



June 18, 2026

To: Legislative Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

Subject: Approval to Release Request for Proposals for State Legislative Advocacy and Consulting Services

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Overview

Staff is requesting Orange County Transportation Authority Board of Directors' approval to release a request for proposals for state legislative advocacy and consulting services for a term beginning January 1, 2027, following the expiration of the current contract on December 31, 2026, and coinciding with the 2027–28 legislative session. A draft request for proposals has been developed to initiate a competitive procurement process for these services.

Recommendations

- A. Approve the proposed evaluation criteria and weightings for Request for Proposals 250342 for selection of a firm to provide state legislative advocacy and consulting services.
- B. Approve the release of Request for Proposals 250342 to select a firm to provide state legislative advocacy and consulting services for a two-year initial term with two, two-year option terms.
- C. Approve the evaluation committee and proposed schedule for the procurement.

Discussion

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) has regularly sought proposals for state legislative advocacy and consulting services. The most recent procurement was completed in 2020. On October 26, 2020, the OCTA Board of Directors (Board) approved a state legislative advocacy and consulting contract with Topp Strategies, LLC, with Platinum Advisors, LLC as a subcontractor, for an initial term of two-years through December 31, 2022, with two, two-year option terms. On July 25, 2022, the Board authorized exercising

the first option term of the agreement and extending the term of the first option by five months through December 31, 2024. The Board then exercised the second option term of the contract on June 24, 2024. The second term will expire December 31, 2026. Under this contract, Moira Topp serves as the lead legislative advocate for OCTA, a role which she has had since 2007.

OCTA's state legislative consultants represent the agency's positions on legislation, policy issues, and funding priorities before the State Legislature and the Administration. The state legislative advocacy consultants also provide input to the OCTA legislative platform, notify staff of relevant proposed legislation, legislative activity affecting OCTA, and provide timely updates and strategy for transportation issues and events occurring in Sacramento.

It is important for OCTA to retain advocacy services during the next legislative session. With a new Administration starting and several new members of the State Legislature, it will be important that OCTA influence transportation funding and policy discussions early on. It is expected that next session will bring significant challenges related to overall transportation funding and policies. This includes potential discussions about future transportation funding sources as revenues decline and uncertainties about transportation funding from the Cap-and-Invest Program. In addition, it is anticipated that discussions will continue on several ongoing policy issues related to zero-emission transportation technology, governance and accountability reforms among transit operators, the meeting of statewide environmental goals through transportation planning and services, and the future role of toll facilities and transit within the State.

With these considerations, staff recommends releasing a request for proposals for state legislative advocacy and consulting services for an initial two-year term from January 1, 2027, to December 31, 2028, with two, two-year option terms. This contract term not only maintains alignment with the term of each session of the Legislature but also is consistent with OCTA's federal advocacy contract.

Procurement Approach

Staff is requesting that the Board approve the release of RFP 250342, and the evaluation criteria and weightings. The procurement will be handled in accordance with OCTA's policies and procedures for professional services. Award is recommended to the firm offering the most comprehensive overall proposal considering such factors as staffing, prior experience with similar clients, approach to the scope of work, and expertise in the field of advocacy.

The proposed evaluation criteria and weightings are as follows:

- Qualifications of the Firm 25 percent
- Staffing 35 percent
- Work Plan 25 percent
- Cost and Price 15 percent

The qualifications of the firm criterion is weighted at 25 percent as it is important because the firm must show that it has performed these services for other similar clients and has the necessary access to the state legislators and their staff. Staffing criterion is weighted highest at 35 percent as it is the most critical element to the success of these services. The key personnel must be knowledgeable of the political and economic climate and the ongoing transportation issues that face California. The work plan is also weighted at 25 percent as the firms must demonstrate that the firm has a good understanding of OCTA's needs and be able to advocate on OCTA's behalf. Finally, cost and price criterion is weighted at 15 percent as firms must demonstrate that they can perform the services at maximum cost efficiencies to ensure that OCTA receives value for the services provided.

The contract for this procurement will be solicited for a two-year initial term with two, two-year option terms. The total cost of the initial term is anticipated to be approximately \$456,000.

Evaluation Team

As with past procurements for state and federal advocacy and consulting services, staff is recommending Board participation in the evaluation and interview of the proposing firms. Consistent with the process used for the federal advocacy and consulting services contract in 2024, staff is recommending the creation of an evaluation team of five voting members, consisting of the Chair of the Board, Vice Chair of the Board, the Chair of the Legislative and Communications Committee, Chief Executive Officer, and the Executive Director of Government Relations. Additionally, Contracts Administration and Materials Management (CAMM) staff will facilitate the procurement activities but will not be a voting member. It is expected that the evaluation committee, apart from CAMM staff, will be available to meet virtually on August 24, 2026, as set forth in the schedule below.

Procurement Schedule

Staff recommends the following draft schedule for the procurement of state legislative advocacy and consulting services. The RFP will be released and available from June 22 to July 22, 2026.

June 18 - Draft RFP and schedule presented to the Legislative Committee for approval

June 22 - Draft RFP and schedule to the Board for approval

June 22 - Issue RFP

July 7 - Pre-proposal conference (done virtually with OCTA Government Relations staff and CAMM staff participation)

July 14 - Deadline for written questions to be submitted

July 22 - Proposal submittal deadline

August 24 - Interviews (virtually with entire evaluation team participation)

October 15 - Recommendation from the Legislative Committee

October 26 - Board consideration of the recommendation from the Legislative Committee

The draft RFP is included as Attachment A. The RFP will be released upon Board approval of these recommendations.

Fiscal Impact

The project was approved in OCTA's Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget, Government Relations, Account No. 1412-7519-A3202-K5H, and is funded through the Local Transportation Fund.

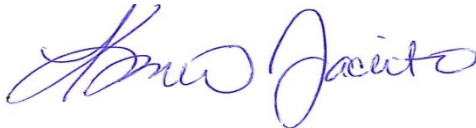
Summary

Board of Directors' approval is requested to release RFP 250342 to initiate the competitive procurement process to select a firm to provide state legislative advocacy and consulting services, as well as approval of the proposed evaluation criteria, weightings, evaluation team, and draft procurement schedule.

Attachment

- A. Draft Request for Proposals 250342 – State Legislative Advocacy and Consulting Services

Approved by:



Kristin Jacinto
Executive Director, Government
Relations
(714) 560-5754



Pia Veesapen
Director, Contracts Administration and
Materials Management
(714) 560-5619