funds previously programmed to the Metrolink Service Expansion Project would be reassigned towards the purchase of a total of ten battery-electric buses under the State of California contract, along with the associated infrastructure upgrades. This action will provide the funding necessary to cover the estimated cost of the electric buses and support systems.

The buses will be 40-foot standard low floor OCTA-equipped battery-electric buses with seating for 37 passengers, or 33 passengers and two wheelchairs, internal and external camera system, wireless and mobile routers, a farebox equipped for mobile ticketing, automated passenger counters, radio system and automatic vehicle location, and a three-position exterior bicycle rack. Additionally, infrastructure and improvements required for fueling the buses include electrical cabling, trenching, dedicated charging stations, smart energy management controllers, as well as utility and depot upgrades.

Purchasing these ten buses with the required infrastructure will allow OCTA to test them along with the ten hydrogen fuel cell electric buses in the local environment and geography to see how both technologies perform within the OC Bus Service Plan.

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The proposed funding plan is provided below:

Programmed Funding (\$000's)	LCTOP	SCCP ¹	SGR	HVIP ²	VW Settlement ²	Total
Previously Programmed	\$ 5,597	\$ 4,330	\$ 2,135	\$ 1,041	\$ 900	\$ 14,003
Proposed Programming	\$ 7,538	\$ 4,330	\$ 2,135	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 14,003
Difference	\$ 1,941	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (1,041)	\$ (900)	\$ -

1 -SB 1 (Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017) SCCP funds the cost of purchasing five buses.

2 - HVIP subsidy and VW Settlement no longer available.

LCTOP - Low Carbon Transit Operations Program

SCCP - Solutions for Congested Corridors Program

SGR - State of Good Repair Program

HVIP - Hybrid and Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Program

VW - Volkswagen