



May 4, 2026

To: Executive Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

Subject: Proposed Response to 2025–2026 Orange County Grand Jury Report, “Connecting Orange County to LAX: Evaluating Transportation Options”

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Darrell E. Johnson", is written over the "From:" field of the memo.

Overview

Staff has prepared a response to the December 2025 report issued by the Orange County Grand Jury entitled, “Connecting Orange County to LAX: Evaluating Transportation Options,” for the Orange County Transportation Authority Board of Directors consideration. The response addresses the findings and recommendations assigned to the Orange County Transportation Authority and provides clarification, context, and actions already taken where applicable.

Recommendation

Authorize the Chief Executive Officer to submit the proposed response to the Orange County Grand Jury report’s findings and recommendations as required by California Penal Code Section 933(c).

Background

California Penal Code Section 933(c) requires the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Board of Directors (Board) to comment on findings and recommendations of the Orange County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) that pertain to matters under the control of the Board within 90 days of the release of the Grand Jury’s final report. The Grand Jury report entitled “Connecting Orange County to LAX: Evaluating Transportation Options” was released on February 23, 2026, (Attachment A), and the 90-day deadline for submission is May 24, 2026. If approved, the proposed response (Attachment B) will be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court, with copies placed on file with the OCTA Clerk of the Board and the Orange County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.

The Grand Jury’s report focused on travel options between Orange County and the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), including existing public transportation services, travel times, costs, and operational challenges. The

**Proposed Response to 2025–2026 Orange County Grand Jury Page 2
Report "Connecting Orange County to LAX: Evaluating
Transportation Options"**

report also references prior efforts to provide direct service and discusses potential concepts related to regional connectivity involving multiple agencies.

Discussion

The 2025–2026 Grand Jury report titled, "Connecting Orange County to LAX: Evaluating Transportation Options" presented six findings and eight recommendations, of which OCTA is responsible for responding to Findings F1, F2, and F4, and Recommendations R1, R4, and R8.

The proposed response addresses each assigned finding and recommendation, acknowledging areas of partial agreement and providing clarification regarding OCTA's role in regional transportation planning and service delivery. The response emphasizes the operational, regulatory, and financial constraints associated with providing direct transit service to LAX, including federal restrictions, historically low demand for airport transit services, and the time-sensitive nature of airport travel.

The response also highlights OCTA's established planning practices, including periodic system-wide service assessments and recent service restructuring efforts under the Making Better Connections Study. These efforts prioritize service improvements in areas with the highest ridership potential to ensure efficient use of limited resources.

Additionally, the response notes that previous attempts to provide direct service to LAX, such as the FlyAway® Irvine route, were discontinued due to low ridership and financial losses. The responses further recognize that upcoming LAX capital improvements, including the Automated People Mover, are expected to significantly influence future travel patterns and should be considered before evaluating new service options.

Where recommendations involve collaboration with cities or other agencies, OCTA acknowledges its ongoing coordination role and commits to continuing to support regional planning efforts consistent with regulatory requirements and available funding.

**Proposed Response to 2025–2026 Orange County Grand Jury Page 3
Report "Connecting Orange County to LAX: Evaluating
Transportation Options"**

Summary

The proposed response to the 2025–2026 Grand Jury report addresses all findings and recommendations assigned to OCTA. The response provides clarification on OCTA's role, outlines existing efforts and coordination with regional partners, and explains the operational and regulatory factors that influence transit service decisions. It reflects OCTA's continued commitment to responsible planning, efficient use of resources, and collaboration to improve regional mobility.

Attachments

- A. Connecting Orange County to LAX: Evaluating Transportation Options
Orange County Grand Jury 2025–2026
- B. Proposed Response to 2025–2026 Orange County Grand Jury Report
"Connecting Orange County to LAX: Evaluating Transportation Options"
– Redlined Version

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