



August 28, 2025

To: Regional Transportation Planning Committee
From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer
Subject: 2026 State Transportation Improvement Program Overview

Overview

The State Transportation Improvement Program is a biennial five-year plan of projects adopted by the California Transportation Commission for future allocations of state transportation funds. Every two years, the Orange County Transportation Authority updates the program of projects to be funded through this program. An overview of the 2026 State Transportation Improvement Program process is presented for information purposes.

Recommendation

Receive and file as an information item.

Background

The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is a five-year state funding program that is adopted by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) for transportation projects. The STIP is divided into two major funding categories: the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) and the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP). Seventy-five percent of the program is allocated to the RTIP, which is then provided to counties by formula to help deliver transportation capital projects that are consistent with the regional transportation plan. The remaining 25 percent is provided to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) through the ITIP for transportation projects of interregional significance and intercity rail projects.

Every two years, the CTC considers changes to the STIP Guidelines (Guidelines) and approves the fund estimate (FE), which forecasts what level of funding will be available to support the STIP, as well as other state funding programs, for the following five-year period.

Projects eligible for the STIP must adhere to the Guidelines and the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Capital Programming Policies (CPP) that were adopted by the Board of Directors (Board) on December 13, 2021, (Attachment A). OCTA is responsible for the development and programming of Orange County's share of the RTIP portion of STIP revenues, which is submitted to the CTC for approval. OCTA and Caltrans coordinate the development of projects that are considered for inclusion in the RTIP and the ITIP.

The current 2024 STIP was adopted on March 21, 2024, by the CTC. Orange County's approved 2024 STIP contained nine projects for Orange County and totaled \$222.326 million (Attachment B).

Discussion

2026 STIP FE

The 2026 STIP FE, which was adopted by the CTC on August 14-15, 2025, indicates that the total statewide STIP funding capacity for the 2026 STIP is \$952 million. The OCTA share of the new capacity is approximately \$24.718 million including adjustments for prior STIP advancements. For the 2026 STIP, OCTA's program of projects would be approximately \$130.720 million, including \$106.002 million in carryover funds committed to projects in the 2024 STIP.

2026 Guidelines

The Guidelines identify procedures and requirements that project sponsors and implementing agencies must adhere to in order to program, allocate, deliver, and seek reimbursement for STIP funds.

This year, the Guidelines include minor changes related to how uncommitted funds are identified, and more clarification on what needs to be included in fact sheets.

Next Steps

Staff is coordinating with Caltrans and local agencies, as applicable, on specific project proposals for the RTIP and the ITIP. A schedule of the next steps is included as Attachment C. Staff expects to return to the Board in October 2025 with specific programming recommendations. Additionally, once approved, the program of projects will be formally submitted to the Southern California Association of Governments for modeling purposes and to the CTC by their December 15, 2025 due date. The CTC is expected to approve the 2026 STIP at the March 2026 meeting.

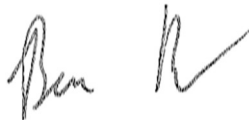
The updated program of projects that will be recommended to the Board may include modifications to existing projects or new projects that are consistent with OCTA priorities, Long-Range Transportation Plan, the CPP, and requests to expedite existing STIP projects.

Summary

OCTA is responsible for the development and programming of the STIP projects for Orange County. With the upcoming 2026 STIP cycle, OCTA staff has started the process to consider priority projects for recommendation to the Board for the RTIP submittal to the CTC.

Attachments

- A. Capital Programming Policies by Fund Source, December 2021
- B. 2024 STIP - California Transportation Commission Approved Projects
- C. 2026 State Transportation Improvement Program Development Schedule

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