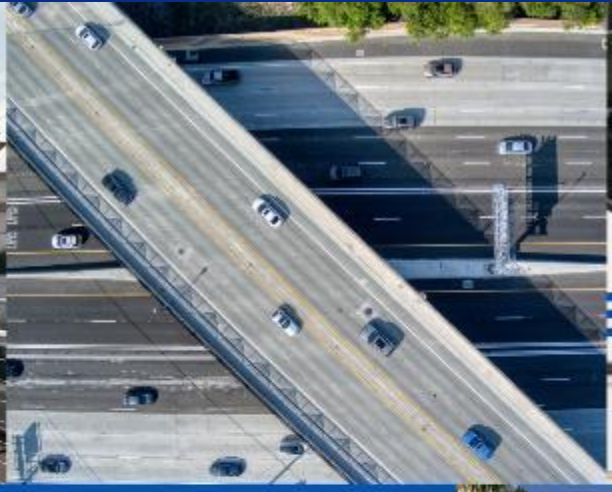


ATTACHMENT B

OCTA

Measure M2 Ten-Year Review

Presented to the Board of Directors on
April 27, 2026

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

Common Abbreviations

Agreed-Upon Procedures	AUP
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act	ARRA
American Rescue Plan Act	ARPA
Americans with Disabilities Act	ADA
Anaheim Rapid Connection	ARC
Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center	ARTIC
Assembly Bill	AB
BNSF Railway Company	BNSF
California Air Resources Board	CARB
California Department of Tax and Fee Administration	CDTFA
California Department of Transportation	Caltrans
California Environmental Quality Act	CEQA
California State Transportation Agency	CalSTA
California Transportation Commission	CTC
Call for Projects	Call
Comprehensive Business Plan	CBP
Congestion Management Program	CMP
Congestion Mitigation Air Quality	CMAQ
Conservation properties	Preserves
Construction Manager/General Contractor	CM/GC
Coronavirus	COVID-19
Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security	CARES
Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act	CRRSAA
Department of Motor Vehicles	DMV
Early Action Plan	EAP
Environmental Cleanup Program	ECP
Environmental Document	ED
Environmental Mitigation Program	EMP
Federal Transit Administration	FTA
Fédération Internationale de Football Association	FIFA
Fiscal year	FY
Fixing America's Surface Transportation	FAST
Freeway Service Patrol	FSP
Funding and Policy Guidelines	Guidelines
High-Occupancy Toll	HOT
High-Occupancy Vehicle	HOV
High-Speed Rail	HSR

Inflation Reduction Act	IRA
Infrastructure Construction Cost Pressure Index	ICCPI
Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act	IIJA
Intersection Capacity Utilization	ICU
Interstate 5	I-5
Interstate 15	I-15
Interstate 405	I-405
Interstate 605	I-605
Level of Service	LOS
Local Fair Share	LFS
Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo	LOSSAN
Low Carbon Transit Operations Program	LCTOP
Maintenance and Storage Facility	MSF
Maintenance of Effort	MOE
Master Plan of Arterial Highways	MPAH
Measure M	M1
Measure M2	M2
Mile Post	MP
National Environmental Policy Act	NEPA
Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan	Conservation Plan
Next 10 Delivery Plan	Next 10 Plan
OCTA Board of Directors	Board
Orange County Business Council	OCBC
Orange County Local Transportation Authority	Authority
Orange County Transportation Authority	OCTA
Orange County Unified Transportation Trust	OCUTT
Ordinance No. 3	M2 Ordinance
Pacific Coast Highway	PCH
Project Report	PR
Project Study Report-Project Development Support	PSR-PDS
Regional Capacity Program	RCP
Regional Housing Needs Allocation	RHNA
Regional Traffic Signal Synchronization Program	RTSSP
Solutions for Congested Corridors Program	SCCP
Regional Transportation Plan	RTP
State of Good Repair	SGR
Renewed Measure M Transportation Investment Plan	Plan
Resource Management Plan	RMP
Right-of-Way	ROW

Riverside County Transportation Commission	RCTC
Santa Ana Regional Transportation Center	SARTC
Senate Bill	SB
Senior Mobility Program	SMP
Senior Non-Emergency Medical Transportation	SNEMT
Southern California Regional Rail Authority	Metrolink
State Route 55	SR-55
State Route 57	SR-57
State Route 71	SR-71
State Route 73	SR-73
State Route 74	SR-74
State Route 91	SR-91
State Route 133	SR-133
State Route 241	SR-241
State Transit Assistance	STA
State Transportation Improvement Program	STIP
Surface Transportation Block Grant	STBG
Sustainable Communities Strategy	SCS
Tax Cuts and Jobs Act	TCJA
Taxpayer Oversight Committee	TOC
Ten-Year Review	Review
Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program	TIRCP
Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act	TIFIA
United States	U.S.
Vehicle Miles Traveled	VMT
Year of Expenditure	YOE

1

Executive Summary

1. Executive Summary

In 2006, nearly 70 percent of voters approved the renewal of Measure M (M1) to continue Orange County's half-cent transportation sales tax for 30 years (2011 through 2041). Renewed Measure M, also referred to as Measure M2 (M2), funds a balanced program of freeway improvements, local streets and roads investments, transit enhancements, and environmental initiatives that are defined in the Renewed Measure M Transportation Investment Plan (Plan). M2 is administered by the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), in its capacity as the Orange County Local Transportation Authority (OCTA), and is delivered in partnership with the County of Orange and the County's 34 cities. As required by Ordinance No. 3 (M2 Ordinance), this comprehensive Ten-Year Review (Review) evaluates M2 program performance and assesses whether changing conditions warrant adjustments to the Plan.

Overall, the Review finds that the M2 program remains on track to deliver the transportation improvements promised to voters. Since implementation, OCTA and its partners have made significant progress advancing projects and programs across all four investment categories. Major freeway improvements are underway or complete along key corridors, while cities continue to receive funding to maintain streets, repair pavement, improve intersections, and synchronize traffic signals. Transit investments have expanded mobility options and supported programs serving seniors and persons with disabilities, and environmental initiatives have preserved open space and funded projects that improve water quality and reduce pollution entering local waterways.

Independent performance assessments and program monitoring confirm that OCTA has maintained strong program management and fiscal stewardship. Oversight mechanisms—including annual audits, triennial performance assessments, and review by the Taxpayer Oversight Committee (TOC)—ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with the M2 Ordinance, helping ensure that revenues are used as intended.

The Review also considers external factors that influence program implementation, including regulatory changes, land use, travel and growth projections, economic conditions, and public support. OCTA has responded by leveraging external funding opportunities, refining delivery strategies, and adjusting implementation plans where necessary. Because many program elements are scalable to available revenues, the program remains fiscally sustainable while continuing to deliver transportation improvements.

Public outreach conducted as part of the Review indicates continued support for the M2 program and its balanced approach to transportation investments. Stakeholders consistently emphasized the importance of maintaining existing infrastructure, addressing congestion, expanding multimodal travel options, and supporting environmental sustainability—priorities that align with the original objectives of the Plan.

Looking ahead, the M2 program remains well positioned to deliver the remaining projects and programs through 2041. The Action Plan outlined in Section 7 identifies targeted steps to strengthen program delivery, address emerging risks, and ensure that investments remain aligned with evolving transportation needs across Orange County. Continued collaboration among OCTA, local jurisdictions, regional partners, and community stakeholders will be essential to implement these actions. Through careful financial management, proactive planning, and adherence to strong taxpayer safeguards, the M2 program will continue to improve mobility, support economic vitality, and enhance quality of life for residents, businesses, and visitors throughout Orange County.

2

Review Process

2. Review Process

2.1 Purpose

M1, approved by Orange County voters in 1990, established a locally controlled half-cent sales tax to fund transportation improvements from 1991 through 2011. Over its 20-year duration, M1 delivered the projects promised to voters and demonstrated disciplined financial management supported by strong independent oversight.

> *"At least every ten years the Authority shall conduct a comprehensive review of all projects and programs implemented under the Plan to evaluate the performance of the overall program and may revise the Plan to improve its performance."*
>
> *— M2 Ordinance, Section 11*

Building on that success, nearly 70 percent of voters approved M2 in November 2006, extending the half-cent sales tax for an additional 30 years through 2041. The Plan includes a balanced portfolio of freeways, streets and roads, transit, and environmental investments designed to address Orange County's evolving mobility needs. The Plan also incorporates enhanced taxpayer safeguards to ensure continued transparency, accountability, and protection of voter-approved funds:

Built-In Taxpayer Safeguards

Foundational Requirements	Public Reporting Requirements	Funding Requirements
✓ Only approved projects and programs	✓ Quarterly reports	✓ Specific eligibility requirements for local jurisdictions
✓ Voters approve major changes	✓ Annual reports	✓ Funds provided shall augment, not replace, existing funds
✓ Independent TOC	✓ Triennial Performance Assessment	✓ Penalties for misuse of funds
✓ Annual public hearing and certification	✓ Review	✓ Limits on administrative/ oversight expenses
✓ Regular audits and reviews of expenditures		

One of the safeguards mandated by the Plan is the requirement to conduct a comprehensive review of the M2 program at least once every ten years to evaluate overall performance and determine whether refinements to the Plan are warranted. The Plan identifies specific elements that must be included in the Review.

The overarching purpose of the comprehensive review is to evaluate the performance of the Plan while ensuring the intent of the Plan as approved by the voters is not compromised for the 30-year duration.

2.2 Background

To accelerate Orange County transportation benefits, the OCTA Board of Directors (Board) has pursued the expeditious implementation of M2 through the adoption of delivery plans. In 2007, the Board adopted the Early Action Plan (EAP) to mobilize M2 projects and programs prior to sales tax revenue collection, which began April 1, 2011. Since that time, two other delivery plans

have been adopted, the M2020 Plan and Next 10 Delivery Plan (Next 10 Plan), which have directed advancement of projects and investments across all program areas.

The first Review, presented to the Board on October 12, 2015, considered November 8, 2006 as the effective date of the M2 Ordinance. This second Review builds on the previous Review, incorporates and aligns with the 2025 update of the Next 10 Plan, triennial performance assessments, and M2 Quarterly Progress Reports, along with a robust and inclusive public outreach campaign. Collectively, these inputs provide a comprehensive assessment of M2's progress to date, long-term outlook, and external factors affecting the delivery of the Plan.

Conducted at the midpoint of the 30-year program, this Review provides a timely opportunity to evaluate performance to date and to identify potential adjustments, as needed, to support the continued fulfillment of voter commitments.

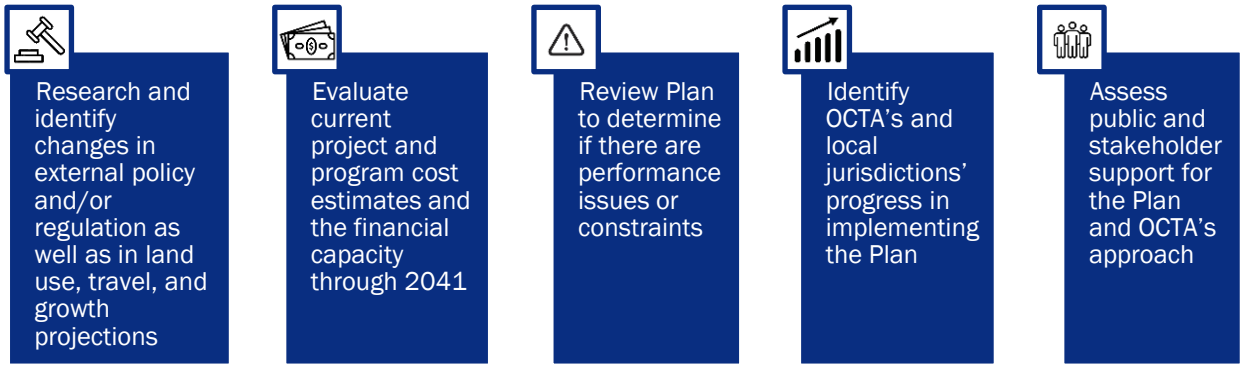
The M2 Ordinance establishes a defined process for amending the M2 Ordinance and the Plan. This process includes a public hearing, notification to local jurisdictions, approval by two-thirds vote of the TOC (if amending the Plan), and approval by the Board. Amendments within a transportation category (the Freeway Program, Streets and Roads Program, or Transit Program) in the Plan can be made using this process. An amendment that changes allocation among the transportation categories or to the funding allocation of the Local Fair Share (LFS) Program requires taking the amendment back to the voters. A list of M2 Ordinance and Plan amendments is included as Appendix A.

As the Review process was initiated, several important considerations were identified as foundational:

- Success of M1 was based on delivering the improvements as promised to the voters - promises made, promises kept;
- The Plan was developed based on market research, stakeholder input and approved by nearly 70 percent of Orange County voters;
- M2 is a balanced plan that emphasizes transportation system performance, multimodal mobility, infrastructure preservation, and environmental sustainability;
- All M2-related actions must remain consistent with the Plan's transparency and accountability safeguards;
- Currently at the midpoint of the 30-year program; and
- With substantial work currently underway across all program areas, no major changes to the Plan are recommended at this time.

2.3 Process

The second Review kicked off with the Board through an M2 Workshop in September 2024, which served to reintroduce M2, highlight key accomplishments to date, and outline the statutory requirement for the effort. Building on that discussion, staff presented the Review framework in October 2024, which detailed the scope, areas of analysis, and the following five objectives:



Progress updates were provided to the Board throughout the review period, both as standalone items and as part of regular M2 Quarterly Progress Reports. This ongoing communication ensured transparency and allowed staff to incorporate Board feedback into the development of the report.

The Review was developed through a collaborative, agencywide effort led by OCTA's M2 Program Management Office (PMO) with guidance from the M2 Program Management Committee. This group, composed of management and staff from all divisions of OCTA, meets regularly to coordinate the implementation of M2 and direct the comprehensive review effort, which included four categories of analysis:

Planning and Policy Context	Financial Analysis	Project Delivery Analysis	Public Priority Analysis
• Assessed changes in transportation policies, plans, and regulations at the local, state, and federal levels. • Examined land use, travel behavior, and growth projections to evaluate implications for M2 project delivery.	• Reviewed sales tax revenue performance, long-term forecasts, bonding assumptions, and overall fiscal capacity. • Evaluated updated project cost estimates—planning, capital, and operating—and their impact on the ability to deliver the Plan through 2041.	• Measured progress toward implementing the Plan, including coordination with partner agencies such as the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and local jurisdictions. • Identified delivery successes, challenges, and potential constraints across the full portfolio of M2 projects, including freeway, transit, street and road, and environmental programs.	• Engaged stakeholders through a robust public outreach campaign, including briefings with cities and committees, and conducted surveys to assess awareness of and support for M2 and its long-term priorities.

The following sections present the results from each of the four areas of analysis and provide an evaluation of the M2 Program performance to date. Based on these evaluations and findings, a proposed Action Plan was prepared to address opportunities and risks, as summarized in Section 7, Action Plan.

3

Planning and Policy Context

3. Planning and Policy Context

Reviewing the Changes Affecting Orange County's Transportation Systems

To assess the evolving conditions affecting Orange County's transportation system, the review examines not only changes in the policy and regulatory environment, but also shifts in land use, growth patterns, and travel patterns since the adoption of M2. The Review includes a summary of significant federal and state legislation enacted between 2006 and 2014, followed by a more detailed examination of legislative and regulatory developments from 2015 through 2025. In parallel, this analysis considers how changes in population, housing, and employment have influenced travel demand and infrastructure needs. Travel patterns about where people work and live have evolved over the past decade, shaped by regional job/housing imbalances, increased intercounty commuting, and the growth of alternative work schedules and arrangements. Collectively, these policies, land use, growth, and travel trends provide important context for evaluating transportation planning, funding, and project delivery, and for assessing their implications for the performance and continued implementation of the M2 Program.

3.1 State and Federal Legislation

M2 has been central to funding and delivering a wide range of transportation projects throughout Orange County. The success of these projects has been shaped by a complex and evolving legislative landscape at both the state and federal levels. Since voter approval in 2006 - and with a particular emphasis over the past decade - numerous laws have influenced how OCTA finances, plans, and implements its M2 commitments. Legislative actions have touched on key areas such as transportation funding, environmental regulation, tolling authority, transit operations, procurement methods, and infrastructure investment, each contributing to the broader conditions under which OCTA operates.

At both the state and federal level, legislation has played a dual role in both enabling and constraining project delivery. Funding-related bills often provided critical opportunities to supplement M2 revenues, while new environmental and regulatory mandates introduced layers of compliance that sometimes increased project complexity, timelines, or costs. These shifts required OCTA to be proactive, adaptable, and strategic in order to ensure timely and cost-effective delivery. OCTA has strategically pursued legislation to advance and streamline the delivery of major infrastructure initiatives, maximizing the impact of M2 dollars and ensuring taxpayer investments go further. At the same time, federal legislation since 2015, including economic stimulus packages provided during the pandemic, infrastructure investment acts, and expanded transit funding initiatives, has directly influenced OCTA's access to federal grants and broader funding programs.

3.1.1 Funding Stability and Leverage

State and federal transportation funding legislation has played a critical role in supplementing M2 revenues and enabling OCTA to advance voter-approved projects more efficiently. Major state funding initiatives enacted since 2015 have provided revenue streams for freeways, streets and roads, transit capital, and operations. These programs enhanced funding predictability and allowed OCTA to strategically leverage external resources to accelerate delivery of programs and projects as sales tax revenues fluctuated.

At the federal level, multi-year surface transportation authorization acts and subsequent extensions helped stabilize formula funding for freeways and transit, supporting long-term planning and project delivery. More recently, federal infrastructure and recovery legislation expanded discretionary funding opportunities, enabling OCTA to pursue competitive grants aligned with M2 priorities.

These funding dynamics – and the degree to which external funds supplement M2 – are discussed further in Section 4, Financial Analysis, including assumptions related to long-term revenues, external funding availability, and fiscal capacity through 2041. The implications of these assumptions for program delivery are reflected in Section 5, Project Delivery Analysis, and are carried forward into Section 7, Action Plan, which identifies strategies to manage economic and funding uncertainty.

3.1.2 Project Delivery Flexibility

Legislative actions over the past decade expanded the tools available to transportation agencies to manage delivery in an increasingly complex construction environment. State legislation broadened authority for alternative delivery methods such as design-build, construction manager/general contractor (CM/GC), and progressive design-build, providing agencies with greater flexibility to manage risk, control costs, and compress schedules for large and technically challenging projects.

OCTA has utilized these authorities to improve delivery of M2 investments, particularly the Interstate 405 (I-405) Improvement Project. These delivery methods have supported OCTA's efforts to reduce schedule risk, manage cost escalation, and deliver benefits earlier where feasible—an outcome that is evaluated in Section 5, Project Delivery Analysis, including schedule status and delivery constraints.

3.1.3 Environmental and Regulatory Requirements

Environmental and climate-related legislation enacted at the state and federal levels has substantially influenced transportation planning and project delivery under M2. Changes to environmental review processes, performance metrics, and greenhouse gas reduction targets increased the complexity of advancing transportation projects.

OCTA has responded by proactively adapting its delivery approach, including integrating sustainability and mitigation strategies into project design, coordinating closely with Caltrans, and advancing programmatic approaches to mitigation where appropriate. These regulatory influences and their implications for project delivery risk are reflected in Section 5.4, Delivery Risks, including the report's discussion of regulatory uncertainty and approval requirements.

Because environmental and regulatory shifts can affect both costs and delivery timelines, the potential implications for financial capacity—including assumptions associated with future project approvals and cost escalation—are addressed in Section 4, Financial Analysis.

3.1.4 Transit Operations and Resilience

Legislation affecting transit funding and operations has influenced M2 implementation. State actions related to transit assistance programs, low-carbon transit initiatives, and fare policy provided both flexibility and new compliance obligations for transit operators. These measures supported investments in emissions reduction, service expansion, and fare affordability, while reinforcing accountability and reporting requirements.

At the federal level, emergency relief legislation enacted in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic played a critical role in stabilizing transit operations during an unprecedented period of ridership loss and revenue decline. These funds helped maintain essential transit services and workforce capacity, supporting continuity of operations during the pandemic recovery period.

More recent legislative attention to climate resilience and rail corridor sustainability has highlighted emerging risks associated with extreme weather, coastal erosion, and long-term infrastructure reliability. These issues are particularly relevant to rail operations and are reflected in the Review's evaluation of transit program sustainability, including risk considerations related to long-term Southern California Regional Rail Authority (Metrolink) service and corridor resilience.

Accordingly, this topic is carried forward in Section 4.4, Transit (Financial Analysis) and Section 5, Project Delivery Analysis, which discuss the intersection of service levels, ridership recovery, operating costs, and funding capacity. It also directly informs the recommended monitoring and decision points identified in Section 7, Action Plan, particularly actions related to Metrolink sustainability and resilience planning.

3.1.5 Summary and Implications for M2

These legislative developments formed an ever-changing framework within which OCTA had to operate to fulfill its M2 obligations. While some policies streamlined project delivery or expanded resources, others introduced new challenges that had to be carefully managed. Despite this, OCTA has successfully met its voter-mandated objectives by aligning its strategies with both state and federal legislative trends, ensuring that Orange County's transportation network continues to evolve in step with policy and public need. Further details on specific legislation signed into law on topics impacting OCTA, particularly those that have influenced the financing, delivery, and oversight of M2, is provided in Appendix B.

3.2 Land Use

Land-use patterns play a central role in shaping travel behavior, transportation demand, and the effectiveness of mobility investments. Since the approval of M2 in 2006, land-use policy and development patterns in Orange County have evolved incrementally rather than undergoing a fundamental shift. While state and regional policies have increasingly emphasized compact development, infill, and transit-oriented strategies, Orange County remains largely built out, and the pace and scale of land-use change have been influenced by market conditions, local planning decisions, and physical and environmental constraints.

It is important to note that OCTA does not have control over the location, type, or intensity of land-use development throughout Orange County. Growth in population and employment are additional factors that are closely tied to land use, which OCTA has little influence over.

Over the past decade, state legislation and regional planning initiatives have strengthened the formal linkage between land use and transportation planning. These policies have introduced new analytical requirements and planning frameworks, but they have not altered the voter-approved structure of the Plan. As a result, M2 investments continue to reflect Orange County's existing development patterns while adapting to evolving regulatory and planning contexts.

3.2.1 State Policy Influence on Local Land Use

SB 375 (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008) requires regional transportation plans to incorporate a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) that aligns land use and transportation investments with greenhouse gas reduction targets. While M2 predates SB 375, its projects and programs are incorporated into the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/Sustainable Communities Strategy, demonstrating consistency with regional climate and mobility objectives. Importantly, SB 375 does not require changes to voter-approved local transportation sales tax plans, allowing M2 to remain focused on delivering the projects and programs promised to voters while adapting to evolving policy requirements. In Orange County, implementation of the SCS has progressed incrementally, with jurisdictions advancing land-use policies that support compact development, higher residential densities, and transit-oriented development near major corridors and activity centers.

Specifically for M2, the Plan as a whole includes elements that support and enhance regional SCS in Orange County. Brief summaries of the specific programs are listed below:

Projects A through N	Freeway improvements and Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) provide emission reductions through congestion relief
Freeway Environmental Mitigation Program (EMP)	Natural resource protection strategy to provide for more comprehensive mitigation of environmental impacts from M2 Freeway Program projects
Projects O and P	Traffic signal synchronization and street improvements provide emission reductions through congestion relief and allow for bicycle and pedestrian project elements
Project Q	Local funding for city-selected transportation projects that provides for preservation of the streets and roads system and includes bicycle, pedestrian, water quality, and transit enhancements as eligible expenditures
Project R	Expanded Metrolink service including improvements to stations and parking to improve transit reliability, convenience, and reduce reliance on freeways
Project S	Transit extensions to improve access between Metrolink stations, residential, and employment centers and provide an alternative to driving
Project T	Station to connect to planned future high-speed rail (HSR) services
Project U	Sustain mobility choices for seniors and persons with disabilities and provides an alternative to driving
Project V	Community-based transit/circulators to complement regional transit services with local communities and provides an alternative to driving
Project W	Transit stop improvements to support transfers between major bus lines and provide passenger amenities such as shelter improvements, enhanced lighting, bicycle racks, and trash receptacles
Project X	Water quality improvement programs/projects to meet federal Clean Water Act standards for urban runoff and augment required mitigations

Another significant policy shift occurred with the implementation of SB 743, which replaced traditional automobile level of service (LOS) with vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as the primary metric for evaluating transportation impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This change reduced the

emphasis on congestion mitigation as a sole driver of transportation improvements and increased the focus on reducing overall vehicle travel. However, congestion, safety, and system reliability remain critical operational concerns for local jurisdictions and transportation agencies. As a result, while project evaluation metrics have evolved, the underlying travel demand generated by Orange County's land-use patterns has continued to necessitate investments in freeway, arterial, and multimodal infrastructure.

State housing legislation enacted over the past decade has also influenced land-use planning across Orange County. Higher Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) targets and laws intended to streamline housing development – particularly near transit corridors – have prompted zoning changes and increased residential capacity in certain areas, most notably in north and central County. While these changes support long-term goals related to housing supply and sustainability, transportation impacts associated with new development often materialize before meaningful shifts in travel behavior occur. As a result, transportation infrastructure continues to play a critical role in accommodating growth while supporting gradual transitions toward multimodal travel. Over time, these land-use changes have the potential to alter travel patterns by increasing proximity between housing, employment, services, and transit, though the transportation impacts of these policies are expected to materialize gradually.

3.2.2 Local Land-Use Trends

At the local level, many Orange County local jurisdictions have continued to advance complete streets policies designed to enhance safety, accessibility and convenience to expand active transportation networks, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities. These improvements enhance safety, provide first- and last-mile connections to transit, and support local mobility. M2 streets and roads programs – particularly the Regional Traffic Signal Synchronization Program (RTSSP) – have complemented these efforts by improving system efficiency within constrained rights-of-way (ROW). While active transportation has become an increasingly important component of the transportation system, it functions primarily as a complement to, rather than a replacement for, automobile travel given existing land-use patterns. Particularly, south Orange County remains predominantly auto oriented due to lower density. As a result, providing frequent, cost-effective transit service remains challenging in many areas despite increasing state-level emphasis on mode shift.

Emerging land-use considerations related to climate adaptation and goods movements have also become more prominent over the past decade. Coastal communities face growing challenges related to sea level rise, coastal erosion, and flooding, while inland and hillside areas are increasingly affected by wildfire risk and extreme heat. Recent state legislation has emphasized integrating climate adaptation and resilience into transportation and land-use planning, influencing decisions about development location, infrastructure design, and long-term system protection. At the same time, the growth of e-commerce and logistics-related land uses has increased demand for reliable freeway and arterial access, particularly in employment and industrial areas.

Changes in goods movement and logistics have introduced additional land use and transportation considerations. Growth in e-commerce, warehousing, and last-mile distribution has increased freight activity and truck travel, often in areas not historically designed for high volumes of goods movement. These trends raise land-use compatibility challenges related to truck access, roadway design, air quality, and impacts on nearby residential communities. Coordinating land-use policy with freight and goods movement planning is increasingly important to managing these impacts while supporting economic activity.

Equity and environmental justice considerations have also become more prominent in land-use decision-making. State and federal legislation increasingly emphasizes ensuring that transportation and land-use investments do not disproportionately burden disadvantaged communities and that the benefits of improved mobility, access, and environmental quality are shared

equitably. Land-use policies influence access to housing, employment, transportation options, and essential services, making equity a key consideration as Orange County continues to accommodate growth.

3.2.3 Implications for Transportation and M2

Overall, land-use changes over the past decade have not fundamentally altered the assumptions or structure of the M2 Plan. Orange County remains a largely built-out region characterized by incremental infill, redevelopment, and gradual increases in density concentrated in specific areas. These patterns reinforce the importance of a balanced transportation investment strategy that addresses roadway performance, supports multimodal options where appropriate, and responds to evolving policy and environmental conditions.

As Orange County continues to respond to state mandates, housing pressures, climate-related risks, and changes in travel behavior, ongoing coordination between land-use planning and transportation investment will remain essential. The Plan—developed to reflect local conditions and voter priorities—continues to provide the flexibility needed to address these evolving land-use dynamics while maintaining consistency with the commitments made to voters.

3.3 Growth

Orange County is one of California's most populous and economically significant regions, home to several million residents and jobs distributed across 34 cities. Within the footprint of nearly 800 square miles and 42 miles of coastline, the County functions as a major regional employment center while also attracting substantial recreational and visitor travel which generates travel demand that extends beyond daily commuting.

Orange County is highly urbanized, with nearly all residents living within a relatively compact developed footprint. Population densities in many areas approach or exceed several thousand people per square mile, reflecting limited land availability and a long-standing emphasis on infill development. Several cities, including the City of Santa Ana, rank among the most densely populated mid-sized cities in the nation.

Consistent with long-term regional growth trends, Orange County has experienced sustained growth since 2011 across population, housing, and employment. Over this period, population, job, and housing growth have all increased at meaningful rates, accompanied by growth in travel demand on arterial and local roadways. The following sections describe recent and projected growth trends in population, housing, and employment, followed by an assessment of how these trends influence travel behavior and worker flow patterns within and beyond Orange County.

3.3.1 Population

Orange County is home to over 3.1 million residents, making it the third most populous county in California and the sixth largest county in the nation with a population larger than 18 states. Not only is Orange County populous, but it has the second highest density in California with the average population density of nearly 4,000 residents per square mile (see Figure 3-1).

Figure 3-1: Regional Population Density Comparison

COUNTY POPULATION PER SQUARE MILE	
COUNTY	POPULATION PER SQUARE MILE
Orange	3,999
Los Angeles	2,403
San Diego	783
Riverside	351
California (Statewide)	253
San Bernardino	110

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division
Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Counties in California

Since 2011, Orange County population has grown by approximately 3.8 percent. As shown in Figure 3-2 and Figure 3-3, the most pronounced growth occurred

in cities such as Anaheim, Irvine, as well as in unincorporated areas. Much of the County's coastal and southern areas experienced more modest growth, consistent with limited land availability and established development patterns.

Orange County has experienced notable growth in its older population over the past decade. Based on 2010 and 2020 United States (U.S.) Census data, the number of residents aged 60 and older increased on average by 40 percent, significantly outpacing overall population growth. This demographic shift reflects the aging of the baby boomer generation and is expected to continue over the coming decade. As the population ages, transportation needs evolve, which reinforces the importance of maintaining and enhancing programs that support mobility needs. Further discussion about this is included in Section 5.2.3.

Looking ahead, population growth is projected to continue this trend of incremental, infill-oriented growth. By 2041, population density is anticipated to increase by approximately 5.5 percent, with most growth in central Orange County and along key transportation corridors while growth in southern and eastern portions of the County remains comparatively dispersed (see Figure 3-4). Overall, projections suggest that future population increases will largely occur within the existing urban footprint, placing continued emphasis on efficient land use and the capacity of the current transportation system (see Figure 3-5).

These population trends underscore the importance of focusing transportation investments on areas with higher and growing densities, where demand for mobility options is greatest. As Orange County accommodates additional residents, ensuring reliable, multimodal transportation access will be critical to supporting mobility, economic vitality, and quality of life.

See Appendix C for a map of Orange County Population Density in 2011.

Figure 3-2: Change in Orange County Population Density, 2011–2024

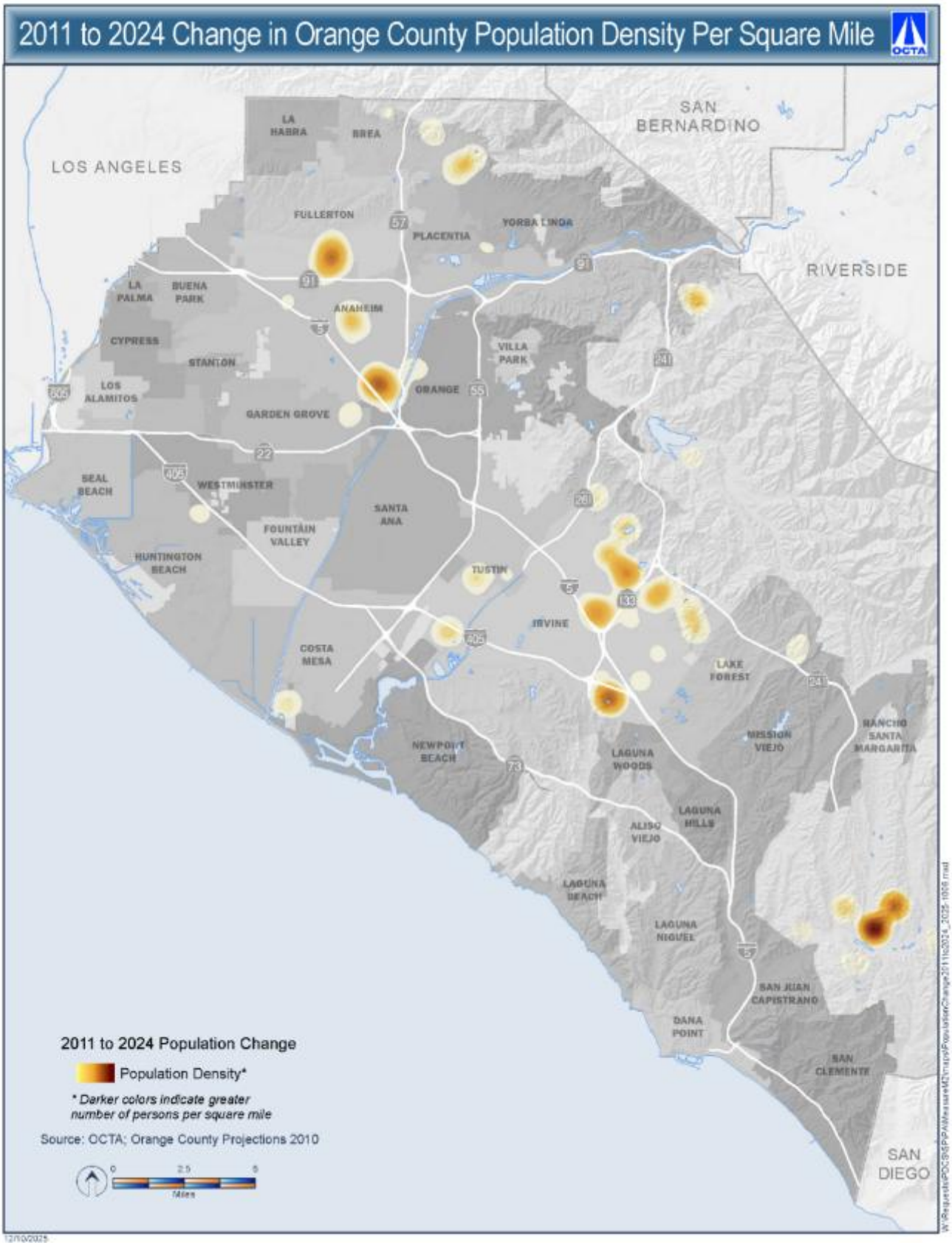


Figure 3-3: Orange County Population Density, 2024

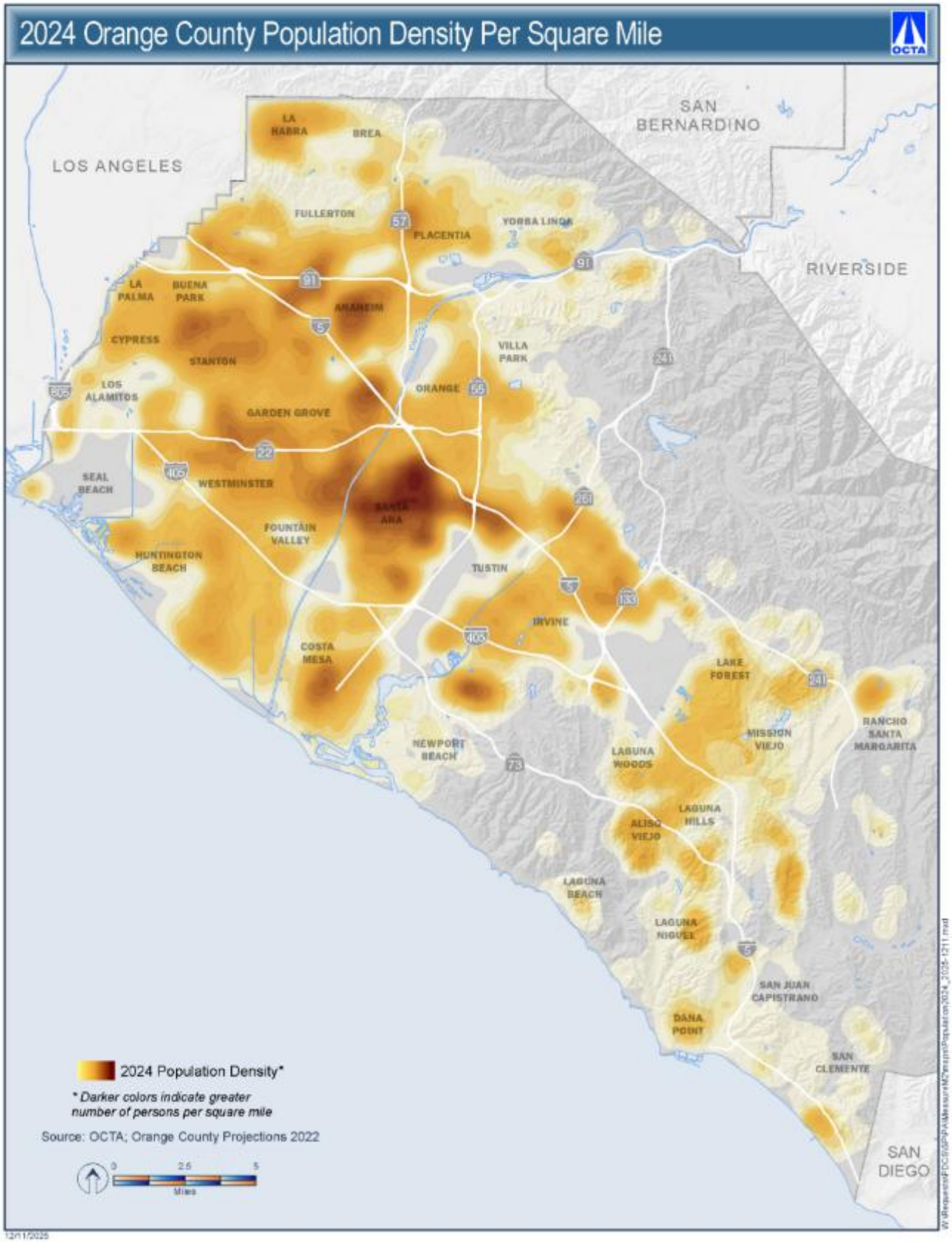


Figure 3-4: Projected Change in Orange County Population Density, 2024–2041

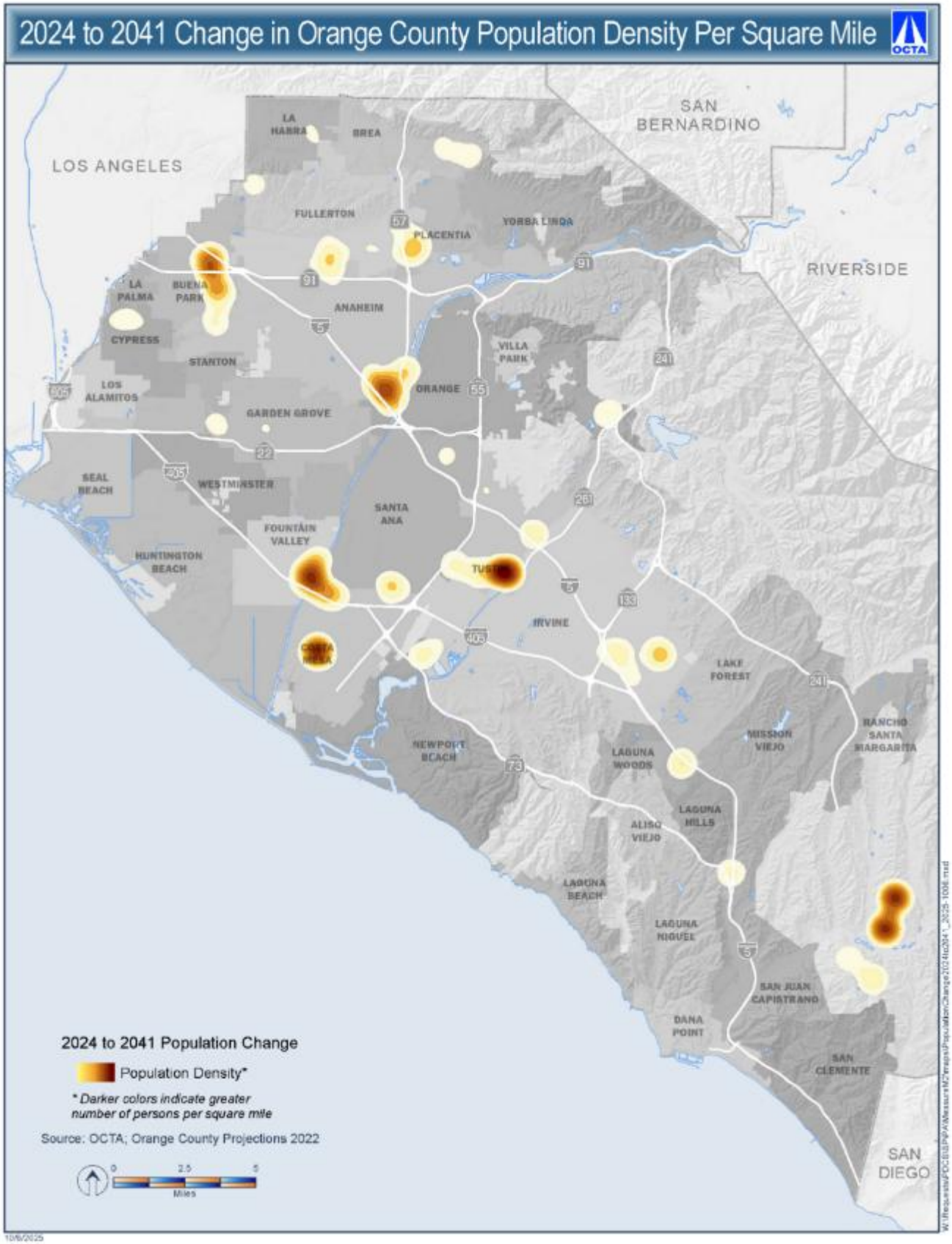
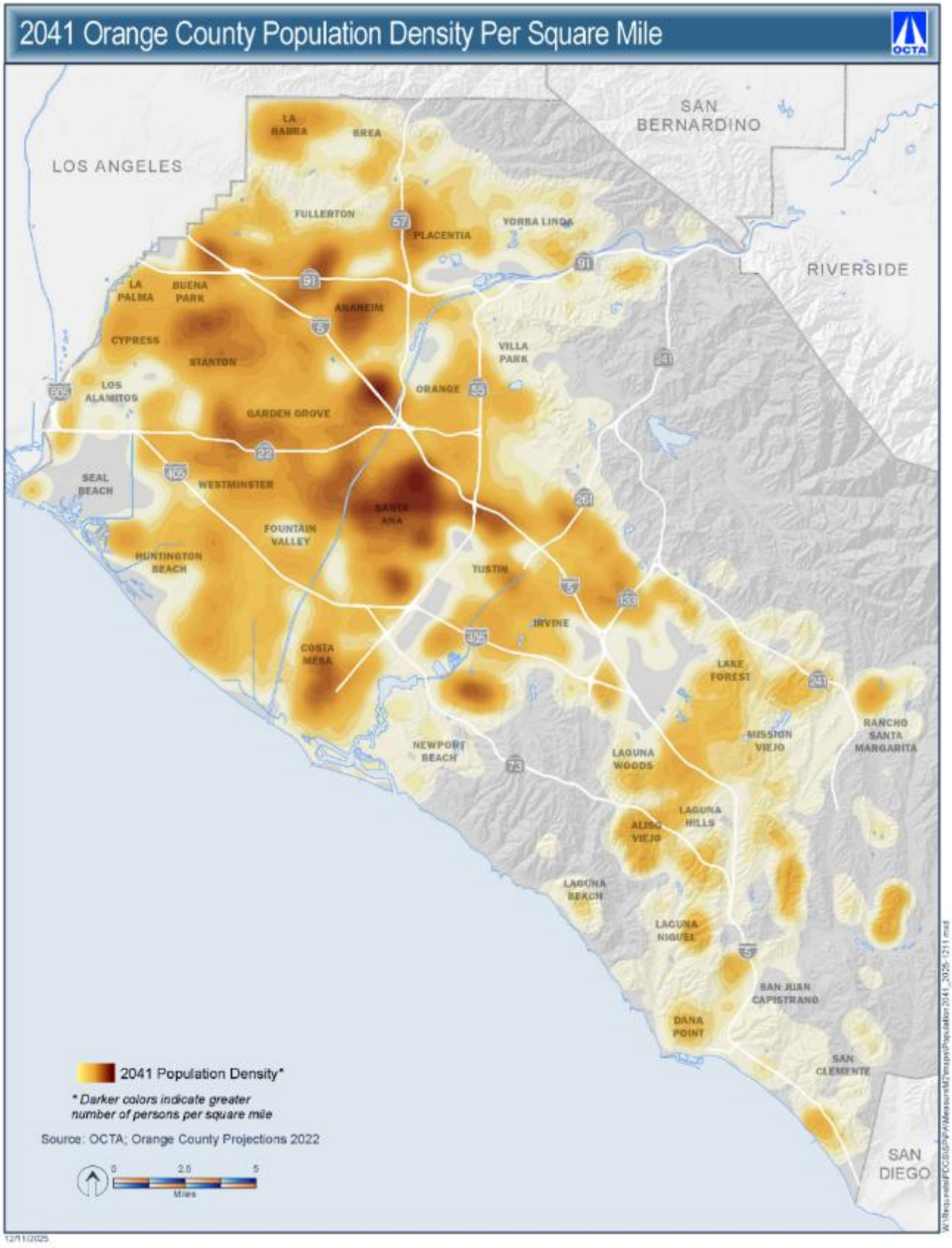


Figure 3-5: Projected Orange County Population Density, 2041



3.3.2 Housing

Housing growth in Orange County has increased by approximately 10.2 percent. As shown in Figure 3-6 and Figure 3-7, notable increases in housing density since 2011 have generally occurred within the County's existing urbanized footprint, though the intensity and location of growth have varied across jurisdictions.

Housing growth is projected to continue at a moderate pace (10.2 percent) through 2041 in general areas as reflected in Figure 3-8. The 2041 projected housing density map (Figure 3-9) generally indicates continued intensification in central Orange County and along major transportation corridors, including areas near freeway interchanges and regional employment centers.

Overall, these housing trends suggest that Orange County will accommodate future growth largely through redevelopment and increased residential density, which underscores the need for transportation investments that enhance multimodal accessibility, relieve congestion, and address travel demand.

See Appendix C for a map of housing density per square mile in 2011.

Figure 3-6: Change in Orange County Housing Density, 2011–2024

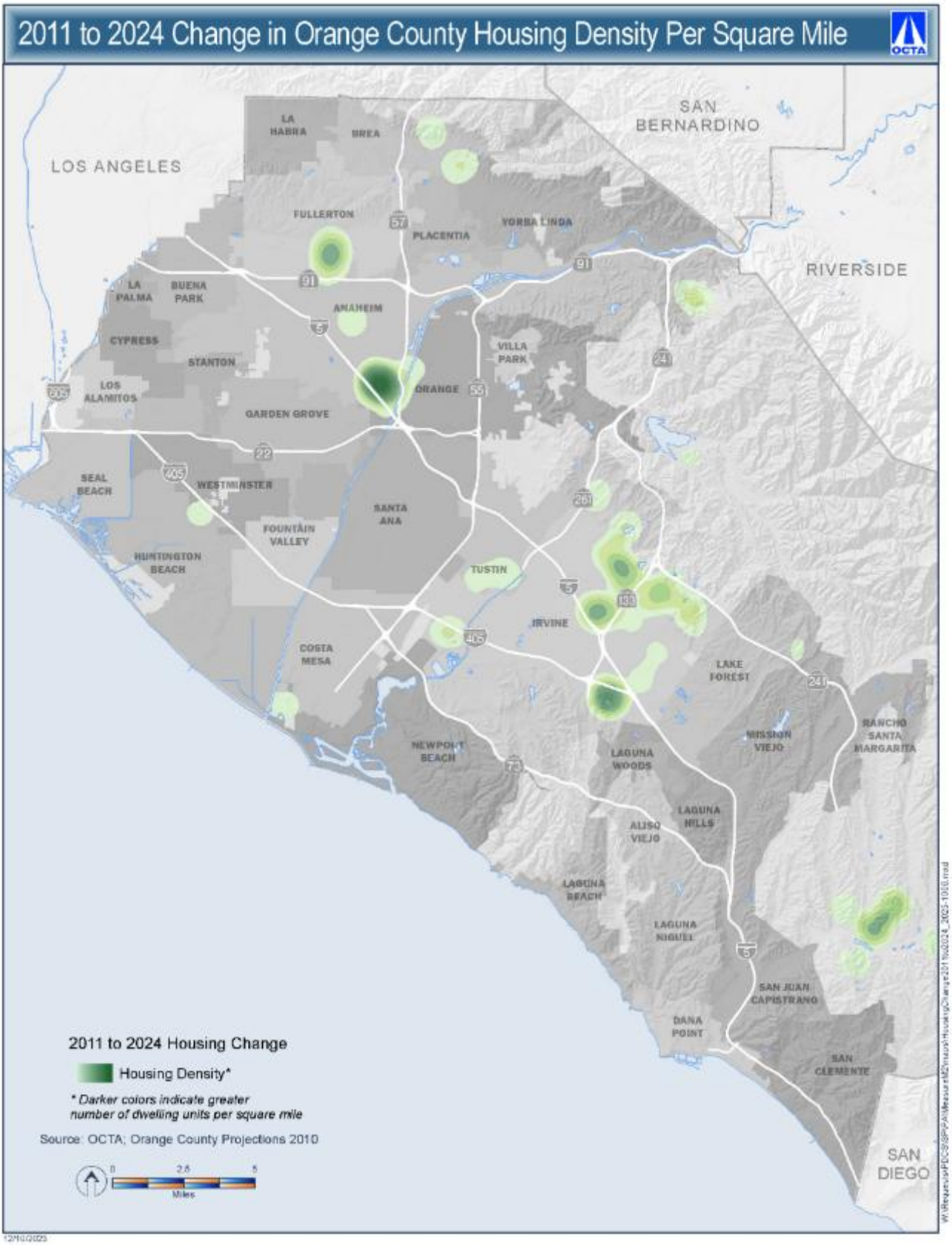


Figure 3-7: Orange County Housing Density, 2024

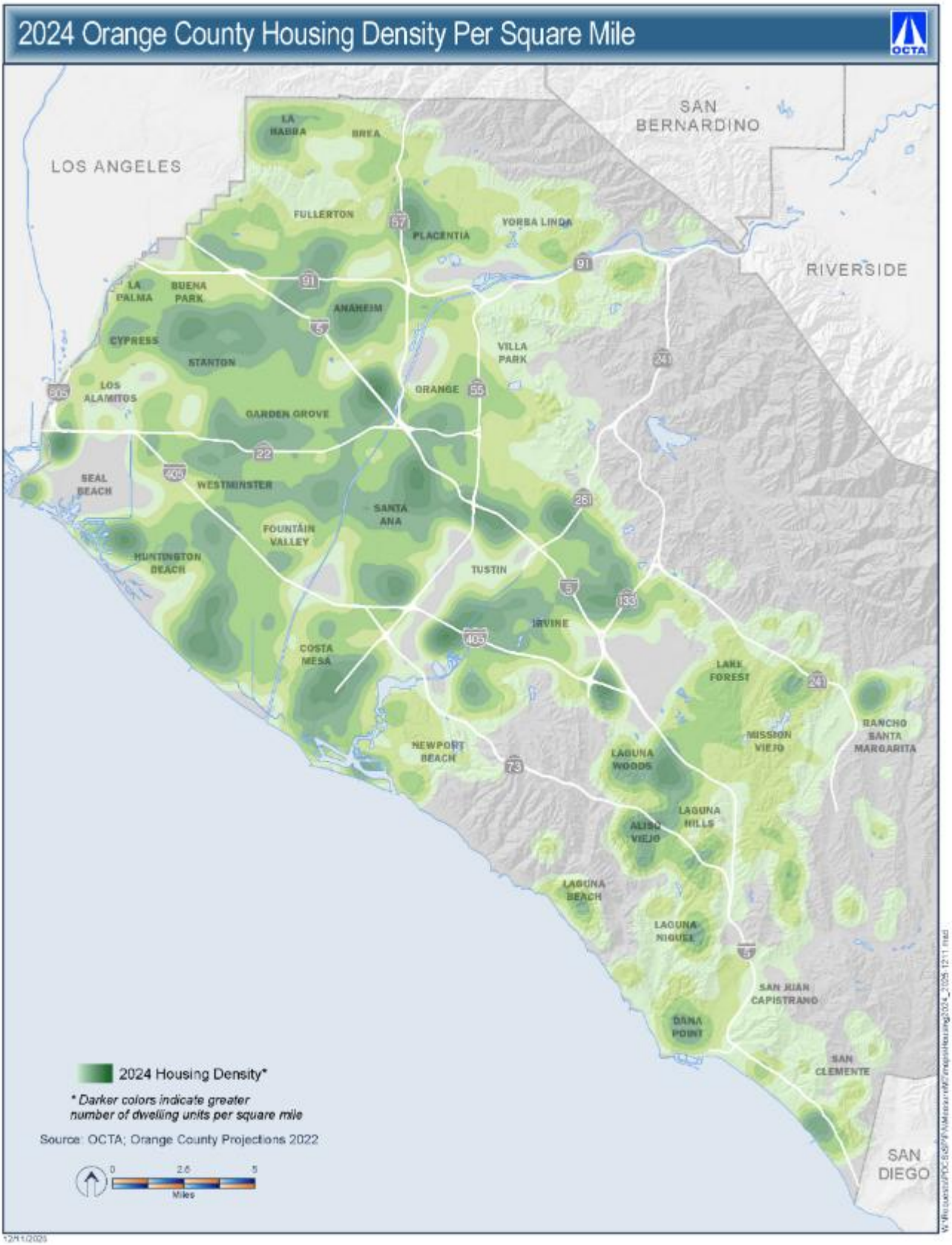


Figure 3-8: Projected Change in Orange County Housing Density, 2024–2041

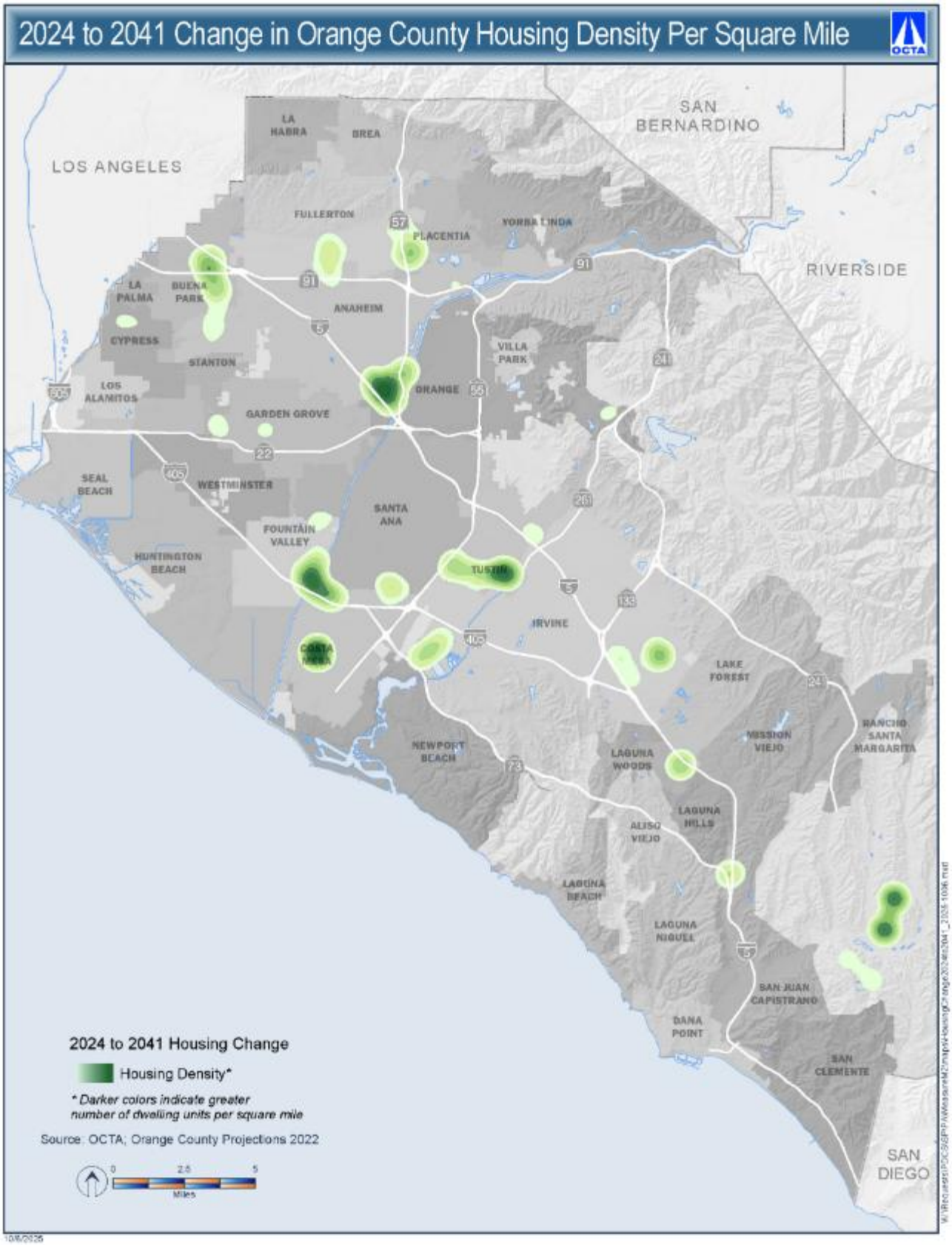
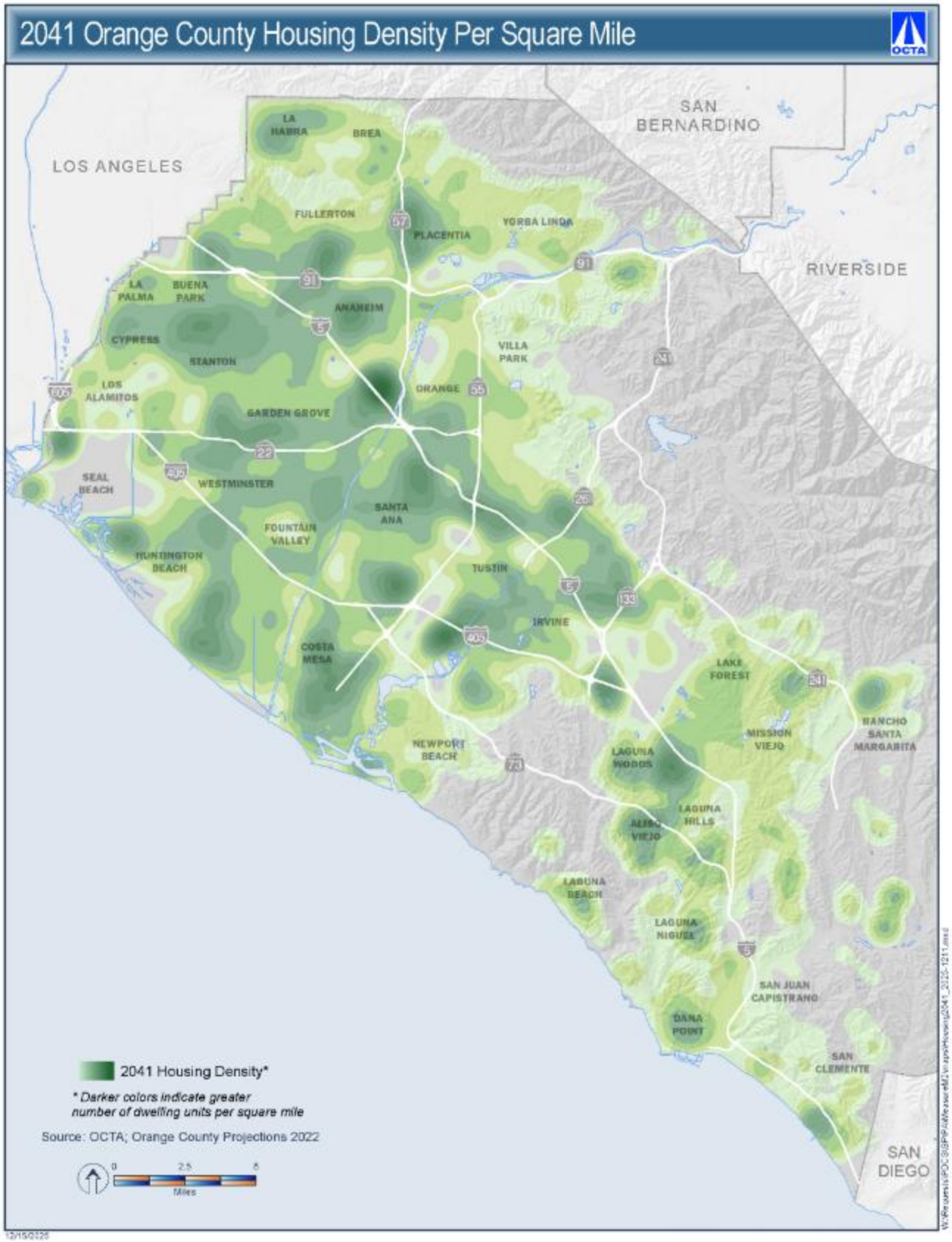


Figure 3-9: Orange County Housing Density Projection, 2041



3.3.3 Employment

Employment growth in Orange County has remained concentrated in established job centers, reflecting long-standing land-use patterns and access to regional transportation infrastructure. Since 2011, changes in employment density were generally in central Orange County (see Figure 3-10 and Figure 3-11). Notable employment growth during this period occurred in key employment hubs and along freeway corridors. Employment changes in South County and more suburban areas were comparatively modest and more dispersed, consistent with their predominantly residential land-use patterns.

Looking ahead to 2041, employment growth is projected to continue focusing on existing employment centers rather than creating new, large-scale job concentrations. The 2041 employment density map (see Figure 3-12 and Figure 3-13) indicates further intensification in central Orange County and within major business districts, including areas near regional activity centers, medical campuses, and established office and industrial zones. Projected employment growth also follows key transportation corridors, highlighting the ongoing relationship between job location decisions and regional accessibility.

Overall, employment trends suggest that future job growth in Orange County will largely build upon existing employment hubs, reinforcing the importance of reliable and efficient transportation connections between residential areas and major job centers. These patterns emphasize the need for continued investment in multimodal transportation options, congestion management strategies, and corridor-based improvements to support commuting patterns and regional economic activity.

See Appendix C for a map of Orange County Employment Density Per Square Mile in 2011.

Figure 3-10: Change in Orange County Employment Density, 2011–2024

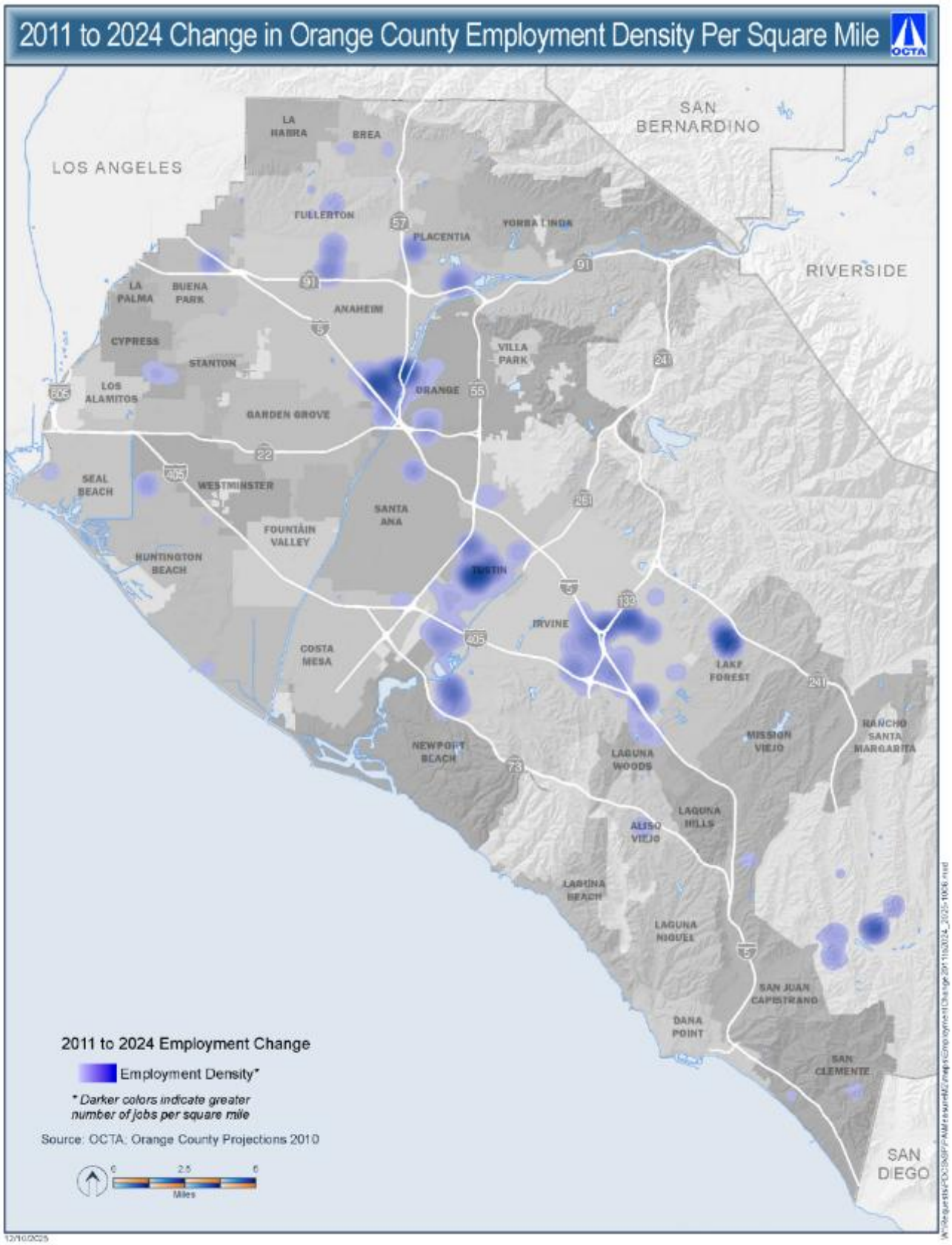


Figure 3-11: Orange County Employment Density, 2024

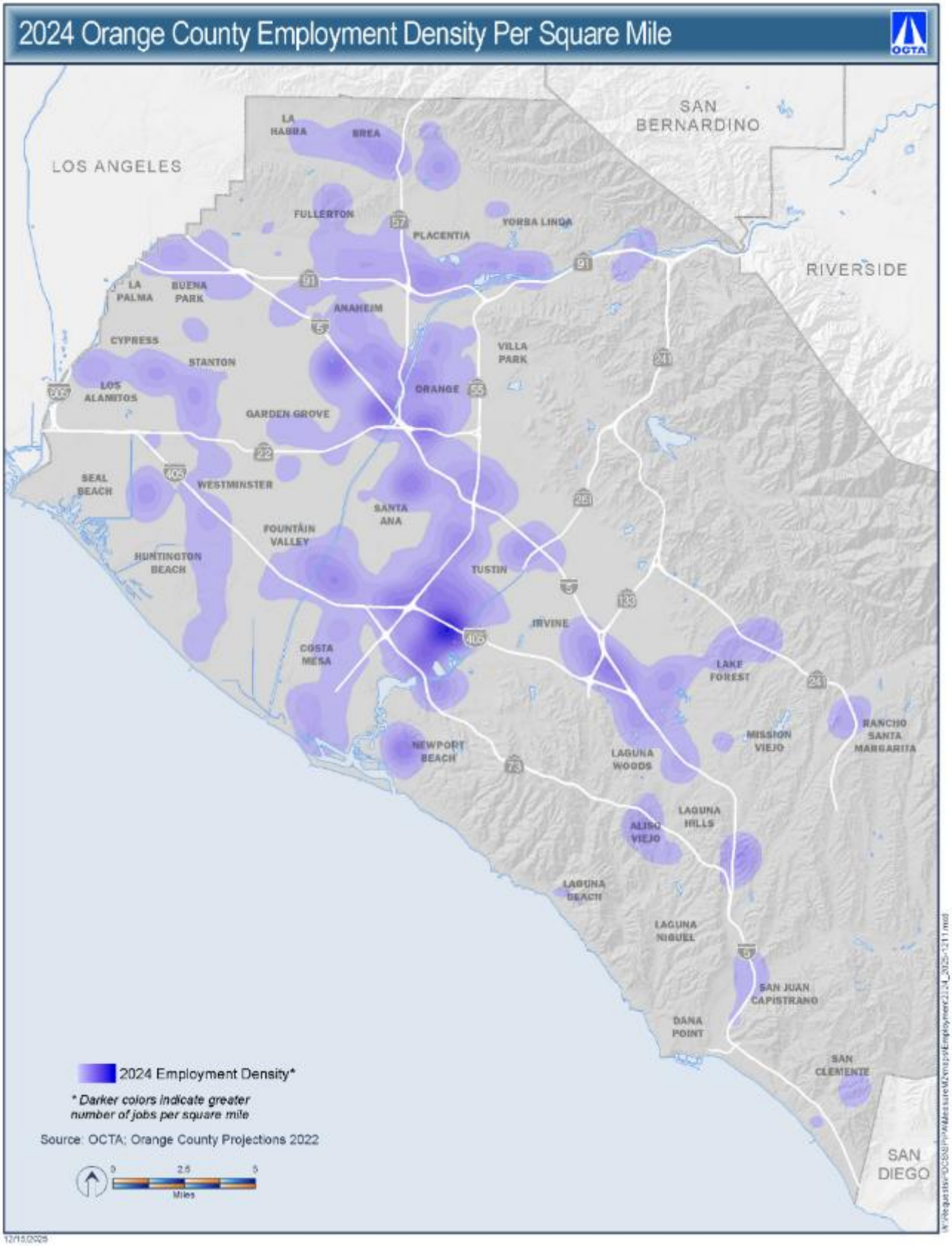


Figure 3-12: Projected Change in Orange County Employment Density, 2024–2041

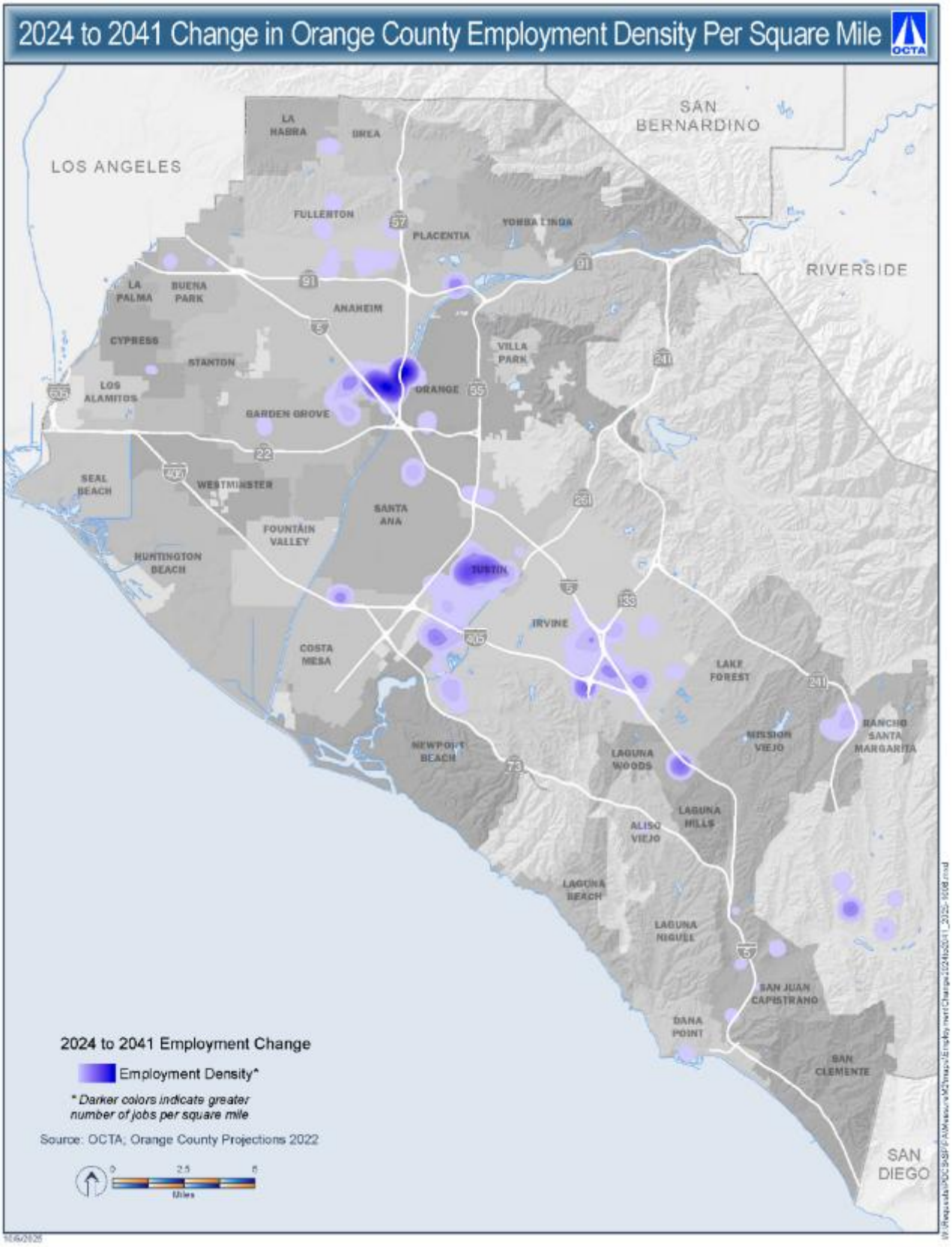
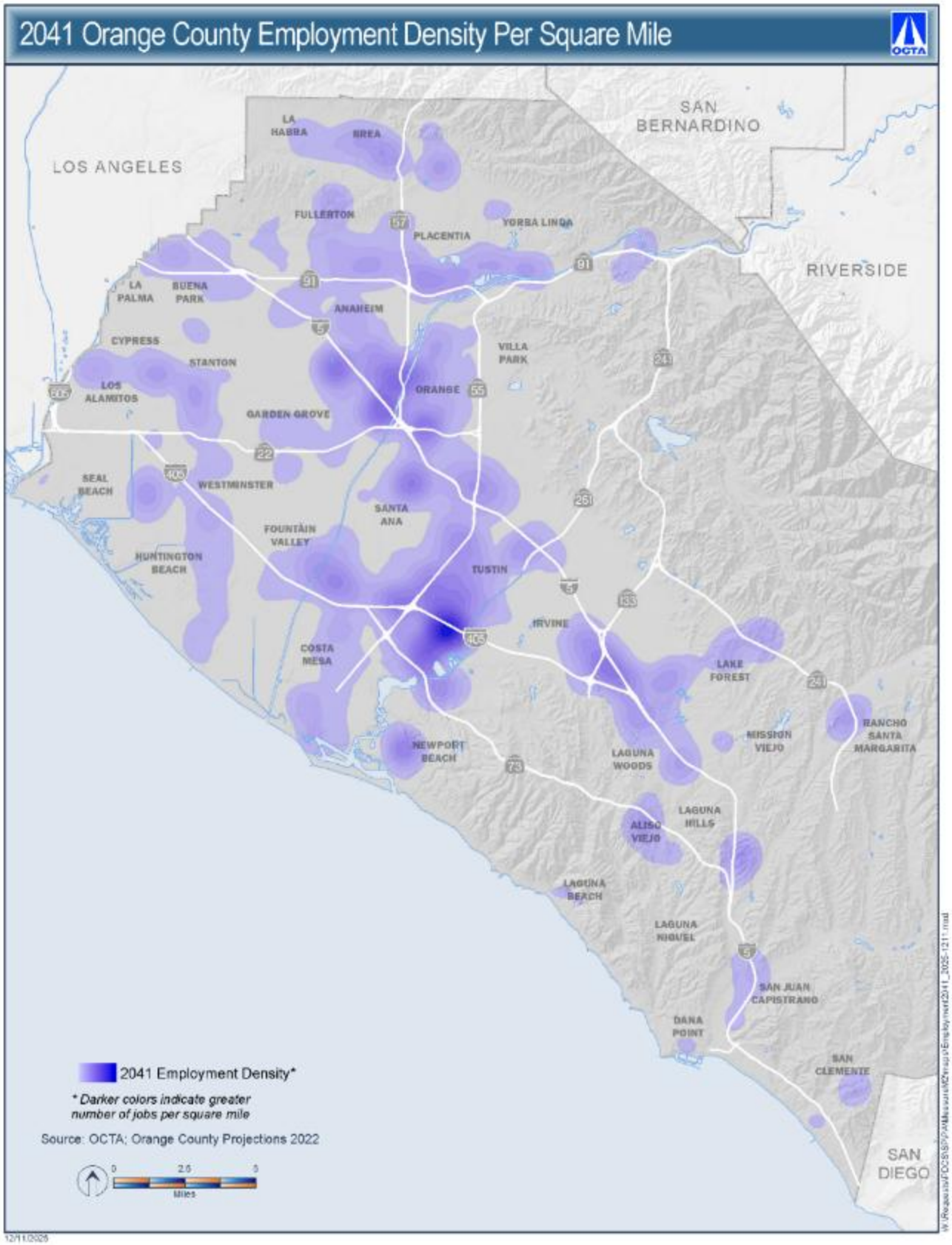


Figure 3-13: Projected Orange County Employment Density, 2041



3.4 Travel

3.4.1 Worker Flow Patterns

Orange County continues to function as both a major employment center and a net importer of workers from surrounding counties. A comparison of intercounty worker flow patterns between 2011 (Figure 3-14) and 2022 (Figure 3-15) indicates that the majority of work trips occurred internally, with residents living and working within Orange County accounting for the largest share of total worker flow activity. Between 2011 and 2022, internal work trips increased, reflecting overall growth in employment and continued concentration of jobs within the county.

Intercounty worker flow also increased over this period. Inflows from Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and other counties grew between 2011 and 2022, indicating a rising number of workers traveling into Orange County for employment. Los Angeles County remains the largest source of inbound commuters, followed by Riverside and San Bernardino counties. At the same time, outbound workers from Orange County to neighboring counties also increased, particularly to Los Angeles and Riverside counties, reflecting the region's interconnected labor market and housing dynamics.

Overall, the increase in both inbound and outbound intercounty workers suggests growing regional integration and longer-distance commute patterns. These trends place additional pressure on major freeway corridors and highlight the importance of coordinated regional transportation planning. As worker flow continues to intensify across county boundaries, investments that improve corridor capacity, support high-occupancy and transit options, and enhance system reliability will be critical to managing travel demand and maintaining regional mobility.

Figure 3-14: Intercounty Worker Flow Patterns, 2011

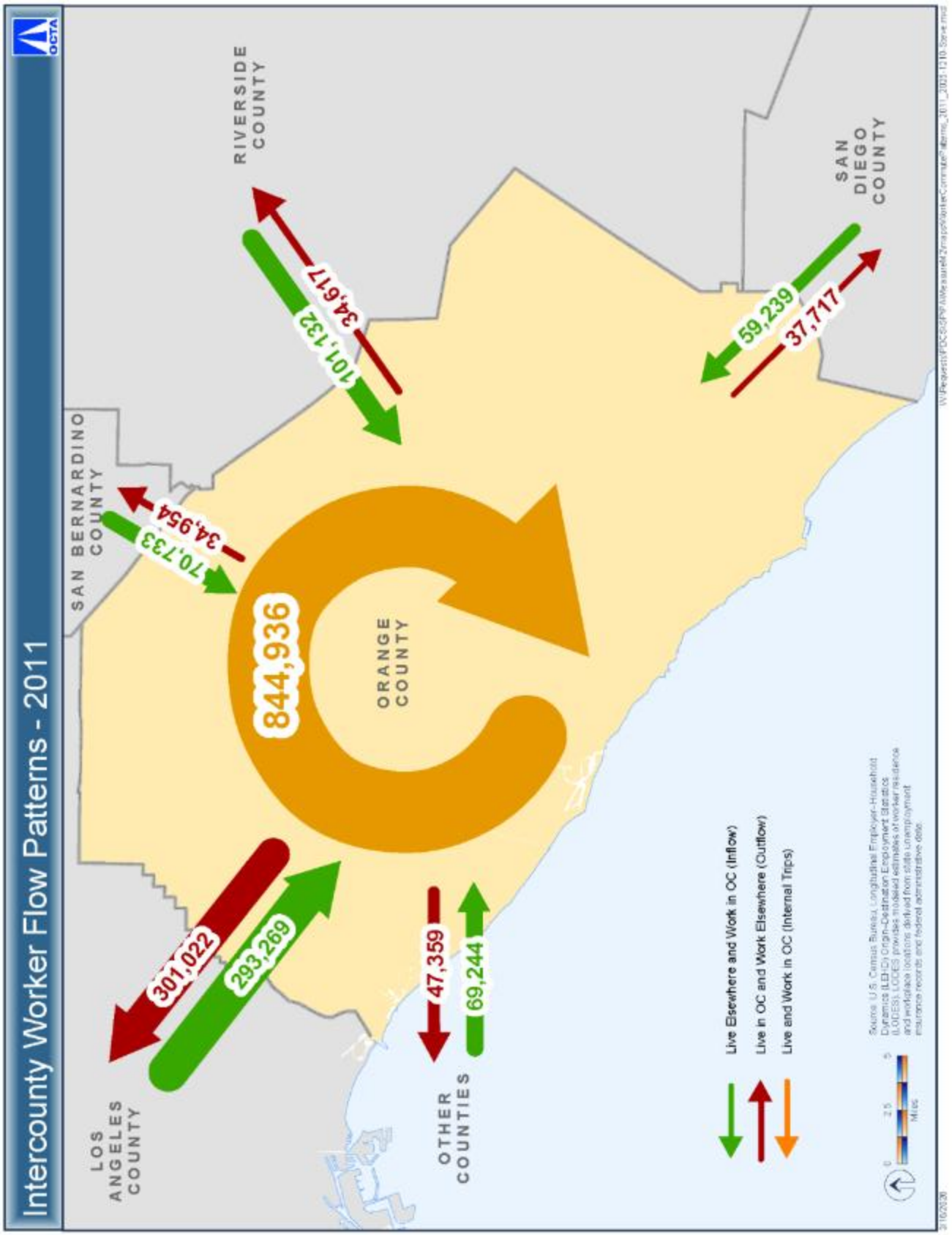
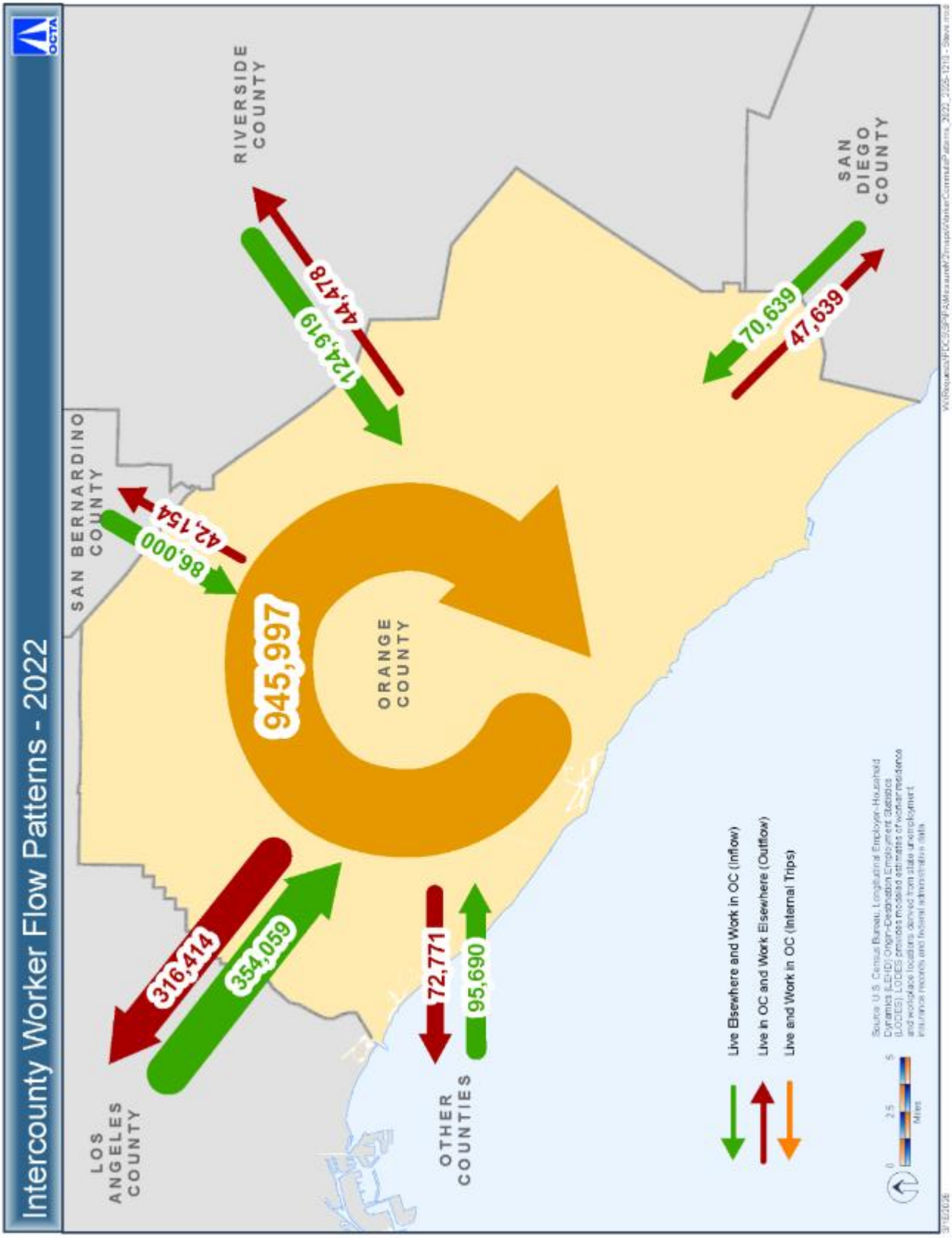


Figure 3-15: Intercounty Worker Flow Patterns, 2022



3.4.2 Travel Demand and System Performance

Modeling Scenarios: Baseline, No M2, and 2041 M2 Only

To evaluate the performance of M2 investments to Orange County's transportation system, three modeling scenarios were examined: current conditions with M2 investments implemented to date (Baseline), a counterfactual scenario representing conditions if M2 had not been implemented (No M2), and a long-term scenario reflecting 2041 conditions assuming full buildout/delivery of the M2 Program (2041 M2 Only).

Baseline and No M2

The Baseline and No M2 scenarios attempt to isolate the impacts of M2 investments: the present-day analysis compares modeled current conditions with M2 to a counterfactual scenario in which M2-funded projects are removed. Results from the model indicate that, without M2, overall system performance would be measurably worse across multiple travel and congestion indicators. In the absence of M2 investments, total vehicle hours of delay increase by approximately 15 percent compared to the Baseline, and delay as a share of total travel time rises from 11 to 13 percent. Additionally, transit usage is lower, reflecting reduced service levels and network coverage, while roadway conditions experience higher levels of congestion. Vehicle delay increases, average travel speeds decline, and peak-period conditions deteriorate on both freeways and arterial roadways. These findings demonstrate that M2 investments play a significant role in supporting mobility and mitigating congestion under present-day conditions, even as travel demand continues to grow. Without M2, Orange County would be experiencing substantially worse congestion and reduced travel reliability.

2041 M2 Only

The 2041 M2 Only scenario evaluates the transportation network after all M2 projects and programs are fully built out/delivered under projected growth conditions. Under this scenario, transit and active transportation services are held at 2024 levels, transportation demand management and mobility hub trip reduction assumptions are excluded, while signal synchronization and the full Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) network remain in place.

The 2041 M2 Only scenario reflects future population, employment, and housing growth, resulting in higher overall travel demand. However, despite this increase in demand, overall system performance remains comparable to current conditions. Total vehicle hours of delay in 2041 M2 Only are similar to the Baseline and significantly lower than the No M2 scenario. Delay as a percentage of travel time remains at 11 percent, matching current levels.

Speed and reliability metrics further demonstrate the long-term effectiveness of M2. Average daily travel speeds and both freeway and arterial peak-period speeds in 2041 are projected to be maintained at or near today's performance, indicating that M2 investments help prevent growth-related increases in commute times.

Transit performance also improves in the 2041 M2 Only scenario as daily transit trips increase substantially. This emphasizes M2's role in supporting a more balanced, multimodal transportation system that helps absorb growth and reduce pressure on the roadway network.

Overall, the modeling results show that M2 does not eliminate growth-related increases in travel demand, but it significantly improves the system's ability to manage growth. Full implementation of M2 allows Orange County to accommodate future growth while maintaining congestion levels, travel speeds, and commute times comparable to present day.

3.5 Summary and Conclusions

The planning and policy context surrounding the M2 Program has evolved considerably since voter approval in 2006. Over the past two decades—and particularly within the last ten years—changes in federal and state legislation, regional planning policies, land-use patterns, and travel behavior have collectively influenced the environment in which transportation investments are delivered.

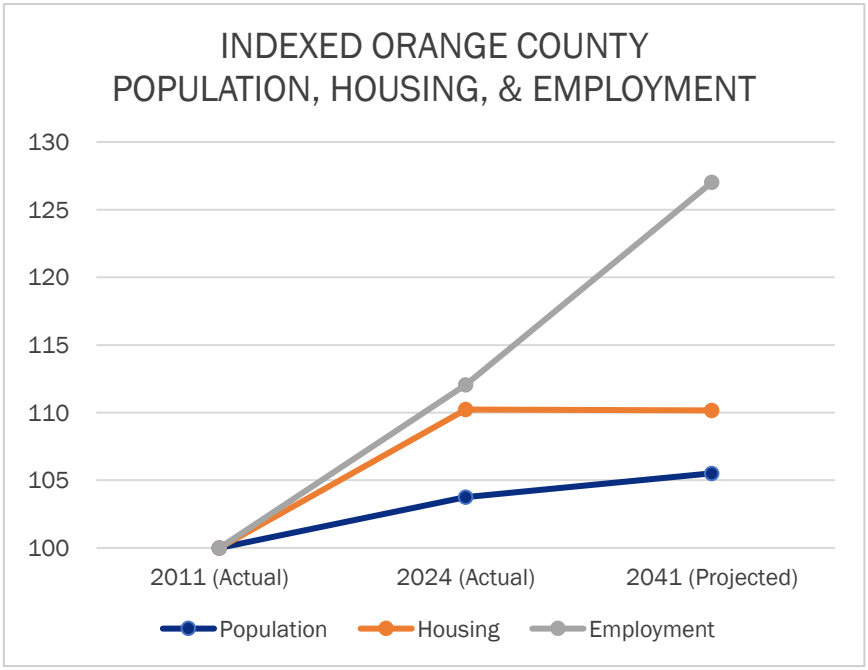
At the state and federal levels, transportation policy has increasingly emphasized sustainability, greenhouse gas reduction, and multimodal mobility. Legislative actions related to climate policy, environmental review, housing production, and transportation funding have introduced new regulatory requirements and performance metrics that affect project planning and delivery. At the same time, federal surface transportation authorizations and infrastructure funding initiatives have created opportunities to supplement local funding sources and accelerate project delivery.

While these legislative changes have introduced additional regulatory complexity, they have also expanded tools and funding opportunities available to OCTA. In response, OCTA has adapted its planning and delivery strategies—leveraging external funding, incorporating sustainability and mitigation strategies, and utilizing alternative delivery methods—to maintain progress on voter-approved investments while complying with evolving policy requirements.

Since the inception of M2, Orange County has experienced sustained growth across population, housing, and employment, accompanied by corresponding increases in travel activity from residents, workers, and visitors. Over this period, the county's population, housing, and employment have each grown, while the number of workers who both live and work within Orange County has increased. Intercounty worker flows have also intensified, with growth in workers who live outside the County but are employed in Orange County, while worker flows from Orange County to neighboring counties have evolved as regional housing and employment dynamics have shifted.

Looking ahead, Orange County is projected to continue experiencing growth across all major indicators, including continued demand generated by tourism and visitor activity. As shown in Figure 3-16, population, housing, and employment are all expected to increase, with employment and housing outpacing population growth. These trends will influence both internal and intercounty worker flows and contribute to overall travel demand. Together, they reflect the County's continued role as a major regional employment center and reinforce the importance of maintaining strong freeway, arterial, and transit system performance.

Figure 3-16: Indexed Growth in Population, Housing, and Employment (2011–2041)



Despite the growth in residents, jobs, and travel demand, congestion levels within Orange County have not increased at the same rate as underlying growth indicators. Instead, long-term congestion trends suggest that increases in travel demand have been partially offset by transportation investments, operational improvements, and system management strategies that have been implemented. When viewed in a broader regional context, congestion conditions in Orange County have generally tracked more favorably, underscoring the importance of continued investment.

It is important to note that these trends have also been influenced by a range of external factors beyond local transportation investments alone. Major economic events, such as the Great Recession and the COVID-19 pandemic, have affected travel behavior and commuting patterns, including shifts toward alternative work arrangements. Additional influences include the growth of e-commerce and goods movement, regional housing availability and migration patterns, changes in tourism and visitor travel, changes in state and federal transportation policy, emergence of new mobility technologies, and environmental and climate-related events such as wildfires, flooding, and coastal impacts. Together, these factors shape travel demand and congestion outcomes and should be considered when interpreting historical trends and future projections.

4

Financial Analysis

4. Financial Analysis

Evaluating OCTA's Capacity to Complete M2 Commitments

To evaluate OCTA's capacity to deliver the voter-approved Plan through 2041, this Review examined the program's revenue forecasts, expenditure projections, financing strategies, and safeguard framework. The analysis considers how changes in sales tax performance, construction market conditions, external funding availability, and economic factors have affected long-term financial assumptions since M2 implementation began. It also reviews financial sustainability by program category, identifying areas of flexibility as well as elements with fixed commitments that require continued oversight. Collectively, this financial assessment provides the basis for determining that the M2 Program remains fiscally sound and capable of fulfilling the commitments made to Orange County voters.

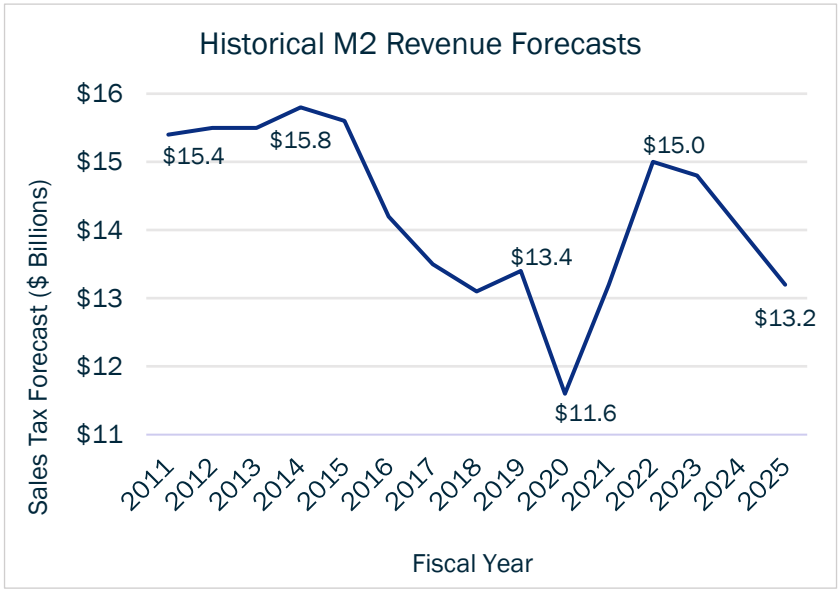
4.1 Program Revenue and Assumptions

4.1.1 Sales Tax Forecast

M2 is funded through a half-cent countywide sales tax in effect from April 1, 2011, through March 31, 2041. As the primary source of revenue for the program, the sales tax forecast provides the basis for assessing OCTA's long-term financial capacity to deliver the voter-approved Plan.

Since inception, M2 sales tax revenues have demonstrated sensitivity to broader economic cycles, reflecting changes in consumer spending, employment levels, inflation, and overall regional economic performance, as shown in Figure 4-1. Following initial program implementation during a period of economic recovery post-Great Recession, annual revenues grew steadily through the mid-2010s. Subsequent economic disruption during the COVID-19 pandemic introduced volatility; however, revenues rebounded as taxable sales shifted and consumer spending patterns adjusted. More recently, growth has moderated in response to higher inflation, increased interest rates, and softening economic conditions.

Figure 4-1: Historical M2 Revenue Forecasts



Over the first half of the M2 program period, long-term revenue projections have been revised annually to reflect updated economic assumptions. Forecast adjustments have included both upward and downward revisions, underscoring the cyclical and inherently uncertain nature of sales tax-based revenue streams. The October 2025 forecast projects total sales tax revenue available to support the M2 Program at approximately $13.2 billion over the 30-year period. This represents a decrease from the

prior year forecast and reflects flat recent-year performance combined with more conservative short- and long-term growth expectations.

Consistent with Board-approved methodology, the forecast applies short-term growth projections from MuniServices, LLC for the first five years of the forecast period and incorporates the average growth rates from California State University, Fullerton, Chapman University, and the University of California, Los Angeles for the remaining years. Under the current assumptions, short-term growth averages approximately two percent annually, while long-term growth averages approximately three percent, resulting in an overall average annual growth rate of approximately 2.7 percent across the program through 2041, as shown in Figure 4-2.

Figure 4-2: M2 Sales Tax Revenue Actuals and Projections (FY 2011–FY 2041)

	Fiscal Year	Gross Sales Tax	Growth Rate
Actuals	2011*	$ 61,756,868	6.5%
	2012	$ 250,892,931	6.2%
	2013	$ 266,384,076	6.2%
	2014	$ 279,599,946	5.0%
	2015	$ 291,615,675	4.3%
	2016	$ 300,944,523	3.2%
	2017	$ 308,768,664	2.6%
	2018	$ 321,480,529	4.1%
	2019	$ 332,358,188	3.4%
	2020	$ 317,963,821	-4.3%
	2021	$ 345,345,181	8.6%
	2022	$ 424,896,566	23.0%
	2023	$ 439,123,114	3.3%
	2024	$ 431,412,458	-1.8%
	2025	$ 431,842,537	0.1%
Short-Term	2026	$ 431,842,537	0.0%
	2027	$ 441,389,937	2.2%
	2028	$ 453,637,233	2.8%
	2029	$ 465,010,764	2.5%
	2030	$ 475,271,165	2.2%
Long-Term	2031	$ 491,279,604	3.4%
	2032	$ 507,420,796	3.3%
	2033	$ 523,943,853	3.3%
	2034	$ 540,318,739	3.1%
	2035	$ 556,044,373	2.9%
	2036	$ 572,108,603	2.9%
	2037	$ 588,604,782	2.9%
	2038	$ 605,211,267	2.8%
	2039	$ 622,327,623	2.8%
	2040	$ 640,044,080	2.8%
	2041*	$ 493,611,419	2.8%
		$ 13,212,451,852	2.7%

** Fiscal year (FY) 2011 includes sales tax receipts for one quarter and FY 2041 represents forecasted sales tax receipts for three quarters*

From a financial capacity perspective, the updated forecast indicates that, while revenue growth is expected to be more moderate than in prior periods, the M2 Program remains deliverable within available resources. The structure of the M2 Plan provides flexibility in several program categories where expenditures can be scaled to match available revenues. In addition, OCTA has historically applied conservative budgeting practices, maintained prudent reserve levels, and leveraged external funding sources to supplement M2 revenues. These tactics have mitigated the impact of revenue volatility and supported continued project advancement.

Although economic uncertainty remains—including potential impacts from inflation, interest rate fluctuations, trade policy changes, political instability, and demographic trends—no structural revenue shortfall has been identified that would compromise overall program completion. Ongoing annual forecast updates, integration with the Comprehensive Business Plan (CBP), and annual updates to the Next 10 Plan provide a mechanism to recalibrate project timing and funding assumptions as necessary to maintain fiscal sustainability.

Based on current projections and financial management practices, OCTA retains the capacity to deliver the Plan through 2041, consistent with commitments made to Orange County voters.

4.1.2 Market Conditions Forecast

In addition to monitoring sales tax revenues, OCTA evaluates construction market conditions to assess potential cost pressures that may affect delivery of the M2 Program. Because M2 includes a significant capital component—particularly within the Freeway Program—construction cost trends directly influence long-term financial capacity and project timing.

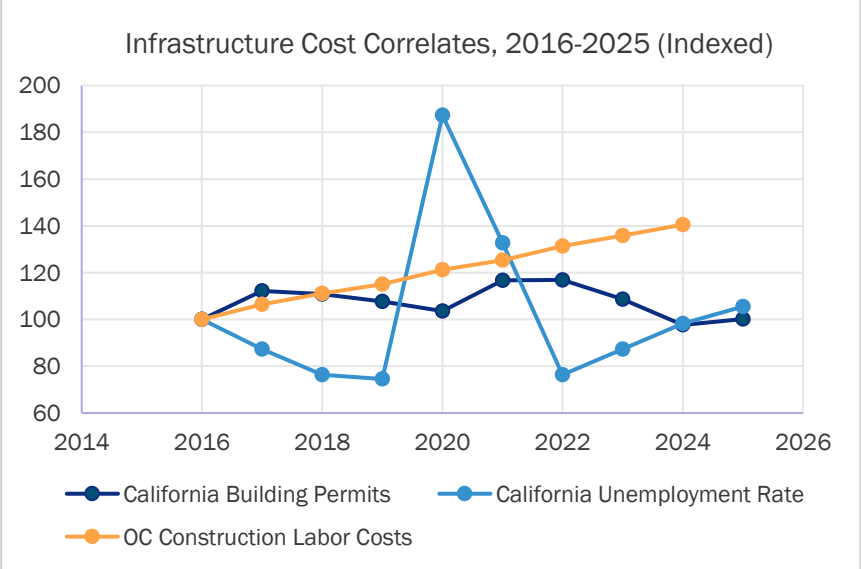
Over the first half of the M2 program period, construction market conditions have fluctuated considerably. Early years following M2 approval coincided with recovery from the Great Recession, when bid prices were favorable and construction costs were relatively contained. As regional economic activity accelerated in the mid-to-late 2010s, competition for labor and materials increased, placing upward pressure on costs.

More recently, the post-pandemic period introduced heightened volatility in material prices, labor availability, and broader economic conditions. Inflationary pressures in 2021 and 2022 resulted in significant increases in key infrastructure inputs, including structural concrete, steel, and aggregate. Although some moderation occurred thereafter, construction costs remain sensitive to macroeconomic variables such as interest rates, labor market conditions, global supply chains, and trade policies.

In September 2017, the Board was presented with a Market Conditions Forecast and Risk Analysis report conducted by economists Dr. Wallace Walrod and Dr. Marlon Boarnet through a contract with the Orange County Business Council (OCBC). The result of this analysis identified strong potential for OCTA to experience an increasing cost environment in the near term. Recognizing the benefits of proactive monitoring and forecasting of market conditions, the Board directed staff to continue to work with OCBC and provide OCTA with cost risk factors for project delivery. Since that time, OCTA has continued partnership with OCBC to track and forecast construction market indicators through the creation of an Infrastructure Construction Cost Pressure Index (ICCPI). The ICCPI evaluates trends in statewide building permits, unemployment rates, localized construction wages, selected Caltrans material cost indices, and general economic conditions. Some of the main factors considered are indexed in Figure 4-3. The ICCPI assigns a score corresponding to a projected range of annual construction cost fluctuations (Figure 4-4).

Historically, ICCPI scores have reflected periods of both elevated and moderate inflationary environments. The most recent update in fall 2025 indicates a forecasted index value of three through 2028, corresponding to a projected annual cost fluctuation range of approximately two to six percent (Figure 4-5). This represents a moderate inflationary environment, elevated relative to recessionary periods but below the extreme cost escalation observed during peak construction boom cycles and the immediate post-pandemic period.

Figure 4-3: Indexed Infrastructure Cost Correlates, 2016-2025



Recent analyses indicate that construction wages continue to rise, select material costs have increased on an annualized basis, and economic uncertainty remains present. Broader economic forces—including tariff policies, Federal Reserve interest rate decisions, labor market adjustments, and international instability—may influence construction cost trajectories in ways that cannot be fully modeled.

From a long-term financial capacity perspective, the anticipated moderate cost environment reinforces the importance of disciplined cost estimating and ongoing market monitoring. OCTA's Project Controls Department adjusts escalation assumptions based on historical trends and current data. Over the past two decades, a three percent escalation assumption has, on average, provided an appropriate baseline. In recent years, escalation assumptions in the range of 3.5 to five percent, combined with project-specific contingencies, have been applied to reflect market realities.

Looking ahead, while construction cost volatility remains a risk factor, current forecasts suggest a stable, moderate inflationary environment rather than a return to the extreme conditions experienced in prior cycles. Through continued monitoring of market indicators and integration of these forecasts into the CBP and Next 10 Plan, OCTA maintains the ability to adjust project timing, manage cost exposure, and preserve overall M2 Program deliverability through 2041.

Figure 4-4: Range of Cost Fluctuations by Index Score

Index Score	Low	Midpoint	High
0	-17%	-9.5%	-2%
1	-2%	-0.5%	1%
2	1%	1.5%	2%
3	2%	4%	6%
4	6%	8.5%	11%
5	11%	25.5%	40%

Figure 4-5: Orange County Business Council Orange County Transportation ICCPI Score Forecasts

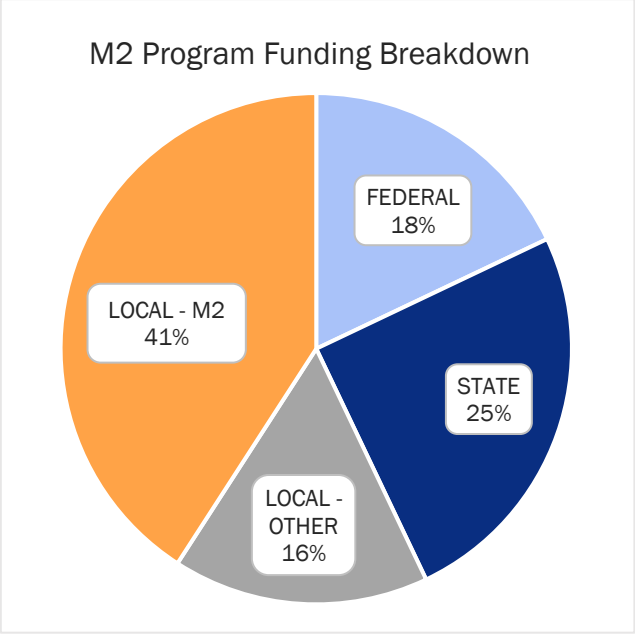
Year	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Fall 2021	Spring 2022	Fall 2022	Spring 2023	Fall 2023	Spring 2024	Fall 2024	Spring 2025	Fall 2025
2018	4														
2019	3	4													
2020	3	3	3	3	0										
2021		3	3	2	1	1	5								
2022			3	2	1	2	4	5	5						
2023					3	4	4	4	4	4	3				
2024							4	4	4	4	3	2	2		
2025									2	3	2	3	3	2	3
2026											2	2	2	2	3
2027													2	2	3
2028															3

4.1.3 External Funding Availability

M2 was structured to be deliverable based on solely local sales tax revenues. While the program does not depend on external funding to fulfill its core promises, OCTA has historically pursued and secured state, federal, and other funding sources to supplement M2 revenues, advance project schedules, and reduce reliance on debt.

Over the first half of the M2 program period, OCTA has successfully leveraged a broad range of external funding programs. These have included federal highway and transit grants, state transportation improvement funds, voter-approved state bond programs, cap-and-trade transit programs, corridor-specific revenues such as net excess 91 Express Lanes funds, and federal financing tools such as Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loans. The strategic use of these external funds has allowed OCTA to accelerate project delivery, offset periods of lower sales tax growth, and preserve M2 capacity for future commitments.

Figure 4-6: M2 Program Funding Breakdown



External funding has been particularly significant for major capital investments, including freeway improvements and transit projects, where competitive state and federal programs have historically supported regional mobility enhancements.

Looking forward, the availability of state and federal funding programs remains subject to policy priorities, economic conditions, and legislative action. Recent shifts in state and federal transportation policy increasingly emphasize multimodal investments, greenhouse gas reduction strategies, and system preservation. These trends may influence the types of projects that are most competitive for discretionary funding opportunities.

Although future external funding levels are uncertain, the M2 Program remains financially structured to deliver its commitments independent of additional external funds. OCTA will continue to actively pursue external funding and coordinate with regional, state, and federal partners to maximize available resources. By integrating external funding assumptions conservatively into long-range financial planning, OCTA maintains fiscal flexibility while preserving the integrity and deliverability of the voter-approved Plan.

4.1.4 Financing and Bonding

Complementing the strategic pursuit of external funding, the M2 Ordinance identifies pay-as-you-go financing as the preferred method of funding transportation improvements, while also providing authority for bond financing when necessary to advance projects, manage cash flow, and mitigate inflationary risk. Over the first half of the M2 Program period, OCTA has strategically utilized both approaches to support timely delivery of voter-approved commitments.

Following M2 approval in 2006, the Board adopted the EAP, which enabled OCTA to initiate project development activities prior to the start of revenue collection in 2011. During the economic downturn associated with the Great Recession, this strategy positioned OCTA to advance projects in a favorable bidding environment and capture significant one-time external funding, including State Proposition 1B and American

Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds. By accelerating projects during a period of lower construction costs and interest rates, OCTA delivered mobility benefits earlier while preserving long-term program capacity.

As market conditions evolved and project delivery schedules were refined through the M2020 Plan and subsequent Next 10 Plans, bond financing was incorporated to manage cash flow timing, hedge against cost escalation, and maintain project delivery schedules. The use of bonds allowed OCTA to advance key freeway improvements during periods when inflationary pressures were rising and construction markets were tightening. This approach proved consistent with practices implemented under M1 and demonstrated OCTA's ability to balance fiscal prudence with timely delivery.

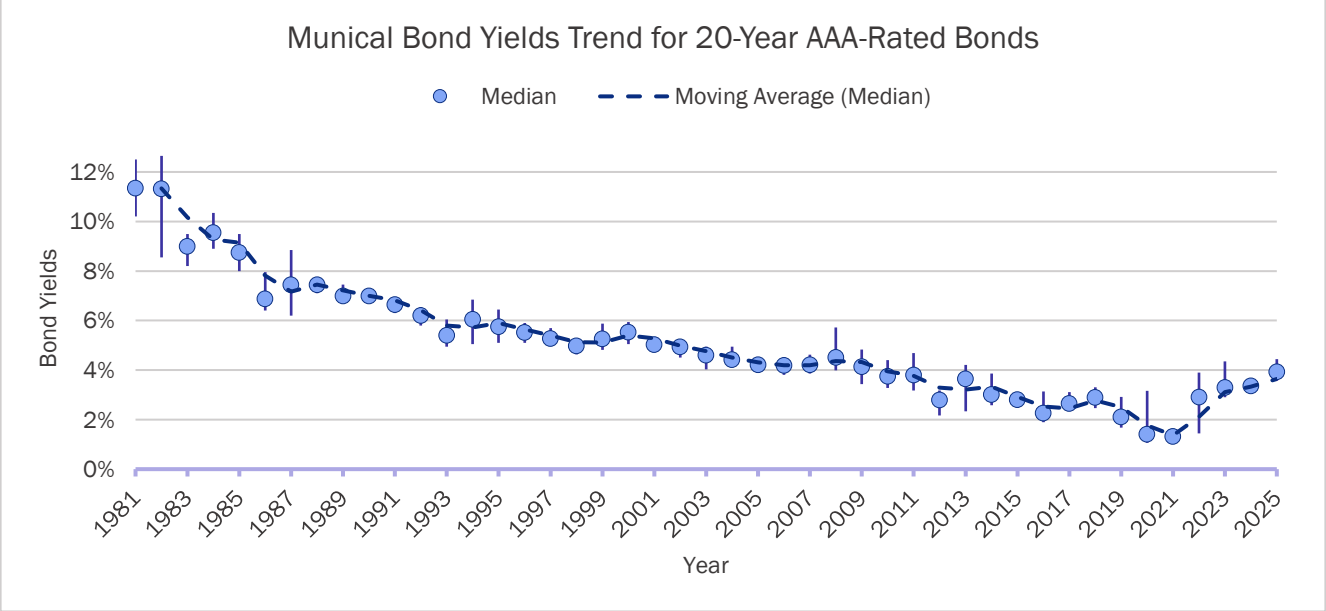
Current financial planning assumptions reflect a transition back to a predominantly pay-as-you-go model for the remaining program period. Based on updated revenue forecasts and cash flow modeling, no additional bond issuances are currently assumed through 2041. Existing debt service obligations are supported by conservative coverage ratios that provide substantial financial flexibility and protection against revenue variability.

Municipal bond markets have experienced cyclical changes over the life of the program (see Figure 4-7). While long-term interest rates remain historically moderate relative to prior decades, they have trended upward in recent years. OCTA continues to monitor interest rate conditions, debt capacity, and coverage ratios to ensure that financing decisions remain aligned with overall program sustainability.

From a financial capacity perspective, OCTA retains significant bonding authority should future conditions warrant additional financing to support project delivery. However, under current projections, available sales tax revenues, programmed external funds, prudent reserve balances, and disciplined cash flow management provide sufficient capacity to complete the Plan through 2041 without reliance on new debt.

Through strategic use of financing tools, conservative fiscal management practices, and ongoing integration of revenue forecasts into delivery planning, OCTA has maintained financial stability while advancing the M2 Program consistent with commitments made to Orange County voters.

Figure 4-7: Historical Trend in 20-Year AAA Municipal Bond Yields



4.1.5 Administrative Cap and Collection Costs

The M2 Ordinance limits administrative expenditures for OCTA salaries and benefits to one percent of annual M2 revenues. A legal opinion clarifies that in years when administrative salaries and benefits exceed one percent, only one percent may be charged to M2, with any excess temporarily advanced from non-M2 fund sources; conversely, in years when administrative costs fall below the cap, OCTA may allocate the full one percent and apply any unused capacity to repay prior borrowings with interest. Based on original revenue projections of $24.3 billion, one percent was expected to fund administrative salaries and benefits over the life of the program; however, updated projections as of June 30, 2025, estimated total M2 revenues at approximately $13.2 billion, reducing the funding available to support administrative functions while the effort required to deliver the program has remained largely unchanged. In addition, the EAP initiated in 2007 required administrative functions four years prior to revenue collection, resulting in necessary upfront costs despite generating project acceleration and savings. To manage these timing and revenue impacts, the Board authorized the temporary use of the Orange County Unified Transportation Trust (OCUTT) fund to cover administrative costs exceeding the one percent threshold, with repayment and accrued interest required in subsequent years when costs fell below the cap; approximately $5.3 million has been borrowed to date. As of December 31, 2025, all borrowings and accrued interest have been fully repaid. Staff conducts quarterly labor allocation reviews to ensure accurate reporting to prevent misclassification of project-related costs and to ensure administrative expenditures during the review period remain compliant with the M2 Ordinance.

In addition to the one percent administrative limitation, state law requires that the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration (CDTFA) deduct its costs of administering and collecting the M2 transactions and use tax prior to remitting revenues to OCTA. These charges are established pursuant to statutory cost-recovery provisions and are reflected in the monthly distribution statements provided to OCTA. As a result, M2 allocations are based on revenues received after CDTFA administrative fees and related adjustments. While these collection costs represent a relatively small portion of total receipts, they are a structural revenue deduction that reduces the amount available for program distribution and are incorporated into OCTA's revenue forecasts and cash flow planning.

4.2 Freeways

The M2 Freeway Program represents approximately 43 percent of total net M2 revenues and consists of 13 voter-approved projects segmented into 30 project elements to accommodate project delivery. Unlike other components of the Plan, the M2 Freeway Program is defined by specific project scopes and cannot be scaled to available revenues.

Included in the M2 Freeway Program is the Freeway EMP, which is funded through five percent of the 43 percent allocation to provide comprehensive, programmatic mitigation for freeway improvements.

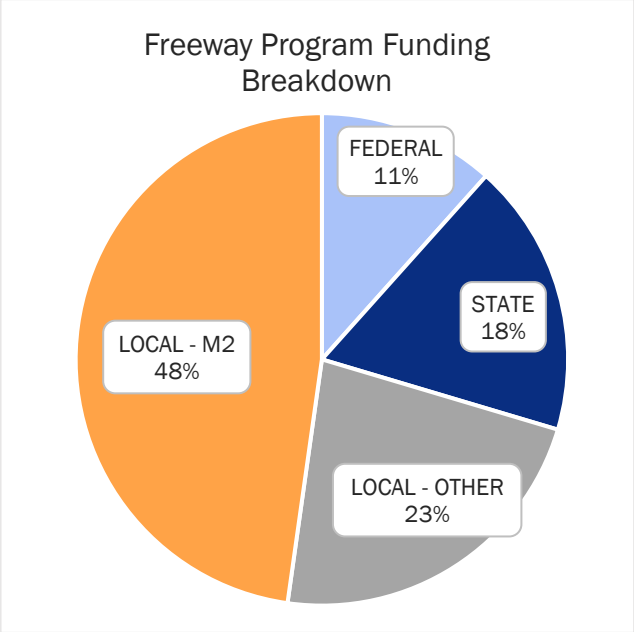
The EMP was established to provide natural resource preservation, habitat restoration, and long-term management of conservation lands in exchange for streamlined environmental approvals and greater certainty in freeway project delivery. To protect the seven conservation properties (Preserves) in perpetuity, a non-wasting endowment was created to fund long-term management and maintenance obligations. As of December 31, 2025, the endowment balance was approximately $39.9 million, and OCTA continues to make annual deposits consistent with Board-adopted funding assumptions.

As part of this Review, OCTA evaluated the long-term funding framework for the EMP, including land management costs incurred to date and projected future obligations. Based on this review, the existing endowment target of approximately $46.2 million remains sufficient to support anticipated long-term stewardship responsibilities.

Based on the 2025 Next 10 Plan financial assumptions, total revenues available to support the M2 Freeway Program are projected at approximately $8.9 billion through 2041, with total program costs estimated at approximately $8.8 billion over the same period. Revenues include the proportional share of M2 sales tax allocations, prior bond proceeds, committed state and federal grants, corridor-specific revenues, and associated interest earnings. Under current projections, the program remains financially balanced over the life of M2.

In addition to M2 revenues, the M2 Freeway Program continues to leverage substantial external funding. As shown in Figure 4-8, approximately 52 percent of total freeway funding is derived from non-M2 sources, including federal, state, and other local contributions. These external funds include a combination of federal formula and discretionary programs [e.g., Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ), Surface Transportation Block Program (STBG), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grants], state programs such as the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and SB 1 (Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017), and other sources including local contributions, toll revenues, bond proceeds, and specialized financing mechanisms such as TIFIA loans. This diversified funding structure reduces reliance on M2 sales tax revenues and supports delivery of voter-approved improvements.

Figure 4-8: Freeway Program Funding Breakdown



While the 2025 sales tax forecast reflects lower projected M2 revenues compared to prior years, no additional bond issuances are assumed through 2041. The Freeway Program maintains strong debt coverage ratios and retains bonding capacity should future economic conditions warrant supplemental financing.

Each project has been reviewed with updated schedules and cost estimates reflecting current engineering information and market conditions. With most projects now in final design or construction, estimates are more refined than in earlier phases. Although recent increases in material and labor costs are reflected in updated projections, the 2025 Next 10 Plan confirms that the M2 Freeway Program remains financially deliverable.

4.3 Streets and Roads

The M2 Streets and Roads Program represents approximately 32 percent of net M2 revenues and consists of three programmatic elements: the RCP (Project O), the RTSSP (Project P), and the LFS Program (Project Q).

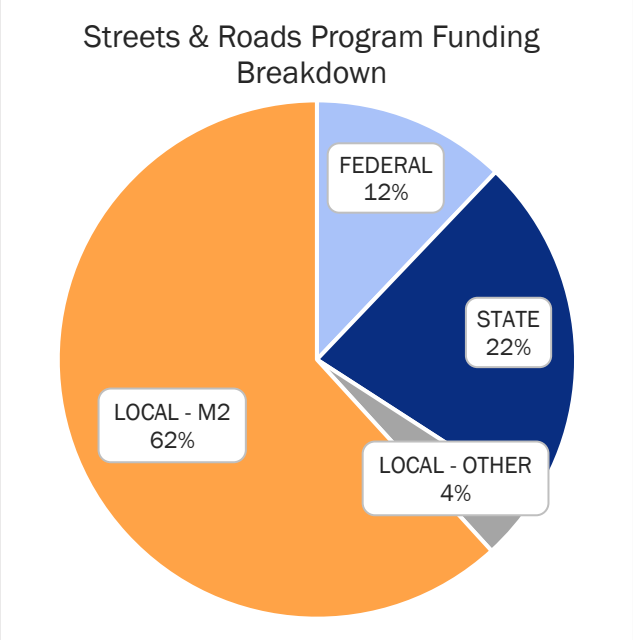
Unlike the M2 Freeway Program, the M2 Streets and Roads category is programmatic in nature and is designed to scale to available revenues. Funding is delivered primarily on a pay-as-you-go basis through competitive calls for projects (call) and formula-based distributions to local jurisdictions.

Based on updated financial assumptions, total revenues available to support the Streets and Roads Program are projected at approximately $4.9 billion through 2041, with total program costs estimated at

approximately $4.7 billion over the same period. Under current projections, the category remains financially balanced over the life of M2.

As shown in Figure 4-9, the Streets and Roads Program leverages a diverse mix of funding sources, largely in part to the OC Bridges Program, which is comprised of seven grade separation projects. Approximately 38 percent of total funding is derived from external sources, including federal, state, and other local contributions, while 62 percent is supported by M2 sales tax revenues. These external funds include a mix of federal formula and discretionary sources (such as CMAQ, STBG, and other federal grants), state programs including STIP, SB 1, and competitive partnership programs, and local contributions from jurisdictions and partner agencies. These sources are frequently paired with local matching requirements, particularly for programs like Project O and Project P.

Figure 4-9: Streets & Roads Program Funding Breakdown



Because Projects O and P are awarded through competitive processes and Project Q is distributed by formula, funding levels can be adjusted to reflect updated sales tax forecasts without amending the M2 Ordinance. This structural flexibility provides resilience during economic fluctuations while continuing to deliver congestion relief, signal synchronization, grade separations, and local street preservation improvements throughout the County.

Under current revenue and expenditure assumptions, the Streets and Roads Program remains financially sustainable through 2041.

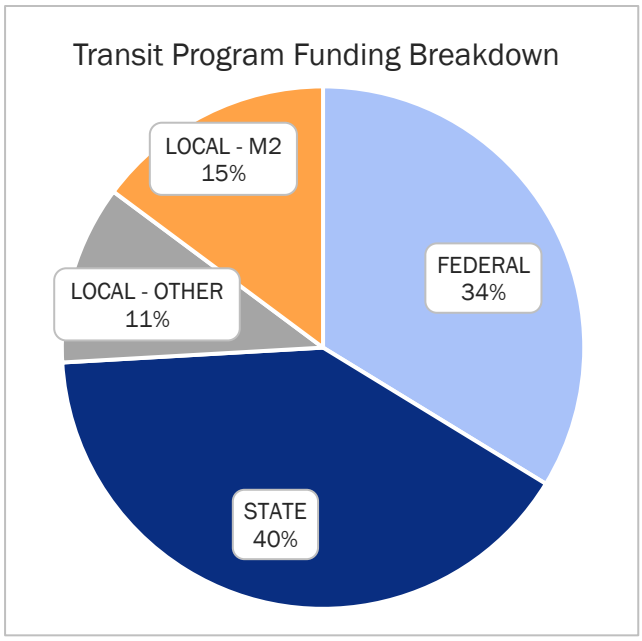
4.4 Transit

The M2 Transit Program represents 25 percent of net M2 revenues and supports a combination of capital and operating programs, including Metrolink service (Project R), transit extensions to Metrolink (Project S), Metrolink Gateways Program (Project T), mobility programs for seniors and persons with disabilities (Project U), community-based transit/circulators (Project V), and transit stop amenities (Project W).

Similar to the M2 Streets and Roads Program, most M2 Transit Program elements are programmatic and scalable to available revenues. Some competitive grant programs, capital improvements, and certain service elements can be adjusted over time; however, some elements of the Plan are defined and cannot scale to available revenue. Based on updated financial assumptions, total revenues available to support the M2 Transit Program are projected at approximately $4.2 billion through 2041, with total program costs estimated at approximately $4.1 billion over the same period.

As shown in Figure 4-10, the M2 Transit Program leverages substantial external funding. Approximately 74 percent of total transit funding is derived from federal and state sources, 15 percent is supported by M2 sales tax revenues, and the remainder by other local contributions. These external funds include a combination of federal formula and discretionary sources (such as FTA Sections 5307, 5309, and 5337, CMAQ, and New Starts funding), state programs including STIP, SB 1, and Cap-and-Trade programs such as the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP), and additional local contributions. These sources are frequently paired with local matching requirements, particularly for programs like Project V, W, and X.

Figure 4-10: Transit Program Funding Breakdown



Project R (Metrolink Service) represents the most significant long-term financial risk within the M2 Program. Without changes in service levels, ridership growth, operating and rehabilitation costs, or additional external funding, current projections indicate that the existing service model cannot be sustained beyond fiscal year (FY) 2033-34. While the M2 Transit Program can be sustainable through 2041, the financial outlook for Project R requires corrective action to ensure long-term sustainability.

Project U (Fare Stabilization Program) is defined by specific M2 Ordinance requirements and therefore cannot scale to available revenue. As identified in the 2015 Review, significant projected revenue reductions at that time created a funding shortfall within the Fare Stabilization Program. To preserve voter commitments, the Board approved an amendment to the M2 Ordinance that closed out Project T following completion of the Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center (ARTIC) and reallocated funds to Projects R and U. As a result of that action and updated revenue assumptions, the Fare Stabilization Program is fully funded and projected to remain solvent through 2041.

As part of the 2025 Next 10 Plan and included in the proposed Action Plan, the Board directed staff to continue working with Metrolink to develop a financially sustainable service plan to ensure service continuity through 2041. This effort includes establishing a target OCTA funding level as part of the FY 2026-27 budget development process and requesting Metrolink to provide regular updates on systemwide performance, operating trends, ridership recovery, capital investment needs, and long-term financial projections.

Under current revenue and expenditure assumptions, the M2 Transit Program can be financially deliverable through 2041; however, proactive policy and financial planning actions related to Project R are necessary to preserve long-term program stability and uphold commitments to Orange County voters.

4.5 Environmental Cleanup

M2 includes an Environmental Cleanup Program (ECP [Project X]), which receives two percent of gross M2 sales tax revenues, to fund water quality improvement projects related to transportation-generated runoff. It is delivered through a competitive, two-tiered structure grant program. Funding levels and award cycles are scalable based on available revenues, project readiness, and local jurisdiction interest. Based on updated financial assumptions, total revenues available to support the ECP are projected at approximately $264.5 million through 2041, with projected costs of approximately $240.1 million over the same period. Under current projections, the program remains financially balanced and deliverable through the life of M2.

4.6 Summary and Conclusion

The Review evaluated the financial capacity of the M2 Program to meet the commitments made to Orange County voters. Updated revenue forecasts, expenditure projections, and cash flow assumptions indicate that the overall M2 Program remains financially deliverable through 2041.

Although the M2 Freeway Program represents the greatest financial exposure due to its defined, fixed-scope commitments, under current revenue and expenditure assumptions, projected revenues are sufficient to support total costs. The M2 Streets and Roads Program and Environmental Cleanup Program remain structurally scalable and financially balanced over the life of M2.

The M2 Transit category presents a more complex financial outlook, particularly with respect to ongoing support for Metrolink service. Metrolink plays a critical role in the regional transportation network, but its financial sustainability requires close monitoring; the 2025 Next 10 Plan reported that the current service cannot be sustained beyond FY 2033-34. Corrective action is needed if ridership growth, operating and rehabilitation costs, or additional external funding does not improve from current estimates. The Fare Stabilization Program (Project U), which was previously addressed through an M2 Ordinance amendment identified through the 2015 Review, is now fully funded and projected to remain solvent through 2041. While the Transit category as a whole remains balanced, sustaining existing Metrolink service levels through 2041 will require continued policy oversight, coordination with regional partners, and development of a financially sustainable service plan.

OCTA's ability to leverage substantial federal, state, and local partner funding has strengthened overall financial capacity and reduced reliance on M2 sales tax revenues alone. Continued success in securing and managing external funds will remain an important component of long-term program stability.

Based on this comprehensive financial review, no structural changes to the Plan are required at this time. With continued prudent fiscal management, conservative forecasting practices, disciplined cost control, and proactive oversight of identified risk areas, OCTA retains the financial capacity to deliver the Plan consistent with the commitments approved by voters.

5

Project Delivery Analysis

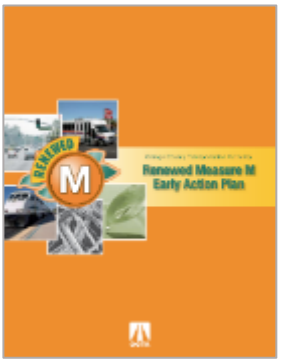
5. Project Delivery Analysis

Identifying Progress and Project Constraints

To assess progress in delivering the voter-approved Plan, this Review evaluates delivery of M2 projects and programs to date and identifies the key constraints that may influence delivery through 2041. The Review examines delivery performance across all modes, including schedule status, major milestones, and implementation strategies that have been applied to maintain momentum under changing economic, regulatory, and market conditions. It also summarizes the evolution of OCTA's delivery approach and highlights the primary risks and dependencies that affect remaining work. Collectively, this assessment confirms that the M2 Program has made substantial progress and remains positioned to complete voter commitments, while identifying targeted areas where continued oversight and proactive management are required to maintain deliverability.

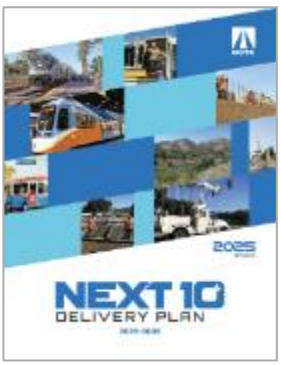
5.1 Historical Context and Strategic Evolution

Since voter approval of M2 in 2006, OCTA has delivered projects and programs under a wide range of economic, policy, and operational conditions. The M2 Program was launched during a period of strong economic growth but soon encountered significant external disruptions that shaped early delivery strategies and continue to influence program implementation today.



Shortly after M2 approval, the Board advanced M2 projects through the adoption of an EAP in 2007 that prioritized project readiness and leveraged debt financing and external funding to initiate construction activities before revenues were fully realized. Soon after, the Great Recession (2008–2009) resulted in a substantial decline in sales tax revenues, reducing long-term revenue projections and introduced some uncertainty into program delivery. Despite this, OCTA was able to capitalize on favorable construction market conditions, deliver congestion relief earlier than originally planned, and position projects to compete successfully for state and federal funds.

Building on the EAP, OCTA adopted the M2020 Plan in 2012 to accelerate delivery of key freeway, street, transit, and environmental projects. The M2020 Plan emphasized expediting construction, managing cost escalation risks, and leveraging external revenues while staying true to the commitments approved by voters. As economic conditions evolved, OCTA transitioned to the Next 10 Plan framework, which established a rolling ten-year outlook to regularly assess project schedules, funding assumptions, and delivery risks. The Next 10 Plan has since been updated annually to reflect changes in sales tax forecasts, construction market conditions, and project development status.



Over the life of M2, OCTA has also adapted to significant policy and operational shifts at the state and federal levels. These include evolving environmental and climate regulations, changes in transportation funding priorities, and increased emphasis on sustainability, multimodal mobility, and system optimization.

More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic introduced new challenges affecting travel behavior, construction markets, and transit operations. While sales tax revenues

rebounded more quickly than initially anticipated, the pandemic resulted in changes to commuting patterns and placed additional financial pressure on transit operations, particularly Metrolink. OCTA has continued to adjust delivery plans, monitor fiscal risks, and refine project sequencing to maintain program momentum while preserving long-term financial sustainability.

Together, these historical conditions and strategic adaptations have shaped the current M2 delivery framework. The cumulative result is a program that has remained resilient through economic downturns, responsive to policy change, and capable of advancing major infrastructure investments while upholding the commitments made to Orange County voters. This foundation informs the assessment of progress and constraints discussed in the following sections.

5.2 M2 Project Schedules and Status

The M2 Program includes a balanced portfolio of freeway, streets and roads, transit, and environmental investments designed to improve mobility, enhance safety, support economic vitality, and protect natural resources throughout Orange County. As M2 advances, projects continue to move through environmental clearance, design, ROW acquisition, construction, and closeout in accordance with the M2 Ordinance and the Plan. The following sections provide a comprehensive update on the current cost estimates, implementation status, and actual or estimated completion dates for each M2 project and program as of December 2025.

5.2.1 Freeway Program

The M2 Freeway Program supports a series of improvements intended to enhance mobility and reduce congestion on Orange County's regional freeway network. These improvements focus on relieving traffic chokepoints, improving interchange operations, and enhancing the overall efficiency and reliability of major freeway corridors throughout the county. The M2 Freeway Program includes three primary components:

- Projects A–M: Freeway Improvement Projects, which deliver congestion relief, improve interchange, and enhance operations across Orange County's major freeway corridors.
- Project N: FSP, which provides roadside assistance to quickly remove disabled vehicles and debris from freeway lanes to reduce congestion and improve safety.
- Freeway EMP, which implements habitat preservation and restoration activities to offset environmental impacts associated with freeway improvements in exchange for streamlined permits.

Together, these elements support the overall objectives of the M2 Freeway Program by improving traffic flow, enhancing safety and reliability, and addressing environmental commitments associated with major transportation infrastructure investments. The following sections provide a detailed review of each component and evaluate program performance as part of the Review.

Figure 5-1 summarizes the current cost based on the year of expenditure (YOE), status, and completion date of the M2 Freeway Program. For additional details on project progress, constraints, and updated schedules, refer to Appendix D and Appendix E.

Figure 5-1: Freeway Program Cost and Status

Project Letter	Project Title	Segments	Current Cost Estimate (Millions, YOE)	Current Status	Actual/Estimated Completion Date
A	Interstate 5 (I-5), State Route 55 (SR-55) to State Route 57 (SR-57)	N/A	$38.85	Completed	January 2021
B	I-5, I-405 to SR-55	I-5, I-405 to Yale Avenue	$392.31	Design, Advertise, and Award	August 2029
		I-5, Yale Avenue to SR-55	$332.09	Construction	February 2031
C/D	I-5, Avenida Pico to San Juan Creek Road	I-5, Avenida Pico to Avenida Vista Hermosa/ Avenida Pico Interchange (D)	$83.60	Completed	August 2018
		I-5, Avenida Vista Hermosa to Pacific Coast Highway (PCH)	$75.26	Completed	July 2017
		I-5, PCH to San Juan Creek Road	$74.27	Completed	July 2018
	I-5, State Route 73 (SR-73) to El Toro Road	I-5, SR-73 to Oso Parkway/ Avery Parkway Interchange (D)	$229.83	Completed	July 2025
		I-5, Oso Parkway to Alicia Parkway/ La Paz Road Interchange (D)	$230.35	Completed	December 2024
		I-5, Alicia Parkway to El Toro Road	$227.26	Completed	July 2025
		I-5, SR-73 to El Toro Road Landscape	$12.37	Construction	December 2026
D	I-5 Interchange Improvements	I-5, Ortega Highway Interchange	$79.80	Completed	January 2016
		I-5, El Toro Road Interchange	$11.49	Environmental	TBD
E	State Route 22 (SR-22) Access Improvements	N/A	N/A	Completed	2008 (M1 bonus project)
F	SR-55 Improvements	SR-55, I-405 to I-5	$505.72	Construction	March 2027
		SR-55, I-5 to State Route 91 (SR-91)	$202.14	Design, Advertise, and Award	July 2030
G	SR-57 Improvements	SR-57 Northbound, Orangewood Avenue to Katella Avenue	$135.44	Construction	June 2028
		SR-57 Northbound, Katella Avenue to Lincoln Avenue	$38.00	Completed	April 2015

Project Letter	Project Title	Segments	Current Cost Estimate (Millions, YOE)	Current Status	Actual/Estimated Completion Date
		SR-57 Northbound, Orangethorpe Avenue to Yorba Linda Boulevard	$52.30	Completed	November 2014
		SR-57 Northbound, Yorba Linda Boulevard to Lambert Road	$54.07	Completed	May 2014
		SR-57 Northbound, Lambert Road to Orange/ Los Angeles County Line	$13.94	Environmental	TBD
H	SR-91 Westbound, I-5 to SR-57	N/A	$59.23	Completed	June 2016
I	SR-91, SR-55 to Tustin Avenue Interchange	N/A	$42.47	Completed	July 2016
	SR-91, SR-57 and SR-55	SR-91, SR-55 to Lakeview Avenue	$140.75	Construction	March 2028
		SR-91, La Palma Avenue to SR-55	$380.68	Design, Advertise, and Award	December 2030
		SR-91, Acacia Street to La Palma Avenue	$257.45	Construction	September 2030
J	SR-91, SR-55 to Orange/Riverside County Line	SR-91, SR-55 to State Route 241 (SR-241)	$79.74	Completed	March 2013
		SR-91 Eastbound, SR-241 to State Route 71 (SR-71)	$57.77	Completed	January 2011
		SR-91, SR-241 to Orange/Riverside County Line [Led by Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC)]	$101.17	Environmental	Estimated 2030
K	I-405, SR-73 to Interstate 605 (I-605)	N/A	$1,620.00	Completed	February 2024
L	I-405, I-5 to SR-55	N/A	$7.02	Environmental Completed in 2018	Further Schedule TBD
M	I-605, Katella Avenue Interchange Improvements	N/A	$53.01	Construction	July 2027
N	FSP	N/A	$166.4	889,167 Assists	Ongoing

Project Letter	Project Title	Segments	Current Cost Estimate (Millions, YOE)	Current Status	Actual/Estimated Completion Date
A-M	Freeway EMP	Preserves	$42.00	7 Properties Totaling 1,300 Acres	Ongoing
		Restoration Projects	$10.50	13 Projects Totaling 350 Acres	10 Projects Complete

Projects A-M: Freeway Improvement Projects

As defined in the Plan, the M2 Freeway Program includes 13 projects (Projects A through M), which deliver targeted capital improvements to Orange County's regional freeway system, I-5, I-405, I-605, SR-55, SR-57, and SR-91. These projects focus on relieving congestion, improving interchanges, and enhancing operational efficiency along some of the County's most heavily traveled corridors. For delivery purposes, the 13 projects have been segmented into 30.

Substantial progress has been made in implementing these improvements. Through the EAP covering the years 2007 to 2012, several key M2 freeway projects were advanced and implemented prior to the collection of sales tax revenues. As of December 31, 2025, 17 of 30 freeway projects or project segments have been completed with ten more underway. Of the ten underway, six are in construction, three are in final design, and a joint project with the RCTC is in environmental revalidation. The joint project will improve SR-91 between SR-241 and SR-71. By 2030, these ten projects are anticipated to be open to traffic, bringing the total number of completed projects to 27, which equates to approximately 90 percent of the M2 Freeway Program. The three remaining projects (of the 30 total) are environmentally cleared or on track to be environmentally cleared by 2028, making them shelf-ready for future advancement. This progress reflects effective program management, strategic use of external funding, and continued coordination with Caltrans and local jurisdictions to advance complex freeway projects.

The performance of these investments is reflected in systemwide analyses. OCTA's modeling compared current conditions with M2 investments to a counterfactual scenario without them (also discussed in Section 3.4.2). Results indicate that average freeway speeds during peak periods are approximately four percent higher with M2 investments in place. Similar improvements are observed across both peak travel periods, with morning peak speeds approximately three percent higher and evening peak speeds approximately five percent higher than conditions without M2. The percentages represent systemwide improvements across a heavily utilized regional freeway network and reflect the cumulative effect of multiple capacity and operational improvements delivered through M2's balanced approach.

Looking forward, modeling of future conditions demonstrates that full implementation of the M2 program—including the remaining freeway improvements—helps Orange County accommodate projected growth while maintaining freeway performance comparable to today's conditions. Despite increases in population, employment, and overall travel demand, average peak-period freeway speeds in the 2041 M2 only scenario remain generally consistent with current conditions.

Taken together, these findings indicate that the freeway improvement projects are performing as intended and remain central to maintaining regional mobility. Based on this assessment, the Freeway Program is meeting its intended objectives and no changes to Projects A through M are recommended at this time.

Project N: Freeway Service Patrol

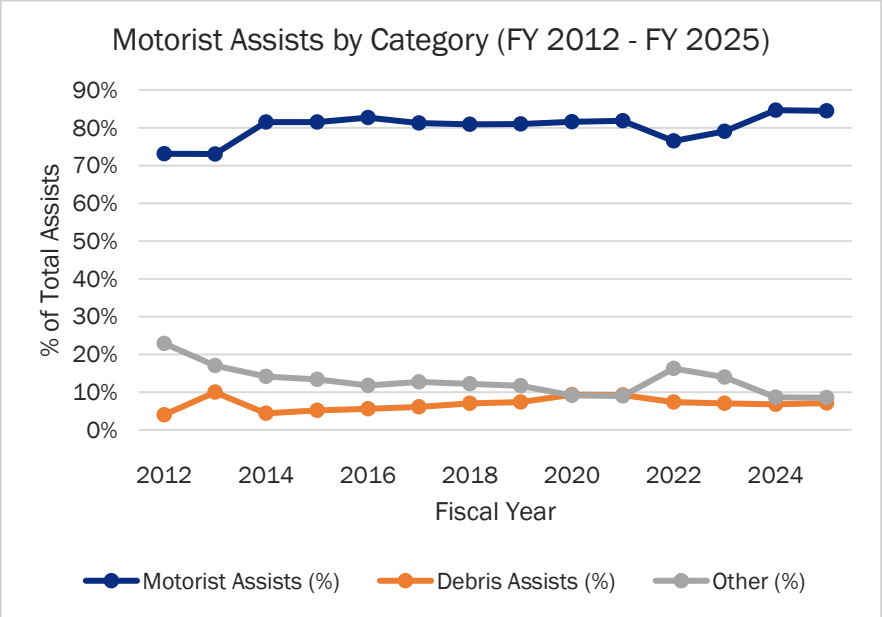
Project N, FSP, provides free roadside assistance to stranded motorists and removes debris from Orange County freeways to quickly restore traffic flow and improve safety.

The program continues to perform strongly and deliver measurable congestion relief benefits to the traveling public. In June 2012, M2 began supporting FSP with local funds to maintain existing service levels and expand services through 2041. Since then, FSP has provided over 889,000 services on the Orange County freeway system, which includes services funded through both M2 and external sources. As shown in Figure 5-2, the majority of FSP activity consists of direct motorist assists, which consistently account for approximately 80 to 85 percent of total services in recent years. Debris removal represents a smaller but important share of activity, typically ranging from four to nine percent. The sustained level of motorist assists demonstrates the program's continued role in quickly clearing disabled vehicles, restoring freeway flow, and reducing the potential for secondary collisions.

In FY 2023-24, FSP generated approximately $6 in congestion relief benefits for every $1 invested, based on estimated vehicle delay and fuel savings. This strong benefit-cost ratio underscores FSP's effectiveness as an operational strategy to mitigate non-recurring congestion and improve reliability on the County's freeway system.

Based on the Review, Project N is meeting its intended objectives and is performing well. No changes to the program are recommended at this time.

Figure 5-2: FSP Motor Assists by Category



Freeway EMP

The Freeway EMP was established as part of the M2 Freeway Program to offset environmental impacts associated with freeway improvements while supporting more efficient project delivery. Working in collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) (collectively referred to as Wildlife Agencies), the program funds land acquisition, habitat preservation, and habitat restoration activities that mitigate impacts from the M2 freeway projects. In exchange, the program provides a comprehensive, programmatic approach to environmental mitigation that streamlines permitting and environmental approvals for M2 freeway projects. It is estimated that over $2.5 million has been saved by leveraging this programmatic mitigation.

A key milestone for the EMP occurred in 2017, when OCTA received biological resource permits following completion of a state and federal Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (Conservation Plan) developed in coordination with Wildlife Agencies. The Conservation Plan establishes a long-term framework for protecting natural habitats and wildlife on OCTA-owned Preserves, funding

restoration projects, and minimizing environmental impacts during construction of M2 freeway improvements. The plan also provides streamlined coordination for streambed alteration agreements and other environmental permits required for freeway projects, helping to improve project delivery certainty while maintaining environmental protections.

To date, the Board has approved the acquisition of the Preserves, totaling approximately 1,300 acres. In addition, 13 habitat restoration projects covering roughly 350 acres have been initiated to enhance ecological value within the preserve system. To date, ten restoration projects have been completed and have been approved by the Wildlife Agencies. Restoration activities and land management efforts are implemented in coordination with the Wildlife Agencies to ensure compliance with the Conservation Plan and to support long-term habitat health and biodiversity.

To support ongoing stewardship of the Preserves, the EMP includes a non-wasting endowment established to fund long-term land management and maintenance obligations. As of December 31, 2025, the endowment balance was approximately $39.9 million. OCTA continues to make annual deposits consistent with Board-adopted funding assumptions. As part of the Review, OCTA evaluated the long-term funding framework for the EMP and confirmed that the existing endowment target of approximately $46.2 million remains sufficient to support anticipated long-term stewardship responsibilities. See Section 4.2 for additional details. As the endowment approaches its target funding level, OCTA will continue to coordinate with Wildlife Agencies and stakeholders and seek future Board direction regarding long-term management arrangements and any potential program considerations consistent with the objectives of the M2 Freeway Program.

Resource Management Plans (RMP) for the Preserves were completed in 2018 and guide ongoing habitat management activities under the Conservation Plan. These plans are periodically updated to incorporate new biological information, document completed management activities, and identify future restoration priorities. In addition, annual Conservation Plan reports track environmental compliance, restoration progress, and monitoring activities across the Preserves. To date, these reports demonstrate that the program remains in compliance with Conservation Plan commitments and is progressing consistent with program objectives.

Overall, the EMP has successfully fulfilled its intended purpose of providing comprehensive environmental mitigation while supporting timely implementation of freeway improvements. The program reflects years of collaboration among OCTA, the Wildlife Agencies, stakeholders, and the public and has been recognized regionally for its innovative programmatic approach to transportation-related mitigation. Based on this assessment, the Freeway EMP continues to meet the objectives established in the Plan, and no changes to the program are recommended at this time.

5.2.2 Streets and Roads Program

The M2 Streets and Roads Program supports Orange County's mobility and economic vitality by investing in the local street network that carries a significant share of daily travel throughout the county. These investments focus on improving roadway conditions, relieving congestion at key bottlenecks, improving traffic flow through regional signal coordination, and delivering targeted gap closures and safety enhancements on major arterial corridors. The M2 Streets and Roads Program includes three primary components:

- Project O: RCP, which provides competitive funding to local jurisdictions for improvements to the MPAH, including intersection enhancements and gap closure projects that improve traffic flow and safety. The program also included the OC Bridges Program, which delivered seven grade separation projects to eliminate vehicle–train conflicts along the BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) corridor and improve safety and reliability for both motorists and freight movement.
- Project P: RTSSP, which supports coordination of traffic signals across jurisdictions to reduce stop-and-go conditions, improve travel time reliability, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by minimizing vehicle idling and enhancing overall corridor efficiency.
- Project Q: LFS Program, which provides formula-based funding to cities and the County of Orange to support locally determined transportation priorities such as pavement rehabilitation, operational improvements, and multimodal enhancements.

Together, these programs support the overall objectives of the M2 Streets and Roads Program by improving roadway conditions, enhancing traffic flow and safety, and helping local jurisdictions maintain and improve critical transportation infrastructure. The following sections provide a detailed review of each component and evaluate program performance as part of the Review. For additional details on project progress and constraints, refer to Appendix D and Appendix E. Figure 5-3 summarizes the current cost, status, and completion date of the grade separation projects in the OC Bridges program.

Figure 5-3: OC Bridges Program Cost and Status

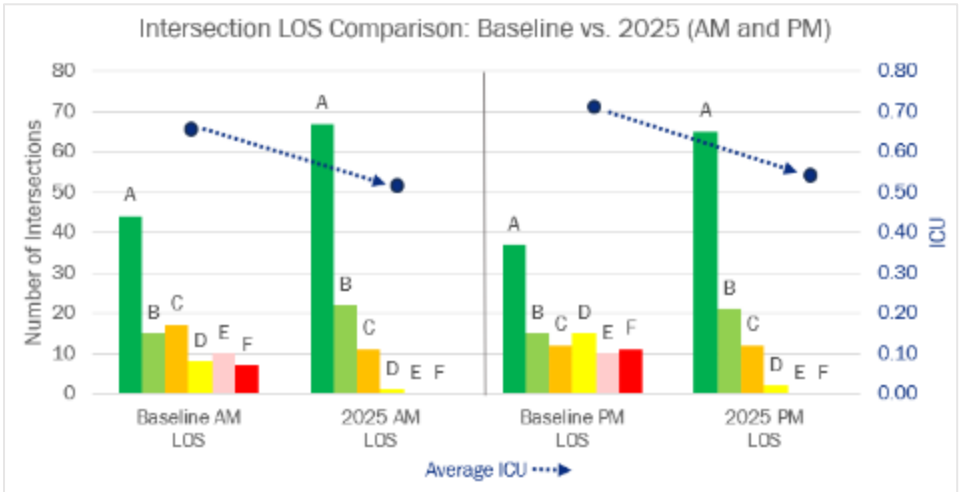
Project	Cost (Millions)	Status	Completion Date
Kraemer Boulevard Grade Separation	$63.83	Completed	December 2014
Lakeview Avenue Grade Separation	$110.93	Completed	June 2017
Orangethorpe Avenue Grade Separation	$105.89	Completed	October 2016
Placentia Avenue Grade Separation	$64.54	Completed	December 2014
Raymond Avenue Grade Separation	$125.94	Completed	May 2018
State College Boulevard Grade Separation	$99.58	Completed	March 2018
Tustin Avenue/Rose Drive Grade Separation	$96.68	Completed	October 2016

Project O: RCP

Project O, the RCP, provides competitive funding to local jurisdictions for improvements to the MPAH, including intersection enhancements, gap closures, and grade separations. Since 2011, through 15 competitive calls, the Board has awarded 195 projects (237 project phases) totaling more than $432 million, including approximately $23.4 million in leveraged external funding. To date, 157 project phases have been completed, with additional projects in various stages of implementation. The related OC Bridges Program further delivered seven grade separation projects addressing roadway conflicts with freight rail operations in north Orange County. All projects have been completed and closed out, representing a significant regional investment in safety and mobility.

The benefits of these investments are reflected in system performance analyses. Travel demand modeling conducted for the Review compared current conditions with M2 investments to a counterfactual scenario without them. Results indicate that average arterial speeds during peak periods are approximately nine percent higher with M2 investments in place. Similar improvements are observed across both peak travel periods, with morning peak speeds approximately nine percent higher and evening peak speeds also approximately nine percent higher than conditions without M2. These percentage represent systemwide improvements across the regional arterial network and reflect the cumulative impact of intersection improvements, corridor enhancements, and grade separations delivered through Project O.

Figure 5-4: Intersection LOS Comparison: Baseline vs. 2025 (AM and PM)



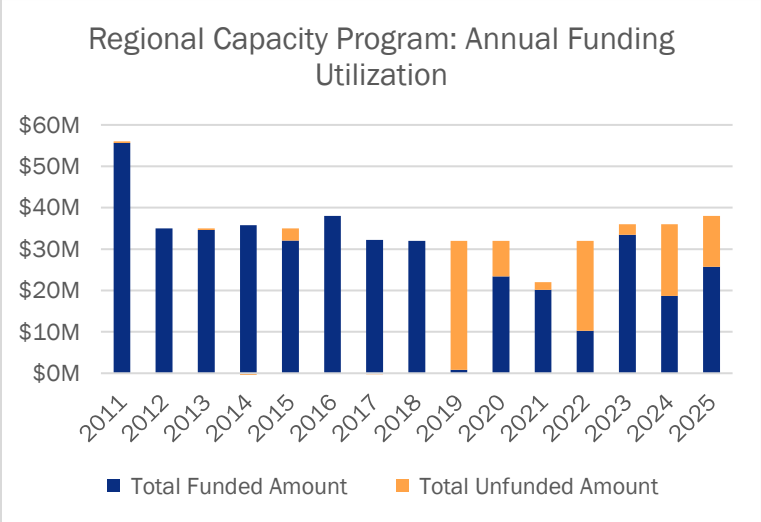
Congestion Management Program (CMP) monitoring results further demonstrate long-term improvements in intersection performance across the County. The 2025 Orange County CMP report indicates that average intersection capacity utilization (ICU) has improved significantly since the program's baseline monitoring period. As shown in Figure 5-4, between 1991 and 2025, the countywide average AM ICU improved from 0.67 to 0.54 and the PM ICU improved from 0.71 to 0.57, reflecting approximately 19 percent improvement in intersection operating conditions. These trends indicate that Orange County agencies have continued to effectively operate, maintain, and improve the arterial network over time.

Looking forward, modeling of future conditions demonstrates that continued implementation of the M2 program—including arterial improvements delivered through Project O—helps Orange County

accommodate projected growth while maintaining arterial system performance comparable to today's conditions. Despite increases in population, employment, and travel demand, average arterial speeds in the 2041 M2 only scenario remain generally consistent with current conditions.

As the arterial network continues to mature and many jurisdictions approach buildout, the nature of improvement needs within the system is also evolving. While earlier RCP cycles were highly competitive, reflecting strong demand for arterial widening and capacity expansion, more recent funding cycles have experienced more fluctuations (see Figure 5-5). In several recent calls, the share of funding awarded has declined, indicating a potential shift in program demand. This trend suggests that demand for traditional MPAH capacity projects may be moderating, as the pool of feasible, large-scale expansion projects has naturally narrowed. In this context, undersubscription does not reflect diminished program value, but rather an evolution in system needs and local priorities.

Figure 5-5: Regional Capacity Program: Annual Funding Utilization



This shift aligns with feedback received during public outreach and stakeholder discussions. Several cities noted that opportunities for major corridor widening or new capacity projects are increasingly limited due to built-out conditions, constrained ROW, and community impacts.

At the same time, stakeholder engagement has highlighted a growing priority: pavement maintenance. "Fixing potholes and repairing roadways" continues to rank among the top transportation priorities in public surveys. In TAC focus groups and elected official roundtables, the need for additional pavement funding was consistently emphasized. Across residents, staff, and policymakers, maintaining smooth, reliable streets remains a fundamental expectation. This is further discussed in Section 6, Public Priority Analysis.

Orange County currently has the highest pavement quality in the State, according to the latest *California Statewide Local Streets and Roads Needs Assessment – Final Report*. However, sustaining this performance will require continued investment. The *Local Agency Pavement Preservation 10-Year (FY 2022–2032) Pavement Management Plan* (2022) indicates that under current funding levels, overall pavement condition remains acceptable but is trending downward, with deferred maintenance projected to increase over time.

Financial modeling demonstrates that maintaining current PCI levels would require a significant funding increase, while achieving measurable improvement would require an even greater commitment. If pavement conditions approach the minimum threshold, segments will increasingly shift from preventative treatments to major rehabilitation, increasing long-term costs and financial volatility. Maintaining pavement within the optimal preventative range better positions Orange County to sustain system performance through 2041.

An April 2025 survey of 34 Orange County jurisdictions further underscores this challenge: 75 percent of agencies allocate less than 25 percent of their total budgets to street repairs, 72 percent report residents as "engaged" or "highly engaged" on pavement issues, and the most frequently cited concern was the need for increased pavement funding amid rising construction costs.

Taken together, these trends suggest that while Project O has successfully delivered arterial capacity improvements, evolving system conditions and stakeholder priorities warrant evaluation of how the program may continue to add value within a largely built-out network.

In response, staff proposes to evaluate the potential creation of a competitive pavement maintenance subprogram within the M2 Streets and Roads Program under Project O. At this stage, the action is limited to evaluation and analysis and does not eliminate any of the existing subprograms. The intent is to assess RCP structure, eligibility criteria, funding targets, and impacts on the existing framework before any formal changes are considered.

This approach maintains transparency, competitive allocation principles, and fiscal discipline while ensuring M2 remains responsive to evolving system needs and stakeholder priorities.

Project P: RTSSP

Project P, the RTSSP, continues to demonstrate strong performance in improving traffic flow and reducing delay across Orange County, enabling synchronization across jurisdictional boundaries and creating regional corridors that benefit multiple cities and improve systemwide mobility.

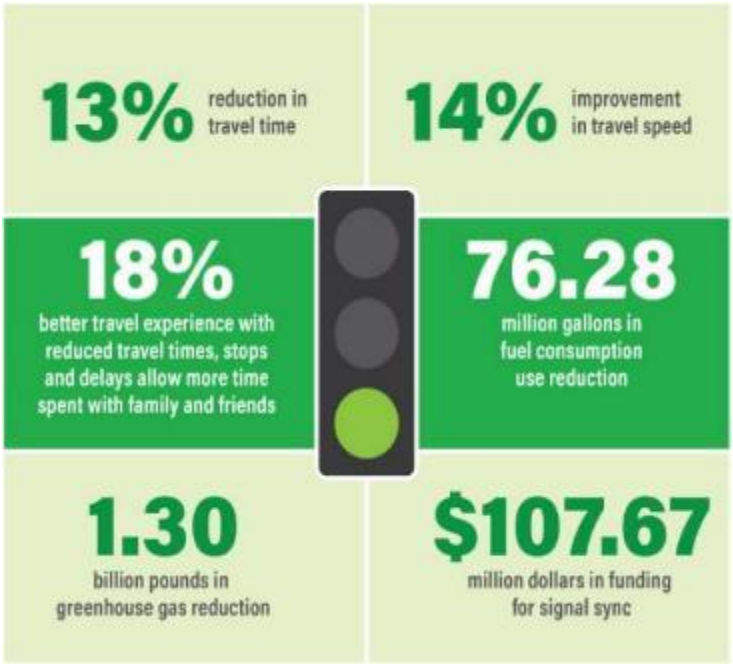
To date, OCTA and local jurisdictions have synchronized 3,789 intersections over 979 miles of streets through 109 completed projects—well exceeding the original target. Through 15 competitive calls, 123[1] projects totaling approximately $162.3 million have been awarded. Overall, OCTA has funded 143 projects totaling nearly $196.8 million, including $40.1 million in leveraged external funding.

RTSSP outcomes have been both measurable and significant. As illustrated in Figure 5-6, synchronized corridors have achieved a 13 percent reduction in travel time, a 14 percent improvement in travel speeds, and an 18 percent improvement in overall travel experience driven by reduced stops and delays. These operational enhancements have also produced substantial environmental and economic benefits, including an estimated 76.28 million gallons in fuel consumption reduction and approximately 1.30 billion pounds in greenhouse gas reductions over the life of the projects. In total, approximately $107.7 million has been invested in improvements along 979 miles of roadway and 3,789 signals, underscoring the program's strong return on investment.

[1] To date, three projects totaling approximately $1.6 million have been cancelled by the awarded local jurisdictions.

A key focus moving forward is completion of the Countywide Signal Synchronization Baseline Project, which serves as the primary Project P Action Plan item identified through the Review. The purpose of this effort is to assess current signal timing conditions, establish a consistent countywide baseline, and identify opportunities to optimize performance before advancing additional capital investments. The baseline, anticipated to conclude in 2029 with finalization by 2030, will provide updated timing plans and performance data for signals across the County. Completion of the study will generate critical data to inform future funding strategies, performance expectations, and program structure.

Figure 5-6: RTSSP Outcomes



Project Q: Local Fair Share Program

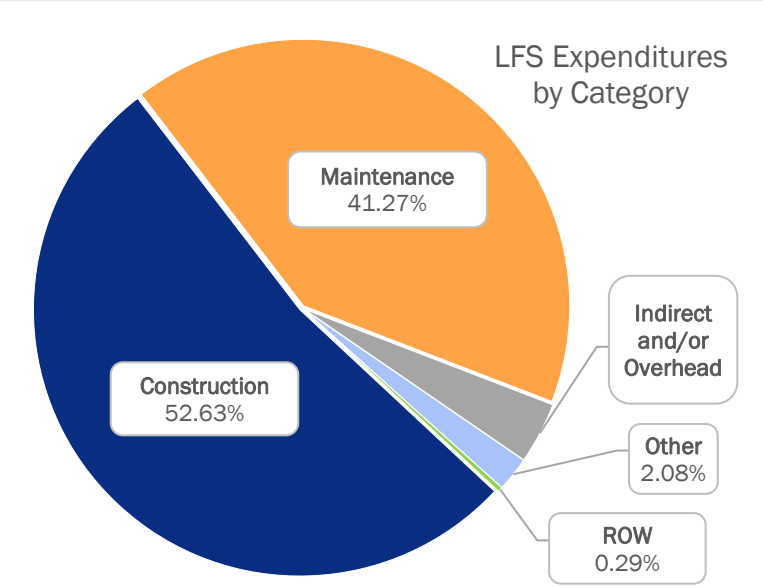
Project Q, the LFS Program, allocates 18 percent of net M2 revenues to Orange County cities and the County of Orange on a formula basis. The intent of the LFS Program is to help local jurisdictions keep up with the rising costs of repairing the aging street system. Funds may also be used for other local transportation needs, as prioritized by each local jurisdiction. Since 2011, approximately $835.3 million in LFS payments have been provided to eligible local jurisdictions.

The LFS formula distributes funds based on three variables: 50 percent based on population, 25 percent based on MPAH centerline miles, and 25 percent based on taxable sales. Each of these factors continues to reflect a logical measure of transportation need. Population captures service demand and resident usage of the system. MPAH mileage reflects the extent of arterial infrastructure that a jurisdiction must maintain. Taxable sales serve as a proxy for economic activity and non-resident travel generation, recognizing that commercial centers attract additional traffic beyond the resident population. Together, these variables balance demand, infrastructure responsibility, and economic activity.

To further assess whether the formula continues to function as intended, staff evaluated growth in each variable between 2011 and 2024 and compared it to growth in LFS receipts over the same period. While population growth across cities has generally been modest—and in some cases flat or negative—taxable sales growth has been substantially stronger and more variable. The MPAH component, by contrast, remains largely stable over time, reflecting each local jurisdiction's long-term responsibility for maintaining the regional arterial network rather than short-term growth trends. The overall average growth in LFS receipts during this period was approximately 79 percent, consistent with the combined influence of the underlying variables. Despite significant variability in taxable sales growth across jurisdictions, LFS receipt growth has remained consistently positive across nearly all cities. This reflects the stabilizing structure of the three-part formula and confirms that the allocation methodology remains responsive to demographic and economic change and continues to operate as designed. No structural imbalance was identified that would warrant changing the existing 50/25/25 formula structure.

Annual expenditure reports submitted by local jurisdictions also demonstrate that LFS funds are being directed toward core transportation purposes. As shown in Figure 5-7, approximately 52.63 percent of LFS expenditures are used for construction and 41.27 percent for maintenance activities. Only 3.72 percent is allocated to indirect or overhead costs, with minimal expenditures for ROW or other categories. This spending profile reflects a strong emphasis on direct capital and maintenance investment, with limited administrative burden.

Figure 5-7: LFS Expenditures by Category



Based on this review, the LFS Program is performing effectively. The allocation formula remains logical and responsive, and expenditures align with the program's intended purpose. No changes to the formula structure or weighting are recommended at this time.

5.2.3 Transit Program

The M2 Transit Program accounts for 25 percent of the Plan and supports a range of investments intended to expand mobility options and improve connectivity across Orange County's transit network. These investments include expansion of regional rail service, enhanced connections between transit and local communities, and targeted programs that improve accessibility and safety for transit users. Together, these initiatives help support a more balanced multimodal transportation system by providing alternatives to driving, improving first- and last-mile connections, and enhancing mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities.

The M2 Transit Program consists of several components, including expanded Metrolink service, transit connections to major activity centers, improvements to transit facilities, and community-based transit services that complement regional routes. These programs are designed to work together to strengthen regional rail service while improving local access to transit throughout the County.

Figure 5-8 summarizes the current cost, status, and completion date of all Transit projects and programs. For additional details on project progress, constraints, and updated schedules, refer to Appendix D and Appendix E.

Figure 5-8: Transit Program Capital Projects Cost and Schedule

Project Letter	Program	Project	Current Cost Estimate (Millions, YOE)	Current Status	Actual/ Estimated Completion Date
R	High Frequency Metrolink Service	Metrolink Grade Crossing Improvements	$90.42	Completed	December 2011
		Anaheim Canyon Metrolink Station Improvements	$34.21	Completed	January 2023
		Fullerton Transportation Center Improvements	$34.00	Completed	May 2019
		Laguna Niguel/ Mission Viejo Metrolink Station Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Ramps	$5.16	Completed	September 2017
		Orange Transportation Center Metrolink Parking Structure	$30.86	Completed	February 2019
		Placentia Metrolink Station and Parking Structure	$40.06	Environmental Completed	TBD
		San Clemente Pier Station Lighting	$0.373	Completed	March 2017
		Tustin Metrolink Station Parking Structure	$15.39	Completed	September 2011
		Laguna Niguel to San Juan Capistrano Passing Siding Project	$33.23	Completed	November 2020
		Sand Canyon Grade Separation	$61.87	Completed	January 2016
		San Clemente Beach Trail Safety Enhancements	$5.00	Completed	March 2014
		Laguna Niguel/ Mission Viejo Station Surface Parking Lot	$4.14	Completed	October 2013
		San Juan Creek Railroad Bridge Replacement	$65.58	Construction	February 2027
S	Transits Extension to Metrolink	OC Streetcar	$671.40	Construction	July 2026
T	Metrolink Gateways	ARTIC	$232.19	Completed; Closed Out	December 2014

Project R: High-Frequency Metrolink Service

Project R provides funding to support Metrolink operations and expand regional rail service within Orange County. The program aims to increase rail service within the County and provide additional Metrolink service north of the City of Fullerton to the Los Angeles County Line. Project R also supports improvements to rail infrastructure necessary to sustain and expand service, including grade crossing improvements, track

enhancements, signal and communications system upgrades, station improvements, and other operational investments. Since program inception, these investments have delivered a range of safety, operational, and passenger access improvements across the regional rail network. To date, safety enhancements have been completed at approximately 50 at-grade rail-highway crossings, enabling several cities to establish quiet zones along the rail corridor. Station improvements have also been completed at multiple locations to enhance passenger access and system reliability, including parking expansions, accessibility upgrades, and platform improvements in Orange County. OCTA also remains committed to advancing development of the new Placentia Metrolink Station; however, advancement beyond the environmental phase is dependent on execution of a shared-use agreement between Metrolink and BNSF, as well as Metrolink's long-term fiscal sustainability and ability to support continued operations.

In 2012, OCTA deployed ten new Metrolink intracounty trains operating between the cities of Fullerton and Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo, primarily during the midday and evening hours. In October 2019, several intracounty trains were extended to Los Angeles County to increase ridership through a redeployment of the trains without significantly impacting operating costs. This change resulted in 54 weekday trains operating between the three lines within Orange County. During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, service was reduced to 41 trains. In October 2021, partial service was restored which increased service to 45 trains.

In October 2024, Metrolink implemented the *Metrolink Reimagined* service change to increase midday and evening service and improve operational efficiency. As a result, the three Metrolink lines serving Orange County now operate 58 weekday trains, exceeding the number of trains operating prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, ridership recovery has lagged behind service restoration. Current ridership levels remain significantly below pre-pandemic levels, affecting farebox revenue and overall cost recovery. At the same time, operating costs have increased due to inflation and systemwide service needs. As mentioned in Section 4.4, without changes in service levels, ridership growth, operating and rehabilitation costs, or additional external funding, current projections indicate that the existing service model cannot be sustained beyond FY 2033-34.

Another issue affecting Metrolink service in Orange County has been the stability of the coastal rail corridor in south Orange County. Beginning in September 2021, a failing slope in the City of San Clemente severely degraded the railroad track structure near Cyprus Shore [Mile Post (MP) 206.8], requiring emergency repairs to stabilize the corridor. While initial stabilization efforts allowed passenger rail service to resume, continued slope movement and coastal erosion caused additional service disruptions during 2023 and 2024. Landslides near the Casa Romantica Cultural Center and Gardens (MP 204.6) and the Mariposa Trail Bridge (MP 204.2) resulted in debris falling onto the railroad ROW and temporary suspensions of passenger rail service. Emergency stabilization measures—including temporary barrier and catchment walls—were implemented to restore service and protect the track infrastructure.

In December 2024, OCTA secured approximately $305 million in state and federal funding to implement immediate protective solutions addressing inland slope stability and coastal erosion within the City of San Clemente. OCTA is leading efforts to implement these near-term resiliency measures while coordinating with regional partners on a broader strategy to protect the corridor. While emergency stabilization work has allowed rail service to resume, longer-term solutions remain necessary to ensure reliable passenger rail operations along this portion of the corridor. A planning study is currently underway to evaluate short-term and medium-term strategies to protect the rail line in place for approximately the next 30 years, while a separate long-term study will evaluate potential alternatives, including possible relocation of the rail line. OCTA will remain an active participant in these efforts, and future implications for M2 service levels or project costs remain uncertain.

Project R continues to provide important regional mobility benefits by supporting expanded Metrolink service and rail infrastructure improvements across Orange County. However, the financial sustainability of the program requires continued coordination with Metrolink and partner agencies. As part of the Review, staff recommends continued work with Metrolink to develop a financially sustainable service plan, including establishing a target OCTA funding level as part of the FY 2026-27 budget development process, and requesting that Metrolink provide regular updates to the OCTA Board regarding systemwide performance and financial conditions.

Project S: Transits Extension to Metrolink

Project S establishes a competitive program for local jurisdictions to broaden the reach of Metrolink to other Orange County cities, communities, and activity centers by connecting passengers to their final destinations via transit extensions. The program includes two categories: a fixed-guideway program and a rubber tire transit program. The emphasis of Project S is on expanding access to the core rail system and establishing seamless connections within the central core and north and south Orange County.

Fixed Guideway

The M2 Plan includes fixed-guideway transit investments intended to enhance connectivity between major activity centers, strengthen links to the regional rail network, and provide alternatives to automobile travel.

As part of this vision, the Anaheim Rapid Connection (ARC) was identified as a potential fixed-guideway connection between the Anaheim Resort area and the Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center (ARTIC). While early planning and environmental work was initiated, subsequent efforts shifted toward broader corridor-based studies to evaluate more flexible and integrated transit solutions. Although ARC has not advanced as a standalone project, its underlying connectivity objectives continue to be reflected in ongoing transit planning.

Through a competitive process, the OC Streetcar advanced beyond initial study and into full project development. The project will operate between the Santa Ana Regional Transportation Center (SARTC), Downtown Santa Ana, and Harbor Boulevard in the City of Garden Grove, providing a key connection to regional rail. OCTA is serving as the lead agency at the request of the cities of Santa Ana and Garden Grove.

Construction is approximately 96 percent complete. All eight vehicles have been delivered to the maintenance and storage facility (MSF), and systems integration testing is underway. Major milestones achieved to date include completion of track installation, traction power substations, and station platforms, as well as successful live wire testing, marking the first time the streetcar operated under mainline power. Vehicle commissioning, system integration, and safety certification activities are ongoing as the project progresses through final construction and pre-revenue phases. The Board approved a revised project budget in February 2025, reflecting updated cost and schedule assumptions.

Because the project has not yet entered revenue service, ridership, farebox recovery, and operational performance metrics cannot be evaluated as part of this Review. These measures will be critical to assessing long-term program effectiveness. As noted in the Action Plan, by the next Review in 2031, the OC Streetcar will have been in operation for several years, providing meaningful performance and ridership data to inform future policy decisions.

Bus and Station Van Extension Projects

Since 2011, M2 has provided competitive, multi-year transit funding commitments for bus and station van services connecting to Metrolink, with approximately $298,333 programmed to date, supporting first- and last-mile access to the regional rail system. One call for rubber tire transit extensions was issued, resulting in approximately $732,000 in funding for four projects in the cities of Anaheim and Lake Forest. The City of Lake Forest subsequently cancelled its three projects. The Anaheim Canyon Metrolink Station Bus Connection Project was successfully completed on June 30, 2020. The service continues under a subsequent Project V grant and is subject to Project V performance standards. No future calls for rubber tire transit extensions are currently anticipated.

Based on the Review, Project S is progressing as intended. The fixed-guideway component is nearing completion, and the rubber tire component has concluded its initial round of funding. Performance evaluation of the OC Streetcar will occur following commencement of revenue service. No action is recommended at this time.

Project T: Metrolink Gateways

Project T was established to provide funding for local improvements to Metrolink stations along the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor in Orange County to facilitate connections to future HSR systems. The program was intended to ensure Orange County's presence in the development and implementation of HSR systems that would serve the County.

As part of EAP efforts, OCTA held a competitive call in 2009 for eligible station cities to develop and implement station projects in preparation for future HSR systems. The cities of Anaheim, Fullerton, Irvine, and Santa Ana were awarded funding for planning of major expansions of their Metrolink stations. Through this process, ARTIC advanced to construction. Environmental clearance for ARTIC was completed in early 2012, and the facility opened to rail and bus service on December 6, 2014. ARTIC was designed as a multimodal transportation hub capable of accommodating future HSR service and regional connectivity.

As part of the 2015 Review, Project T was evaluated and determined to be complete upon delivery of ARTIC. The 2015 Review included an action item recommending amendment of the M2 Ordinance and Plan to formally close out Project T, as ARTIC fulfilled the intent of the program as the only Orange County station identified on the planned HSR route. The Board subsequently approved the M2 Ordinance amendment on December 14, 2015, officially closing the project.

Based on this Review, Project T remains complete and closed in accordance with prior Board action. No further action is recommended at this time.

Project U: Expand Mobility Choices for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities

Project U supports programs that expand mobility options for seniors and persons with disabilities throughout Orange County. The program funds three initiatives: the Senior Mobility Program (SMP), the Senior Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (SNEMT) Program, and the Fare Stabilization Program. Together, these programs provide transportation services and fare assistance that help improve access to healthcare, essential services, and community activities for populations that may face barriers to mobility.

SMP

The SMP allocates one percent of M2 net revenue to enable participating cities (currently 32) to design and implement transportation services tailored to the needs of adults age 60 and older in their communities. The program builds on a locally driven approach that emphasizes community-based transportation solutions rather than countywide services. Cities have implemented a variety of service models, including shuttle services, demand-response rides, subsidized taxi programs, and partnerships with transportation providers, allowing each jurisdiction to address the unique mobility needs of their senior population.

Since inception, more than $43.7 million has been provided to eligible local jurisdictions to support nearly 3.4 million boardings for seniors traveling to medical appointments, nutrition programs, shopping destinations, and senior and community center activities. This demand is expected to increase as demographic trends shift. As noted in Section 3.3.1, the population age 60 and older in Orange County has grown significantly over the past decade – on average 40 percent based on U.S. Census Bureau data – and is projected to continue increasing.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board approved temporary SMP Guidelines exceptions to provide flexibility to local jurisdictions. These actions allowed participating cities to modify services in response to public health restrictions, including permitting the use of SMP funds for meal delivery in lieu of transportation to senior nutrition programs and temporarily suspending funding distribution requirements for jurisdictions with fully suspended services. These temporary measures helped cities continue supporting a vulnerable population during the State of Emergency while maintaining program funding integrity.

While SMP continues to deliver meaningful mobility benefits, stakeholder engagement conducted as part of the Review highlighted a range of perspectives across participating cities regarding program administration, funding utilization, and future direction. Input varied among stakeholders, with some expressing in expanding services, while others indicated challenges in fully utilizing existing allocations. The current Board-adopted SMP Funding and Policy Guidelines (SMP Guidelines) were last updated in 2018. Given the passage of time,

evolving service delivery approaches, and increasing demand associated with a growing senior population, a review of the SMP Guidelines is appropriate to ensure they continue to effectively support local implementation.

Accordingly, staff proposes an Action Plan item to evaluate and update the SMP Guidelines. This effort would focus on reaffirming program objectives, incorporating lessons learned from local implementation, and ensuing alignment between program requirements and operational realities. The review would also consider opportunities to enhance administrative efficiency, while maintaining the flexibility that enables cities to tailor services to their local senior populations.

SNEMT

The SNEMT Program, administered in partnership with the County of Orange Office on Aging, allocates one percent of M2 net revenue to provide transportation for seniors traveling to medical appointments and other health-related services. The program fills an important gap for individuals who may not qualify for OC ACCESS paratransit services or who require transportation options beyond those available through existing transit programs. Through contracts with social service agencies and transportation providers, the program offers specialized transportation services that complement the broader transit network. Since inception, approximately $46.9 million has been allocated to support more than 1.7 million SNEMT boardings.

Fare Stabilization Program

The Fare Stabilization Program allocates 1.47 percent of M2 net revenues to ensure that transit fares for seniors and persons with disabilities remain discounted at levels established when the M2 Ordinance was adopted. The program supports discounted fares on OCTA's fixed-route bus services as well as OC ACCESS paratransit services, helping maintain affordability for transit-dependent populations. Since inception, nearly $63.5 million has been allocated to support more than 166 million program-related boardings. Staff analysis confirms that the Fare Stabilization Program continues to fund fares in an amount equal to the percentage of partial funding of fares as of the effective date of the M2 Ordinance.

Overall, Project U continues to provide meaningful mobility benefits to seniors and persons with disabilities across Orange County. The program remains aligned with the objectives established in the Plan, and the proposed evaluation of the SMP Guidelines will help ensure the program continues to effectively support accessible transportation options through 2041.

Project V: Community Based Transit/Circulators

Project V provides competitive funding to local jurisdictions to implement community-based transit services that complement regional bus and rail operations and address localized mobility needs. As part of the Review, staff evaluated Project V to assess delivery status, compliance with adopted performance standards, and overall program effectiveness.

Since program inception, the Board has approved 50 projects and ten planning studies through five competitive calls, totaling approximately $99.4 million. Of the 50 transit circulator projects, 16 services are currently active, four are planned, 17 have been completed, and 13 were cancelled, primarily due to low ridership. Project V services have collectively carried approximately 5.97 million passengers to date.

Project V services are evaluated on a quarterly basis. Consistent with established program guidelines, Project V-funded services are expected to operate within a maximum cost-per-boarding standard set at twice the M2 Project V subsidy, and local jurisdictions are responsible for costs beyond the OCTA subsidy. Services not meeting performance standards are required to disclose performance to their governing boards and determine whether to continue, restructure, or discontinue service. This structured monitoring process reinforces accountability and ensures that funding is directed toward viable, community-supported services. The most recent semi-annual ridership report, covering April 2025 through September 2025, confirmed that nearly all active services met the adopted cost per boarding and service performance standards. The maximum allowable cost per boarding for FY 2024-25 and FY 2025-26 was established at $21.63, equal to twice the M2 subsidy per boarding of $10.81, and all but one active service operated within this threshold.

The Review also confirms that the program continues to adapt to evolving travel patterns. Seasonal, special event, commuter, fixed-route, and demand-responsive services remain aligned with local mobility needs, and underperforming services in prior cycles were either restructured or discontinued. The current portfolio reflects a more performance-driven and locally responsive program.

Looking ahead, successful community-based transit/circulator grants will require renewal to sustain operations beyond the current extension period. Through the 2024 Project V call, 11 existing services were extended through June 2031. As those cooperative agreement terms approach expiration, continuation of high-performing services beyond that timeframe will require future Board authorization through a subsequent call or formal renewal action. This reflects the normal lifecycle of this competitive grant program and long-term program planning rather than a delivery deficiency.

Based on the Review assessment of service delivery, ridership performance, and program oversight mechanisms, Project V is performing as intended. Active services are meeting adopted performance standards, monitoring practices are functioning effectively, and no programmatic modifications or corrective actions are recommended at this time.

Project W: Safe Transit Stops

Project W provides funding to enhance passenger amenities at transit stops to improve safety, accessibility, and the overall customer experience. Eligible improvements have historically included shelters, seating, lighting, and related amenities intended to support bus riders at high-activity locations.

Since program inception, approximately $3 million has been allocated through three calls for improvements at 122 transit stops. Of these, 94 improvements have been completed and 18 are in various stages of implementation. As a result, the program has substantially fulfilled the M2 Ordinance's original commitment to improve the 100 busiest transit stops. While the program has successfully delivered stop-level enhancements, a significant balance of available funding remains unprogrammed.

The Review identified that the current eligibility framework—tied to the 100 busiest transit stops—has not been updated in recent years, as no calls have been conducted. As a result, the list of eligible stops may not fully reflect current ridership patterns and system conditions. As part of the Action Plan, staff will evaluate updating the list of the 100 busiest transit stops to ensure it reflects current transit activity and priorities. Based on the Review, Project W continues to serve an important role in enhancing the transit passenger environment. Updating the list will help ensure that future investments are aligned with current system needs.

5.2.4 Environmental Program

The Environmental Program supports efforts to address transportation-related environmental impacts and improve water quality throughout Orange County. These investments focus on reducing pollutants entering local waterways, supporting compliance with federal and state water quality regulations, and enhancing environmental conditions associated with transportation infrastructure.

The program includes Project X, the ECP, which fund projects designed to capture, treat, and prevent transportation-related runoff from entering creeks, rivers, and coastal waters. These projects are implemented in coordination with local jurisdictions and water quality agencies and are designed to complement broader regional water quality and environmental management efforts. For additional details on project progress, constraints, and updated schedules, refer to Appendix D and Appendix E.

Project X: Environmental Cleanup Program

Project X implements transportation-related water quality improvement projects designed to reduce pollutants entering Orange County waterways in compliance with federal Clean Water Act requirements. The program consists of a two-tier structure: Tier 1 projects focus on distributed improvements such as trash capture devices and irrigation retrofits, while Tier 2 projects support larger capital improvements that provide water quality and water resource benefits.

Since program inception, 241 Tier 1 projects, totaling approximately $43 million, have been awarded by the Board since 2011. Of the 241 projects, construction on 203 projects have been completed, 21 are in various stages of implementation, and 17 have been cancelled by the awarded agency. Tier 1 installations have removed approximately 91.7 million gallons of trash from Orange County waterways through December 2025. This volume is equivalent to more than 16,200 trash truck loads of debris that would otherwise

have entered local streams and coastal waters. On an annual basis, more than 11 million gallons of trash are currently captured through installed Tier 1 devices, reflecting sustained and ongoing performance.

To date, 26 Tier 2 projects totaling approximately $35 million have been awarded by the Board since 2013. Of the 26 projects, construction on 18 projects has been completed, four projects are in progress, and four projects have been cancelled by the awarded agency. It is estimated that Tier 2-funded projects, once fully functional, will have an annual groundwater recharge and water savings potential of approximately 352 million gallons of water from infiltration, recharge facilities, and diversion to recycled water supply.

Based on the Review, Project X is performing as intended. The program continues to deliver measurable environmental benefits, including substantial trash removal and water resource enhancements, consistent with the commitments of the M2 Ordinance. No action is recommended at this time.

5.2.5 Taxpayer Safeguards and Audits

M2 was approved by voters with explicit taxpayer protections embedded in the M2 Ordinance. These safeguards were designed to ensure transparency, fiscal discipline, and accountability throughout the 30-year life of the program. They include independent oversight, recurring audits, strict eligibility requirements for local jurisdictions, limits on administrative costs, regular public reporting, triennial performance assessments, and a comprehensive review every ten years. These overlapping layers of accountability provide structural assurance that M2 revenues are spent as promised.

As part of this Review, OCTA evaluated the safeguard framework to determine whether any structural changes are warranted. Based on this evaluation, OCTA concludes that the existing taxpayer safeguards remain appropriate. As such, no modifications are recommended at this time.

OCTA maintains a comprehensive Ordinance Tracking Matrix to monitor compliance with all requirements contained in the M2 Ordinance. The matrix documents responsible divisions, reporting frequencies, and supporting documentation for each requirement. This structured compliance framework ensures that all statutory and voter-mandated provisions are systematically reviewed and updated on a recurring basis.

The TOC provides an independent layer of accountability and oversight for the M2 Program. Chaired by the Orange County Auditor-Controller, the TOC is responsible for reviewing expenditures, audits, and program performance to ensure compliance with the M2 Ordinance. Each year, following a public hearing, the TOC Chair, on behalf of the TOC, certifies whether M2 revenues have been expended in accordance with voter-approved requirements. The TOC has consistently found that OCTA is proceeding in compliance with the M2 Ordinance. In addition, at the request of the TOC, the Board authorized annual compliance audits to further strengthen oversight and transparency. A limited compliance audit for FY 2022-23 and a full compliance audit for FY 2023-24 found that OCTA complied, in all material respects, with the requirements of the M2 Ordinance, with no deficiencies in internal control reported.

A key transparency safeguard is the requirement for quarterly progress reports to the Board. These reports provide updates on project status, expenditures, schedule performance, and program delivery milestones. Quarterly reporting ensures that emerging issues are publicly disclosed in a timely manner and that corrective actions, when necessary, are visible to the Board, the TOC, and the public.

The M2 Ordinance also requires the publication of an annual report detailing how revenues have been spent and progress toward implementing the Plan. These annual reports summarize program accomplishments, financial performance, and compliance activities, and are made publicly available. This recurring reporting requirement provides a consistent, year-over-year accounting of M2 revenues and expenditures.

In addition to quarterly and annual reporting, the M2 Ordinance requires a triennial performance assessment to evaluate efficiency, effectiveness, economy, and program results. Six have been performed to date. The most recent performance assessment, covering FY 2021-22 through FY 2023-24, concluded that OCTA maintains strong program management practices, fiscal responsibility, and compliance with M2 Ordinance requirements. While minor recommendations for process enhancements were identified, no material deficiencies were reported.

The M2 Ordinance further requires a comprehensive Review to evaluate the performance of all projects and programs implemented under the Plan. This Review serves as a structural checkpoint to assess revenue projections, project delivery, changing conditions, and continued public support. The current Review represents the second such comprehensive evaluation and confirms that the M2 Program remains financially viable and operationally sound under the existing framework.

Independent financial oversight is reinforced through annual audits and compliance reviews. For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024, an independent compliance audit concluded that OCTA, designated as the Authority, complied in all material respects, with the requirements of the M2 Ordinance and that no reportable deficiencies in internal control were identified.

Local jurisdictions receiving M2 funds are subject to annual eligibility reviews and periodic agreed-upon procedures (AUP) engagements performed by an independent accounting firm. These reviews test expenditures, reporting practices, and compliance with maintenance of effort requirements. The AUP process has demonstrated its effectiveness by identifying instances where jurisdictions did not meet eligibility standards or reported unsupported expenditures. In such cases, the Board suspended disbursements, required reimbursement of ineligible costs, and mandated corrective actions prior to reinstating eligibility. These actions demonstrate that the safeguards are actively enforced and functioning as intended.

The M2 Ordinance also limits administrative expenditures to one percent of annual M2 revenues. OCTA monitors this threshold quarterly and reports compliance through audited financial statements and compliance reviews. Administrative expenditures have remained in compliance with the M2 Ordinance's one percent limitation. See Section 4.1.5, Administrative Cap and Collection Costs for additional information.

Based on this evaluation, the taxpayer safeguards embedded in the M2 Ordinance continue to protect voter-approved revenues and ensure transparency, accountability, and disciplined program delivery. The safeguards are working as designed, and no changes are warranted at this time.

5.3 Delivery Risks/Constraints

Delivery of the Plan occurs within a dynamic implementation environment shaped by economic conditions, regulatory requirements, construction market forces, and interagency coordination. While OCTA has made substantial progress advancing projects and programs across all funding categories, certain delivery risks and constraints—many of which are outside OCTA's direct control—continue to influence schedules, costs, and sequencing. These risks vary by program area and reflect differences in project complexity, scalability, and operational requirements.

5.3.1 Freeway Program

The Freeway Program represents the largest and most complex component of the M2 Program and carries the greatest delivery risk. Freeway projects are defined with fixed scopes in the M2 Ordinance and must be delivered regardless of changing external conditions. As the program has advanced, delivery risks have shifted from early planning uncertainty to execution-related constraints.

A primary risk continues to be ROW acquisition and third-party coordination. OCTA relies on Caltrans to perform ROW acquisition, relocation assistance, and to process resolutions of necessity through the California Transportation Commission (CTC). Resource availability at Caltrans, competing statewide priorities, and complex utility coordination can affect project schedules on a project-by-project basis.

Construction market conditions also present ongoing risk. Labor availability, contractor capacity, and material cost volatility may influence bid prices and construction timelines, particularly for projects advancing later in the program.

Regulatory and policy considerations represent an additional constraint. While most M2 freeway projects have completed environmental review, projects that have not yet advanced through all phases may be affected by evolving requirements related to environmental review, climate considerations, and managed lane implementation, potentially requiring additional analysis or schedule adjustments.

Finally, interagency coordination remains critical for freeway delivery. Several corridors require coordination among multiple agencies to align schedules, funding responsibilities, and construction sequencing, introducing dependencies that may affect delivery timelines.

Despite these risks, the majority of freeway projects are complete, under construction, or in advanced stages of development, and OCTA continues to actively manage delivery constraints through phased implementation and disciplined project controls.

The Freeway EMP continues to progress consistent with voter-approved commitments and does not face significant near-term delivery constraints. Programmatic permits and comprehensive conservation planning have reduced regulatory risk and supported streamlined freeway project approvals. Remaining risks associated with the mitigation program are primarily long-term and environmental in nature, including habitat restoration success, wildfire impacts, and ongoing stewardship responsibilities. These risks are addressed through monitoring and adaptive management practices.

5.3.2 Streets and Roads Program

Delivery risks within the M2 Streets and Roads Program remain limited. A key strength of this program area is its flexibility, which allows funding levels and project timing to be adjusted without compromising overall program objectives.

Most M2 streets and roads projects are delivered by local jurisdictions through competitive or formula-based programs. As a result, delivery risks are primarily local and project-specific, including staffing capacity, utility coordination, and compliance with eligibility and timely use of funds requirements.

For larger capital projects, particularly grade separations, ROW costs, utility conflicts, and legal settlements can increase project costs and affect schedules. These challenges are generally isolated and do not represent systemic program constraints.

Overall, the M2 Streets and Roads Program continue to progress as planned, with no significant delivery constraints identified at the program level.

5.3.3 Transit Program

The M2 Transit Program remains deliverable but faces a distinct set of operational and programmatic risks. Unlike most capital programs, certain transit components such as rail service—cannot be easily adjusted without affecting service levels.

A primary risk is the long-term sustainability of rail operations. Changes in travel behavior, ridership recovery patterns, and rising operating costs place pressure on transit services and require ongoing coordination among partner agencies.

Interagency and railroad coordination also remains a constraint. Rail infrastructure improvements and service expansion depend on agreements governing track access, scheduling, and maintenance responsibilities, which can affect both capital project delivery and operational flexibility.

In addition, climate-related risks increasingly affect transit infrastructure, particularly along the coastal rail corridor in south Orange County. Coastal erosion, storm surges, and slope instability have required emergency actions to maintain service and underscore the need for continued coordination and long-term resilience planning.

5.3.4 Environmental Programs

The ECP remains highly flexible and continues to advance without significant delivery risks. Projects are implemented in partnership with local jurisdictions, with delivery risks generally limited to individual project implementation and compliance with eligibility and timely use of funds requirements.

5.3.5 Other External Factors

In addition to program-specific delivery risks, broader external factors have influenced the implementation of the M2 Program over time. These factors—largely outside of OCTA's control—have affected funding, travel behavior, and project delivery across all program areas.

Economic conditions have played a significant role. The Great Recession resulted in a substantial decline in sales tax revenues early in the program, requiring adjustments to project timing, financing strategies, and increased reliance on external funding. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic introduced similar challenges, with declines in sales tax revenues and ongoing uncertainty in revenue forecasts.

The pandemic also significantly affected travel behavior and system performance. Transit ridership declined sharply, particularly for Metrolink and other discretionary services, leading to temporary service reductions and continued challenges in ridership recovery. Programs serving more vulnerable populations were especially impacted. Within the SMP, ridership declined and some service providers ceased operations. In response, OCTA implemented temporary program adjustments, including allowing the use of funds for meal delivery in lieu of transportation services and holding allocations for agencies with suspended services until

operations could resume. Additional flexibility was provided through temporary suspension of certain program requirements to support continuity of service.

Similarly, Project V services experienced widespread disruption, with many services suspended or delayed due to reduced demand and public health restrictions. OCTA responded by implementing programmatic revisions, including adjustments to performance metrics and funding provisions, to support the re-establishment of services in a post-pandemic environment.

Capital project delivery was also affected by external conditions, particularly during and following the pandemic. Supply chain disruptions, labor constraints, and construction cost escalation introduced schedule pressures and cost increases across major projects, including freeway improvements and the OC Streetcar.

At the policy level, OCTA and the Board implemented targeted relief measures in response to these external pressures, including temporary modifications to M2 Ordinance requirements—such as modification of maintenance of effort (MOE) provisions—to support local jurisdictions during the pandemic. OCTA also leveraged federal relief funding, including resources provided through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and related programs, to help stabilize transit operations and offset revenue losses.

Beyond economic and public health events, evolving technologies are also influencing the transportation system. Advancements such as real-time traveler information, mobile applications, and emerging vehicle technologies—including electric vehicles and early applications of artificial intelligence—are shaping how people travel and interact with the system. While these technologies were not explicitly anticipated in the original M2 Plan, they are increasingly influencing system performance and user expectations.

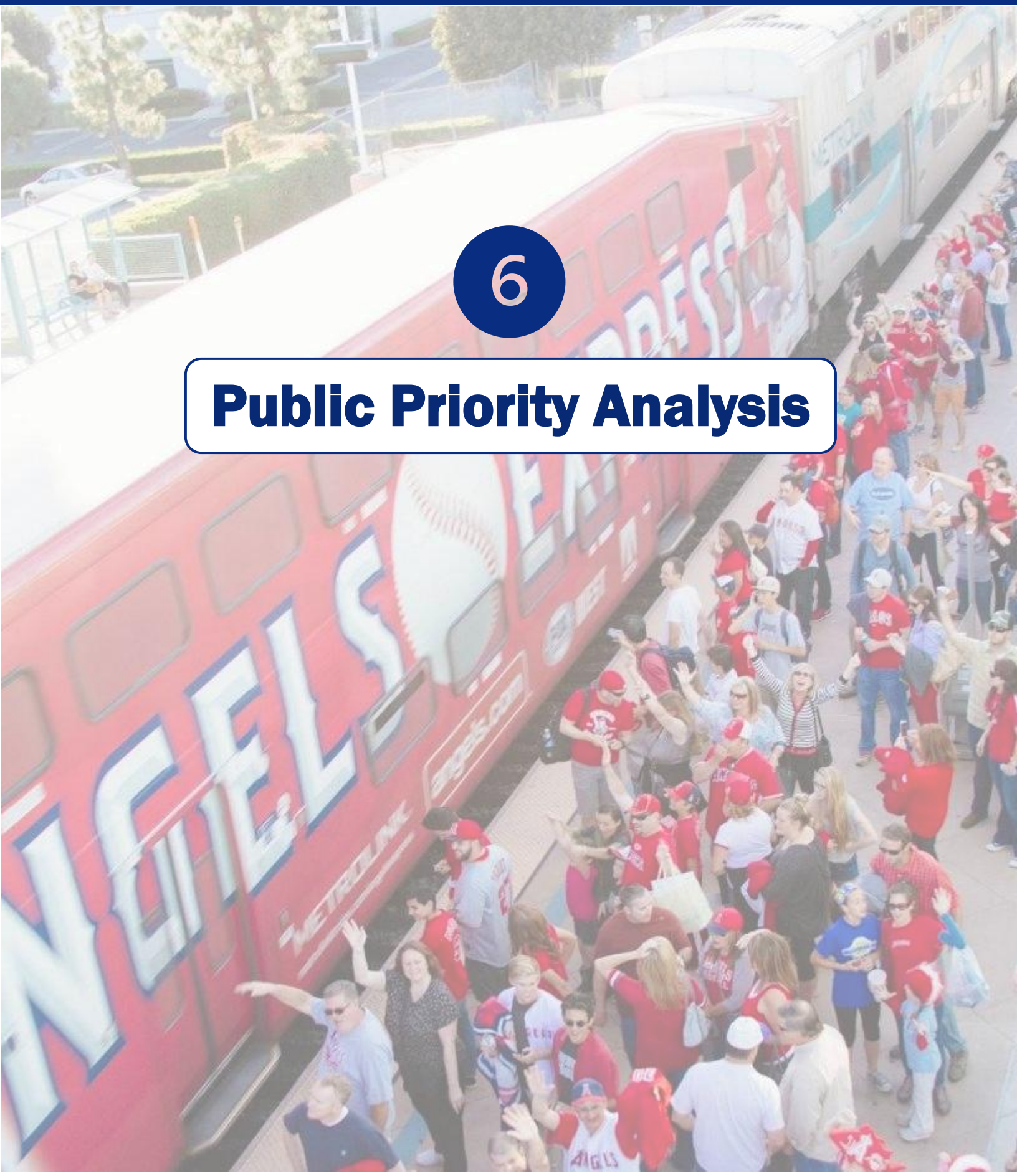
Collectively, these external factors underscore the importance of flexibility and adaptive management in delivering a long-term voter-approved program. While these conditions have introduced challenges, OCTA's ability to respond and adjust has allowed the M2 Program to continue advancing while maintaining its core commitments.

5.4 Summary and Conclusion

Overall, the Project Delivery Analysis demonstrates that the M2 Program has made substantial progress in advancing the promises made to voters and remains on track for delivery through 2041. All major program categories are actively underway, with many projects completed or in construction, reflecting effective program management and sustained coordination among OCTA, local jurisdictions, and regional partners.

While a range of delivery risks and constraints have been identified, these factors are being actively managed and do not materially affect OCTA's ability to deliver. The scalability of several program elements, combined with OCTA's ability to leverage external funding and apply adaptive delivery strategies, continue to showcase flexibility and innovation.

In summary, no major modifications to the delivery approach are warranted at this time; however, continued monitoring and strategic adjustments, as outlined in the proposed Action Plan, will ensure successful delivery in the next 15 years of M2 delivery.



6

Public Priority Analysis

6. Public Priority Analysis

Assessing Public and Stakeholder Continued Support for M2

6.1 Background

The M2 Ordinance requires public and stakeholder input; it is an integral component of the Review. Public Priority Analysis evaluates whether the Plan continues to align with the needs, expectations, and priorities of Orange County residents and stakeholders, and whether public support for the program remains strong at the midpoint of M2.

To support this assessment, OCTA conducted a comprehensive, inclusive, multi-phased outreach and engagement campaign. This effort combined broad-based public opinion research with targeted qualitative engagement to ensure broad representation and depth of understanding.

Collectively, these efforts provide a robust foundation for evaluating public support for M2, identifying priority transportation needs, and informing potential refinements to program delivery and communication strategies.

6.2 Goals & Objectives

The public priority analysis was guided by the following objectives:

- Evaluate awareness and perceptions of M2 and OCTA's role in delivering transportation improvements;
- Identify current transportation priorities, trends, and challenges;
- Assess the level of public support for continuing local transportation funding under M2; and
- Understand residents' priorities across major transportation investment areas, including streets and roads, freeways, transit, and environmental programs.

6.3 Outreach and Data Collection Approach

OCTA implemented an extensive, multilingual, countywide engagement program between January and August 2025, supplemented by a quantitative survey conducted in early 2026. The outreach effort included stakeholder briefings, elected official roundtables, public webinars, focus groups, community events, and both qualitative and quantitative surveys. Public and stakeholder input was gathered through multiple, complementary methods to ensure both depth and breadth of feedback.

Key engagement activities included:

- ✓ A countywide quantitative survey of 1,025 residents;
- ✓ 2,585 completed qualitative surveys;
- ✓ Two elected official roundtables;
- ✓ Five Technical Advisory Committee Member focus groups;
- ✓ Stakeholder briefings and thought leader interviews;
- ✓ Four focus groups;
- ✓ A virtual public webinar; and
- ✓ Outreach at 26 community and cultural events across all five supervisorial districts.

This layered approach allowed OCTA to validate broad public priorities while also capturing nuance and context behind the feedback. Additionally, all materials were provided in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese, and surveys were offered in additional languages to ensure broad participation.

6.4 Key Themes

Continued Support for Local Transportation Funding

Public support for continued local transportation funding remains strong. A majority of survey respondents indicated that maintaining existing local funding for transportation in Orange County is important, with support increasing further when respondents were reminded of how M2 funds are used.

At the same time, perceptions of the transportation system are measured. Most respondents rated overall transportation conditions as "fair," with fewer selecting "excellent" and only a small share rating the system as "poor." This suggests that while the system is viewed as generally functional, residents see clear room for improvement—particularly in addressing traffic congestion and roadway conditions.

Taken together, these findings indicate that residents continue to value M2's locally controlled funding structure while expecting ongoing progress and visible results.

Roadway Maintenance and Traffic Flow Remain Top Priorities

Across all survey questions related to transportation investments, the highest priorities consistently focused on maintaining and improving existing infrastructure. Top-ranked priorities included:

- Fixing potholes and repairing roadways
- Coordinating signals to improve traffic flow
- Improving intersections and reducing congestion on major roads

These priorities align closely with the three M2 Streets and Roads Programs—RCP, RTSSP, and LFS—reinforcing the relevance of the Plan's existing investment structure.

Transit Support is Strong but Secondary to Roadway Preservation

Public support for transit investments remains solid, particularly for programs serving seniors, people with disabilities, and safety improvements at transit stops and stations. Transit services such as bus frequency improvements, Metrolink service, and community shuttles generally received majority support as high or

medium priorities. However, transit investments consistently ranked below roadway maintenance, congestion relief, and operational improvements. This pattern reflects an ongoing expectation among residents that transit investments complement—rather than replace—continued investment in streets, roads, and freeways.

Awareness Gaps Persist Despite Positive Perceptions

While OCTA as a transportation agency is relatively strong, awareness of M2 itself is more limited. Approximately half of survey respondents reported being unfamiliar with M2 prior to being asked, and a majority were not aware that specific transportation improvements were funded by M2. This disconnect highlights an important distinction: the public broadly support transportation funding and the outcomes delivered, but do not always associate those outcomes with M2. This finding underscores the importance of continued transparency, communication, and visibility regarding how M2 funds are used.

Auto-Dominant Travel Behavior Remains the Norm

Survey results confirm that most Orange County residents continue to rely primarily on driving alone for daily travel. Transit, bicycling, and walking account for a much smaller share of primary travel modes, even among respondents who express support for transit investments. At the same time, younger and lower-income residents were more likely to rely on transit and prioritize multimodal investments, while older residents placed greater emphasis on roadway maintenance and congestion relief. These differences reinforce the importance of maintaining a balanced transportation program that addresses current travel behavior while planning for evolving mobility needs.

Administrative Efficiency, Regional Coordination, and Cross-Jurisdictional Leadership are Important to Partner Agencies

City and agency partners emphasized the importance of streamlined reimbursement processes, funding flexibility, and continued interjurisdictional coordination to improve project delivery. Stakeholders encouraged OCTA to maintain its role as a regional integrator – aligning investments across city boundaries, corridors, and modes. Participants also highlighted the value of multi-benefit investments that integrate transportation performance with environmental stewardship, resilience, and community health outcomes.

6.5 Summary

Overall, the Public Priority Analysis indicates that M2 remains well aligned with the public's expectations and transportation needs in Orange County. Residents continue to support local transportation funding, value the balanced structure of the program, and emphasize maintaining and improving existing infrastructure. While satisfaction with the transportation system is generally moderate, public sentiment is consistent and pragmatic, focusing on congestion relief, roadway maintenance, and reliable mobility options. At the same time, the analysis identifies opportunities to strengthen public awareness of M2 and enhance communication regarding how funds are allocated and delivered. A summary report of the outreach campaign is included as Appendix F.

7

Action Plan

7. Action Plan

Based on current project and program schedules, the Plan will reach a pivotal point within the next five years. Assuming no major unforeseen events and successful implementation of the latest, Board-adopted 2025 update of the Next 10 Plan, several key milestones are expected:

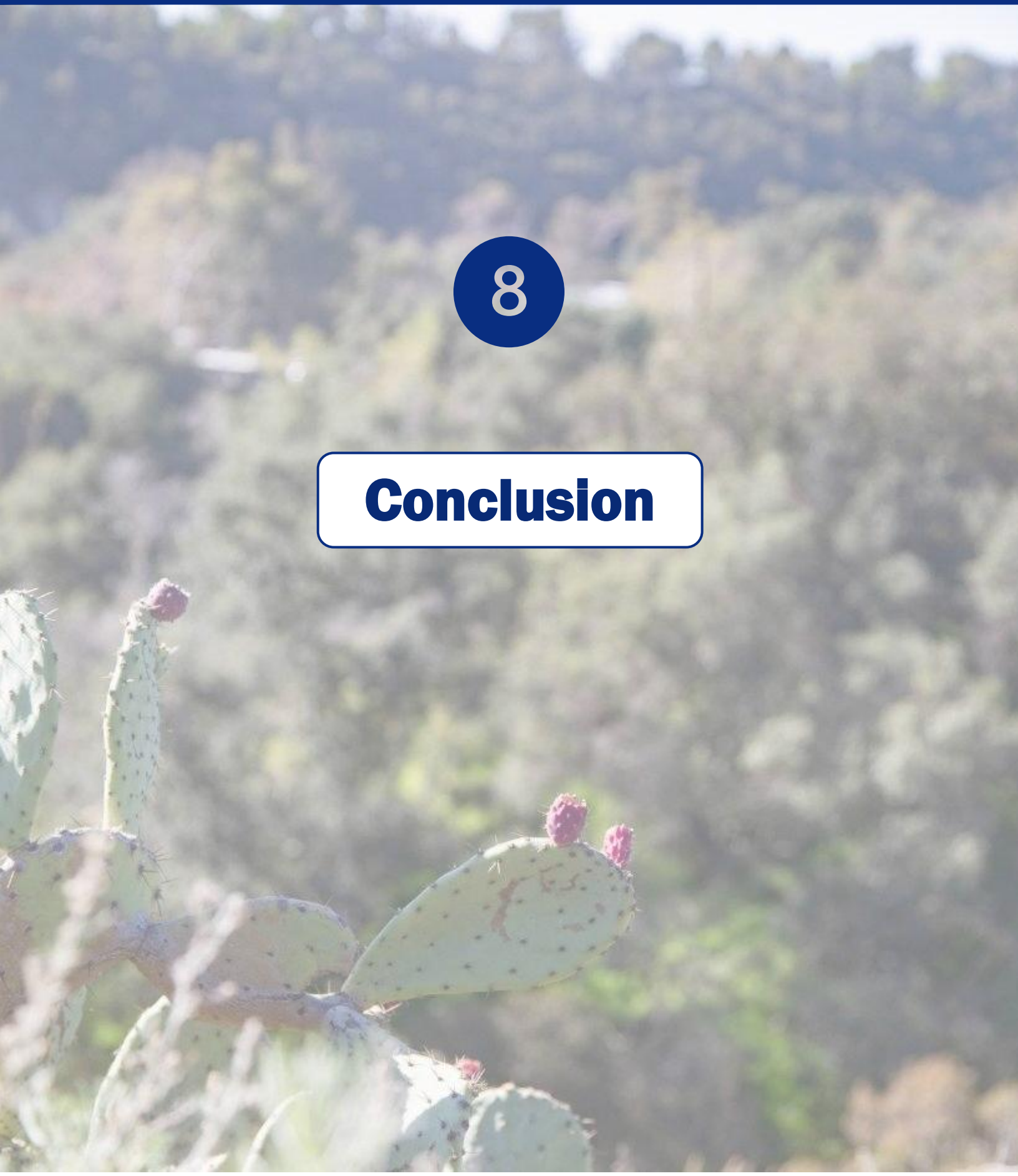
- Approximately 27 of the 30 Freeway Program projects (about 90 percent) are anticipated to be complete, substantially reducing overall program delivery risk;
- The Freeway EMP endowment for long-term management of the Preserves is anticipated to be fully funded, enabling discussion around next steps;
- The Countywide Signal Synchronization Baseline Project will be completed, guiding future calls under the RTSSP;
- The OC Streetcar will have been in operation for several years, providing performance and ridership data;
- Successful community-based transit/circulators grants will require renewal; and
- All transit stop safety enhancement projects will be completed—surpassing the 100 improvements promised in the Plan.

With the significant number of projects and programs currently in progress, it is not an optimal time to make long-term modifications to the Plan. While the M2 Ordinance requires a comprehensive review of Plan performance at least every ten years, OCTA staff recommends that the next comprehensive review be conducted in advance of the ten-year interval to better align with program milestones and future planning needs. By 2031, many M2 programs and projects are expected to reach key milestones that will more meaningfully inform long-term decisions.

Over the next five years, staff proposes the actions outlined in Figure 7-1 for five programs. These actions emphasize evaluating, monitoring, refining, and strategically preparing to ensure that OCTA is well-positioned to successfully deliver the remainder M2. All other M2 projects and programs are recommended to continue implementation as currently planned.

Figure 7-1: Proposed Action Plan

Program	Action
Project O RCP	Evaluate the creation of a competitive pavement subprogram. See Section 5.2.2, Project O for more information.
Project P RTSSP	Assess the results and recommendations from the Countywide Signal Synchronization Baseline Project. See Section 5.2.2, Project P for more information.
Project R High-Frequency Metrolink Service	• Direct staff to continue to work with Metrolink to develop a financially sustainable service plan, including establishing a target OCTA funding level as part of the FY 2026-27 budget development process. • Request Metrolink to provide regular updates to the OCTA Board on systemwide performance. See Section 5.2.3, Project R for more information.
Project U Expand Mobility Choices for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities	Evaluate and update the SMP Guidelines to ensure consistency, enhance clarity, and support evolving mobility needs. See Section 5.2.3, Project U for more information.
Project W Safe Transit Stops	Update the list of the 100 busiest stops. See Section 5.2.3, Project W for more information.



8

Conclusion

8. Conclusion

The M2 program continues to demonstrate strong progress in delivering the transportation improvements promised to Orange County voters. Nearly halfway through the 30-year program timeline, OCTA and its partner agencies have advanced a substantial portion of the voter-approved investments across the freeway, streets and roads, transit, and environmental program areas. Major freeway improvements are underway or complete, local jurisdictions continue to receive flexible funding to address community transportation needs, transit programs are expanding mobility options for residents, and environmental initiatives are preserving open space and improving water quality. These accomplishments reflect a coordinated regional effort to deliver projects that improve mobility, enhance safety, and support Orange County's quality of life.

Independent performance assessments confirm that OCTA has maintained strong program management practices, sound fiscal stewardship, and transparent reporting processes to ensure compliance with the requirements established in the M2 Ordinance. These taxpayer safeguards—including independent audits, oversight by the TOC, and regular public reporting—continue to provide accountability and confidence that M2 revenues are being used as intended.

At the same time, the Review highlights the importance of maintaining flexibility in responding to changing conditions. External factors such as economic cycles, construction market pressures, evolving regulatory requirements, and shifts in travel behavior can affect project costs, schedules, and funding availability. OCTA has demonstrated an ability to adapt to these changes by leveraging external funding opportunities, refining project delivery strategies, and updating implementation plans to maintain progress toward the commitments made to voters. The program's delivery plans and ongoing financial monitoring ensure that M2 remains positioned to deliver the full slate of improvements through 2041.

Looking ahead, the continued success of the M2 Program will depend on sustained collaboration among OCTA, local jurisdictions, regional partners, and the public. As Orange County's transportation system evolves, the program will continue to support investments that reduce congestion, maintain critical infrastructure, expand mobility choices, and protect the region's natural resources. Through continued oversight, careful financial management, and responsive planning, the M2 Program remains well positioned to fulfill its commitments and deliver lasting transportation benefits for Orange County residents, businesses, and visitors.

9 Appendices

9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix A: M2 Amendments to Date

To date, five M2 amendments have taken place; the December 2015 amendment made changes to the M2 Ordinance as well as the Plan. All instances followed the amendment procedures outlined in the M2 Ordinance.

Ordinance Amendments

1. November 25, 2013: Strengthened the eligibility and selection process for TOC members by preventing any person with a financial conflict of interest from serving as a member. It also requires currently elected or appointed officers who are applying to serve on the TOC to complete an "Intent to Resign" form.
2. December 14, 2015 *(corrected March 14, 2016)*: Accounted for additional funding from Project T allocated to the Fare Stabilization Program by changing Attachment B (of the M2 Ordinance) to reflect 1.47 percent delegation (rather than one percent). Corrected amendment language was presented to the Board on March 14, 2016.
3. June 22, 2020: Temporarily changed the MOE requirements for FY 2019-20 and FY 2020-21 to assist local jurisdictions through the unprecedented period of uncertainty due to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. May 24, 2021: Extended temporary changes for maintenance of effort requirements for FY 2020-21 into FY 2021-22 to continue assisting local jurisdictions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Plan Amendments

1. November 9, 2012: Occurred after the Board adoption of the M2020 Plan. This amendment reallocated funds within the Freeway Program, between SR-91 (Project J) and I-405 (Project K).
2. December 14, 2015 *(corrected March 14, 2016)*: Occurred after the first Review. Closed out Metrolink Gateways (Project T) and reallocated the remaining funds within the Transit Program between Metrolink Service Expansion (Project T) and Fare Stabilization Program (Project U). Corrected amendment language was presented to the Board on March 14, 2016.

9.2 Appendix B: State and Federal Legislation

9.2.1 State Legislation

The ability of OCTA to deliver projects under M2 is influenced by state legislation related to transportation funding, environmental regulations, tolling authority, transit operations, and procurement methods. These legislative actions shaped how projects were financed, approved, and executed, often introducing new compliance requirements or funding opportunities that either streamlined or complicated project delivery. The following sections outline key legislation from 2006 to 2024, with an emphasis on legislation from 2014 through 2024, categorized by their impact areas, and presented in alphanumeric, chronological order.

I. Transportation Funding and Taxation

State funding was a critical factor in ensuring that M2 projects were delivered as planned. Several legislative measures shaped transportation funding mechanisms, determining how much revenue was available, and how funds were allocated:

- AB 398 (Chapter 135, Statutes of 2017) – California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006: market-based compliance mechanisms: fire prevention fees: sales and use tax manufacturing exemption.
    - Extended California's cap-and-trade program through 2030, ensuring continued funding for transportation and transit-related greenhouse gas reduction projects through programs like the TIRCP and Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP).
- AB 784 (Chapter 684, Statutes of 2019) – Sales and use taxes: exemption: California Hybrid and Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project: transit buses.
    - Provided a sales and use tax exemption for qualifying zero-emission transit buses purchased by public agencies through state incentive programs, expiring January 1, 2024. This exemption has since been extended to January 1, 2026, by AB 2622 (Chapter 353, Statutes of 2022).
- AB 1113 (Chapter 86, Statutes of 2017) – State Transit Assistance (STA) Program.
    - Clarified and revised eligibility and processes associated with STA funds, ensuring that revenues from the diesel sales tax portion of the program are distributed more predictably among transit agencies.
- SB 1 (Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017) – Transportation funding.
    - SB 1 represented a historic investment in California's transportation infrastructure, generating over $5 billion annually through increased gasoline and diesel taxes, vehicle registration fees, and a new transportation improvement fee. It created a stable and ongoing revenue source dedicated to repairing roads, improving highway safety, and expanding transit options across the state.
    - The bill established and expanded several major funding programs, including:
        - Local Streets and Roads Program – supporting city and county efforts to maintain and rehabilitate local infrastructure;
        - State Highway Operations and Protection Program – targeting critical repairs to state highways and bridges;

        - STA – providing significant funding for transit capital improvements and operations;
        - Solutions for Congested Corridors Program – integrating multimodal improvements to reduce congestion and improve mobility;
        - Active Transportation Program – enhancing safety and connectivity for bicyclists and pedestrians.
    - STA:
        - Base STA Allocation: SB 1 increased baseline STA funding, which is distributed to transit operators based on existing formulas to support operational needs such as fuel, staffing, and maintenance.
        - State of Good Repair Program: Created a separate funding stream under STA to support transit capital projects that maintain or repair existing assets, improve system safety, and ensure long-term reliability. Operators must submit annual project lists and expenditure reports to the State Controller to remain eligible.
    - OCTA has been a key beneficiary of SB 1, which has provided funds for freeway improvements, arterial road upgrades, and enhancements to bus and rail services. These investments have allowed OCTA to advance many M2 priority projects that support regional mobility, sustainability, and equity goals.
    - To ensure public trust, SB 1 includes strict accountability measures, such as the requirement for project reporting, performance audits, and the constitutional protection of funds through voter-approved Proposition 69 (2018). Local agencies must also demonstrate that SB 1 funds are supplementing—not supplanting—existing transportation investments. Overall, SB 1 marked a transformational shift in California's approach to maintaining and modernizing its transportation system.
- SB 9 (Chapter 710, Statutes of 2015) – Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund: TIRCP.
    - Modified TIRCP to focus on transformative capital improvements, expanding funding eligibility for rail, bus, and ferry transit projects.
- SB 125 (Chapter 54, Statutes of 2023) – Transportation budget trailer bill.
    - A budget trailer bill that accompanied AB 102 (Chapter 38, Statutes of 2023), which appropriated $2 billion to the TIRCP and $410 million to the Zero-Emission Transit Capital Program, as part of a $5.1 billion transition funding package. OCTA was designated to receive $380 million. This bill established accountability measures for the funding created a Transit Transformation Task Force administered by the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) to make policy recommendations for future transit reforms.
- SB 508 (Chapter 716, Statutes of 2015) – Transportation funds: transit operators: pedestrian safety.
    - Modified performance metrics related to state funding for public transit and updated related provisions, specifically related to the Local Transportation Fund and fare box recovery ratio requirements.
- SB 824 (Chapter 479, Statutes of 2016) – LCTOP
    - Updated the statutory framework of LCTOP which allocates funding from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to support transit projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

This legislation clarified that LCTOP funds must be used to expand or improve services in ways that increase transit ridership and specified that these funds should not replace existing sources of operating funding.

- SB 942 (Chapter 988, Statutes of 2022) – LCTOP: free or reduced fare transit program.
    - Allowed California public transit agencies with the flexibility to utilize LCTOP funds for free- or reduced-fare transit programs on a continuous basis.

II. Managed Lanes and Mobility Pricing

Managed lanes and road pricing policies play an increasing role in California's approach to improving mobility, managing congestion, and supporting transportation system performance. This section includes legislation related to tolling, high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) and express lanes, and road usage charges.

- AB 194 (Chapter 687, Statutes of 2015) – High-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes.
    - Provided the CTC authority to authorize regional transportation agencies to develop and operate high-occupancy toll lanes and expanded the authority to include other toll facilities; added similar authority for the CTC to authorize Caltrans to develop toll facilities.
- AB 544 (Chapter 630, Statutes of 2017) – Vehicles: HOT lanes.
    - Extended the ability of qualifying low-emission and zero-emission vehicles to use HOV lanes with a special Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)-issued decal until federal authorization ends or 2025, while establishing eligibility rules based on income and prior rebates, and allowing toll benefits unless restricted by law.
- AB 2250 (Chapter 500, Statutes of 2014) – Toll facilities: revenues.
    - Requires any toll revenues generated from a locally administered managed lane on the state highway system to be expended only within the respective corridor in which the managed lane is located.
- AB 2594 (Chapter 969, Statutes of 2022) – Vehicle registration and toll charges.
    - Made changes to the administration of tolls for bridges, toll roads, and express lanes. Specifically, this legislation required toll agencies to provide payment plan options for low-income drivers, imposed limits on penalties and late fees for unpaid tolls, and required clearer notification procedures for toll violations.
- AB 2678 (Chapter 414, Statutes of 2024) – Vehicles: HOV lanes.
    - Extends until January 1, 2027, California's authorization for certain low-emission and zero-emission vehicles displaying valid DMV-issued decals to use HOV lanes regardless of vehicle occupancy, aligning with any future federal extensions beyond the current federal authorization expiration of September 30, 2025.
- AB 2949 (Chapter 8871, Statutes of 2022) – Vehicles: toll exemptions.
    - Exempts veterans' vehicles, including those with disabled veteran, Purple Heart, Medal of Honor, or Pearl Harbor Survivor plates, from paying tolls or related fines on toll roads, bridges, highways, and vehicular crossings.

- SB 339 (Chapter 308, Statutes of 2021) – Vehicles: road usage charge pilot program.
    - Extended the authority of CalSTA and related entities to conduct pilot projects exploring a road usage charge as an alternative to the per-gallon fuel tax. Building on the original pilot established under SB 1077 (Chapter 835, Statutes of 2014), this legislation authorized the development of new pilot studies, including those involving actual payment of simulated charges by participants.
- SB 957 (Chapter 367, Statutes of 2018) – Vehicles: HOV lanes.
    - Allowed low-income drivers to receive new HOV lane access decals for qualifying used clean vehicles.
- SB 1119 (Chapter 606, Statutes of 2018) – LCTOP.
    - Waived the requirement that transit agencies spend 50 percent of their LCTOP funds directly in disadvantaged communities if the funds are used for projects like zero-emission buses, fare subsidies, or expanded services that connect to those communities.

III. Transit

Strengthening and expanding public transit systems has remained a consistent legislative focus. Bills in this section address funding stability for transit, improve service coordination and accessibility, and enhance rider safety.

- AB 1351 (Chapter 627, Statutes of 2019) – Transit operators: paratransit and dial-a-ride services: assessment.
    - Required CalSTA, in coordination with public transit operators, to conduct a statewide assessment of how paratransit and dial-a-ride services accommodate individuals with disabilities who are certified by other transit agencies within the State.
- SB 434 (Chapter 396, Statutes of 2023) – Transit operators: street harassment survey.
    - Required transit operators to collect and publish data on street harassment to improve rider safety, with outreach to underrepresented and limited-English-proficient populations.
- SB 882 (Chapter 167, Statutes of 2016) – Crimes: public transportation: minors.
    - Prohibited minors from being charged with an infraction or misdemeanor for fare evasion on public transit systems.

IV. Passenger and Freight Rail

Passenger and freight rail remain vital components of California's multimodal transportation network. Legislation in this section focused on modernizing HSR, improving intercity rail connectivity, and increasing resilience to climate change impacts along major corridors like the LOSSAN Rail Corridor. These policies support long-term investment in efficient, low-emission rail systems to move people and goods reliably throughout the State.

- SB 677 (Chapter 407, Statutes of 2023) – Intercity rail: LOSSAN Rail Corridor.
    - Required the LOSSAN Rail Corridor Agency to include climate change impacts, resiliency projects, and funding strategies in its annual intercity rail business plan. This legislation directed the agency to assess vulnerabilities to climate-related threats such as sea-level rise,

coastal erosion, and extreme weather events along the corridor. It also required identification of potential resiliency projects and the funding approaches necessary to implement them.

- SB 742 (Chapter 652, Statutes of 2019) – Intercity passenger rail services: motor carrier transportation of passengers.
    - Expanded the scope of intercity bus services connected to rail. This legislation authorized Caltrans and joint powers authorities to contract for and fund motor-coach routes that link with intercity passenger rail systems, and, to sell tickets to riders who were not rail passengers. This lifted previous restrictions that limited these bus routes to rail travelers only.
- SB 1098 (Chapter 777, Statutes of 2024) – Passenger and freight rail: LOSSAN Rail Corridor.
    - Required CalSTA, in collaboration with the LOSSAN Rail Corridor Agency and other stakeholders, to prepare a comprehensive report detailing the infrastructure needs and funding requirements for modernizing the LOSSAN Rail Corridor. This legislation established a requirement for biennial reports beginning in 2027 to track progress and performance over time.
- SB 1225 (Chapter 802, Statutes of 2012) – Intercity rail agreements.
    - Authorizes Caltrans to enter into an Interagency Transfer Agreement to transfer the management/operation of intercity passenger rail service to a local joint powers authority in the LOSSAN Rail Corridor.

V. Transportation Planning and Project Delivery

To accelerate project delivery and improve cost-effectiveness, California has embraced innovative procurement methods such as design-build and progressive design-build. Legislation in this section expanded local and regional agency authority to use these approaches for a wider range of transportation projects, while also promoting accountability, transparency, and streamlined permitting for large infrastructure investments.

- AB 115 (Chapter 20, Statutes of 2017) – Transportation.
    - Implemented key statutory changes to carry out the 2017–18 state budget and support the rollout of SB 1, California's major transportation funding package. As part of this effort, it authorized transportation agencies to use alternative project delivery methods—including CM/GC authority—to speed up project completion.
- AB 400 (Chapter 201, Statutes of 2023) – Local agency design-build projects: authorization.
    - Expanded design-build authority to joint powers authorities constructing transit projects and extended the authorization through 2031.
- AB 401 (Chapter 586, Statutes of 2013) – Transportation: design-build: highways.
    - Provides the authority, until January 1, 2024, for regional transportation agencies to utilize design-build procurement for an unlimited number of projects on, or adjacent to, the state highway system, as well as expressways that are part of a local sales tax measures approved before January 1, 2014.

- AB 515 (Chapter 314, Statutes of 2017) – State Highway System Management Plan.
    - Required Caltrans to develop a comprehensive State Highway System Management Plan integrating rehabilitation and maintenance planning with regional agency input.
- AB 1282 (Chapter 643, Statutes of 2017) – Transportation Permitting Task Force.
    - Directed the Secretary of CalSTA to create a task force to make recommendations to improve coordination and certainty in permitting transportation projects, with a report submitted to the Legislature by December 1, 2019.
- AB 1475 (Chapter 289, Statutes of 2019) – CM/GC method: transportation projects.
    - Expanded the definition of construction manager and authorized use of the CM/GC project delivery method for additional local transportation projects.
- AB 1499 (Chapter 212, Statutes of 2021) – Transportation: design-build: highways.
    - Extended authorization for Caltrans and regional transportation agencies to use the design-build procurement method for transportation projects in California until January 1, 2034.
- AB 2086 (Chapter 629, Statutes of 2024) – Transportation funding: California Transportation Plan: public dashboard.
    - Required the California Transportation Plan to include a financial feasibility analysis and directed Caltrans to expand a public dashboard tracking project performance and funding impacts.
- SB 617 (Chapter 310, Statutes of 2023) – Public contracts: progressive design-build: local and regional agencies: transit.
    - Expanded authority for use of progressive design-build for major infrastructure projects.
- SB 706 (Chapter 500, Statutes of 2023) – Public contracts: progressive design-build: local agencies.
    - Allowed cities, counties, cities and counties, or special districts to use progressive design-build for major projects.

VI. Environmental and Regulatory Compliance

Ensuring infrastructure development aligns with California's environmental goals has led to numerous reforms in planning, permitting, and mitigation practices. This section includes legislation that strengthened CEQA streamlining sustainable transportation projects, prioritized climate adaptation, facilitated renewable energy and wildlife connectivity efforts, and updated emissions reduction strategies across sectors.

- AB 28 (Chapter 4, Statutes of 2017): Caltrans: environmental review process: federal pilot program.
    - AB 28 reinstated California's participation in a federal pilot program that allows the State to assume responsibility for conducting federal environmental reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Through this delegation, Caltrans was authorized to carry out NEPA reviews in place of the federal government (specifically the Federal Highway Administration), streamlining the environmental review process for transportation projects.

- AB 32 (Chapter 488, Statutes of 2006): Air pollution: greenhouse gases: California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006.
    - Required California Air Resources Board (CARB) to adopt regulations to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions levels to 1990 levels by 2020. Also included mechanisms such as mandatory emissions reporting, a market-based cap-and-trade program, and regulations promoting cleaner fuels and energy efficiency. AB 32 also directed CARB to develop a scoping plan to identify and implement cost-effective strategies for long-term emissions reductions.
- AB 252 (Chapter 160, Statutes of 2019) – Caltrans: environmental review process: federal program.
    - AB 252 extended indefinitely Caltrans' authority under the NEPA Assignment Program for state highway projects, maintaining the state's delegated role in performing NEPA reviews. This extension helped ensure continued efficiency in project delivery by allowing Caltrans to independently process federal environmental approvals without reverting to federal agency oversight. Original legislation was AB 1039 (Chapter 31, Statutes of 2006), which granted Caltrans a limited waiver through July 1, 2007. This waiver was subsequently extended by AB 892 (Chapter 482, Statutes of 2011), extending authority until January 1, 2017, and AB 28 (Chapter 4, Statutes of 2017) extended the sunset date until January 1, 2020, ensuring continuous NEPA assignment authority for highway projects.
- AB 2553 (Chapter 275, Statutes of 2024) – Housing development: major transit stops: vehicular traffic impact fees.
    - Expanded the definition of "major transit stop" to include additional forms of high-quality transit service, such as bus rapid transit and frequent bus routes, for the purposes of CEQA exemptions and impact fee eligibility. It also revised the standards under which local jurisdictions calculate and reduce vehicular traffic impact fees for housing projects located near transit. The goal is to promote infill housing and reduce reliance on car travel by encouraging development in transit-rich areas.
- SB 32 (Chapter 249, Statutes of 2016) – California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006: emissions limit.
    - Extended the parameters of AB 32 (Chapter 488, Statutes of 2006) and required CARB to ensure that statewide greenhouse gas emissions are reduced to at least 40 percent below the 1990 level by 2030.
- SB 145 (Chapter 57, Statutes of 2023) – Environmental mitigation: Caltrans.
    - Allows Caltrans to purchase and manage land or mitigation credits for environmental mitigation related to transportation projects, established streamlined procedures and funding mechanisms for long-term habitat maintenance, and exempted certain environmental purchases from standard contracting rules, all under a temporary authorization through 2033.
- SB 146 (Chapter 58, Statutes of 2023) – Public resources: infrastructure: contracting.
    - Extended California's authority to assume federal environmental review responsibilities for any railroad, local public transportation, or multimodal project under NEPA through 2033, and expanded this authority to local transportation agencies. It also permitted Caltrans to use job order contracting for certain maintenance and compliance work.

- SB 147 (Chapter 59, Statutes of 2023) – Fully protected species: California Endangered Species Act: authorized take.
    - Temporarily authorized the California DFW to issue permits allowing the incidental take of fully protected species for certain infrastructure and clean energy projects under strict conditions. Also required population assessments for annual reporting and removed three species from the fully protected species list, all of which is effective until December 31, 2033.
- SB 149 (Chapter 60, Statutes of 2023) – CEQA: administrative and judicial procedures: record of proceedings: judicial streamlining.
    - SB 149 expanded the definition of Environmental Leadership Development Projects under CEQA to include major infrastructure and climate-related projects, extended certification and approval deadlines to 2032 and 2034, strengthened environmental and equity requirements for applicants, and streamlined judicial review by limiting CEQA record content and expediting court procedures.
- SB 150 (Chapter 61, Statutes of 2023) – Construction: workforce development: public contracts.
    - Required Caltrans to partner with the California Workforce Development Board to support high-road construction careers, limited state agencies after January 1, 2026 from entering into project labor agreements over $35 million unless they include community benefit provisions, and directed state agencies to convene stakeholders to develop contract terms maximizing benefits to disadvantaged communities, with recommendations that were due by March 30, 2024.
- SB 288 (Chapter 200, Statutes of 2020) and SB 922 (Chapter 987, Statutes of 2022): CEQA: exemptions: transportation-related projects.
    - SB 288 expanded CEQA exemptions to support the implementation of sustainable transportation projects. It provided streamlined environmental review for a broad range of transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and zero-emission bus infrastructure projects. Notably, SB 288 also extended the CEQA exemption for bicycle transportation plans through 2030, facilitating quicker delivery of these environmentally beneficial projects.
    - SB 922 built upon the foundation established by SB 288 by refining and broadening the scope of the exemptions. It eliminated the requirement that a bicycle transportation plan must be limited to an urbanized area, allowing greater flexibility in plan eligibility. Additionally, SB 922 expanded the exemption to include active transportation plans and pedestrian plans, further supporting statewide goals for increased mobility, public health, and emissions reduction.
- SB 375 (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008) – Transportation planning: travel demand models: sustainable communities strategy: environmental review.
    - Requires regional transportation plans to include a sustainable communities strategy designed to achieve regional greenhouse gas emission reduction targets per AB 32 through coordination between transportation, land use, and housing planning. Projects specifically listed in a local sales tax measure for transportation projects approved prior to December 31, 2008, are excluded. In addition, nothing is to require a transportation authority with a locally approved sales tax measure adopted prior to December 31, 2010,

from changing the funding allocations for categories of transportation projects approved by voters.

- SB 734 (Chapter 210, Statutes of 2016) – Environmental quality: Jobs and Economic Improvement Through Environmental Leadership Act of 2011.
    - Extended the Governor's authority to certify environmental leadership projects for CEQA streamlining and added labor and parking provisions. These certifications enable qualifying projects to benefit from expedited judicial review, helping to reduce delays in the development of large-scale, sustainable infrastructure and transit-oriented developments. The added provisions also encourage labor compliance and promote transportation efficiency by addressing parking impacts.
- SB 743 (Chapter 386, Statutes of 2013) – Environmental quality: transit-oriented infill projects, judicial review streamlining for environmental leadership development projects, and entertainment and sports center in the City of Sacramento.
    - Required the Office of Planning and Research to propose revisions to CEQA guidelines to establish new, non-level of service criteria for determining transportation impacts of projects within "transit priority areas," potentially expanding criteria to other areas. Potential metrics include vehicle miles traveled, vehicle miles traveled per capita, etc.

VII. Workforce and Labor Policies

Recognizing that infrastructure investments must be matched with a trained and protected workforce, legislation in this section expanded labor protections, improved workforce development pipelines, and provided emergency worker benefits during public health crises. These measures supported equitable labor practices, union engagement, and sustainable careers in construction, transit, and public service.

- AB 5 (Chapter 296, Statutes of 2019) – Worker status: employees and independent contractors.
    - Codified the "ABC test" for determining worker classification under state labor, unemployment, and wage laws, establishing that most workers are presumed to be employees unless specific conditions are met, while providing exemptions for certain occupations.
- AB 96 (Chapter 419, Statutes of 2023) – Public employment: local public transit agencies: autonomous transit vehicle technology.
    - Required transit agencies to notify and bargain with employee unions before adopting autonomous transit vehicle technology that could impact jobs.
- AB 1484 (Chapter 691, Statutes of 2023) – Temporary public employees.
    - Mandated inclusion of temporary public employees in bargaining units upon request.
- AB 1912 (Chapter 909, Statutes of 2018) – Public employees' retirement: joint powers agreements: liability.
    - Required member agencies of joint powers authorities jointly liable for public retirement obligations and established procedures for apportioning and enforcing liability.

- SB 95 (Chapter 13, Statutes of 2021) – Employment: COVID-19: supplemental paid sick leave.
    - Required employers to provide supplemental paid sick leave for COVID-19-related absences and extended protections to in-home supportive service providers.
- SB 866 (Chapter 53, Statutes of 2018) – Employment.
    - Expanded labor rights and payroll deduction processes for public employees, enhanced protections for union membership, and established new workforce development and prison-to-employment programs.
- SB 1159 (Chapter 85, Statutes of 2020) – Workers' compensation: COVID-19: critical workers.
    - Established a presumption of workers' compensation eligibility for employees who contract COVID-19 under specified conditions, including outbreak-related exposures.

IX. Conclusion

The legislative landscape significantly influenced the scope, timeline, and cost of M2 projects. While funding-related bills created opportunities for additional revenue, regulatory and environmental mandates introduced compliance challenges. By proactively adapting to these legislative changes, OCTA ensured the efficient and timely delivery of transportation improvements, meeting the commitments made to voters under M2.

9.2.2 Federal Legislation

Since 2015, several major federal legislative measures have been enacted that impact transportation funding, infrastructure investment, economic stimulus, and supply chain stability—all of which play a role in OCTA's ability to deliver M2 projects and programs. Federal legislation can directly impact OCTA's ability to secure grants, fund major capital improvements, and maintain essential transit services by shaping funding availability, regulatory requirements, and economic conditions. Below is an overview of key federal acts and how they influence OCTA's work:

- ***Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act*** – Enacted in 2015, the FAST Act provided long-term funding certainty for surface transportation infrastructure, supporting highway and transit projects through formula-based allocations. It helped stabilize funding for ongoing M2 projects and enhanced OCTA's ability to plan and execute long-term capital investments. The FAST Act expired on September 30, 2020, but was extended through September 30, 2021, followed by a series of short extensions through December 3, 2021.
- ***Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) of 2017*** – While primarily a tax reform bill, TCJA influenced infrastructure financing by altering tax-exempt bond structures, a key funding mechanism for transportation projects. Changes to private activity bonds and tax-exempt advance refunding bonds impacted how transportation agencies finance large-scale projects, potentially affecting long-term borrowing costs for M2-funded improvements.
- ***CARES Act, 2021*** – This omnibus spending bill provided emergency COVID-19 relief, including funding for public transit through the FTA. The additional federal support helped transit agencies, including OCTA, maintain operations despite ridership declines during the pandemic. This funding helped sustain bus services and rail operations without severe cuts, ensuring M2 projects and transit operations could continue moving forward.

- ***Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) of 2021*** – CRRSAA provided nearly $14 billion in supplemental transit funding nationwide through the FTA to address ongoing COVID-19 impacts. For OCTA, this relief supported operating expenses, including employee salaries, personal protective equipment, and sanitization efforts. The funding helped preserve essential transit services, stabilize operations during fluctuating ridership, and offset revenue shortfalls—bolstering OCTA's ability to sustain M2 commitments amid the pandemic.
- ***American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021*** – ARPA injected billions into public transit agencies nationwide, including direct assistance for operating costs, worker protection, and pandemic recovery efforts. OCTA benefited from this federal relief, allowing for the continuation of essential transit services while also preventing workforce reductions that could have slowed the progress of M2 projects.
- ***Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) of 2021*** – The IIJA represents a historic investment in U.S. infrastructure. It expanded federal funding for highways, bridges, and public transit, offering OCTA opportunities to pursue additional grant funding and accelerate delivery of M2 projects, particularly those related to bus and rail expansion, active transportation, and safety improvements. The IIJA expires on September 30, 2026.
- ***Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022*** – The IRA directed substantial federal investments toward clean energy, climate resilience, and greenhouse gas reduction, with new funding opportunities for transportation electrification and emissions reduction programs. For OCTA, the IRA presents potential funding avenues for zero-emission bus deployment, charging infrastructure, and sustainability initiatives aligned with long-term environmental goals. While not directly focused on surface transportation, the IRA's incentives may complement M2's sustainability objectives and support innovative transit strategies in Orange County.
- ***Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023*** – This legislation included provisions to address the federal debt ceiling and federal spending limits. While it provided short-term stability in government funding, it also created budget constraints that may impact future discretionary transportation grants and transit funding. OCTA relies on federal matching funds and discretionary grants to advance M2 projects, and funding limitations at the federal level could pose challenges in securing competitive grants for major infrastructure improvements.

9.3 Appendix C: Maps

Figure 9-1: Orange County Population Density, 2011

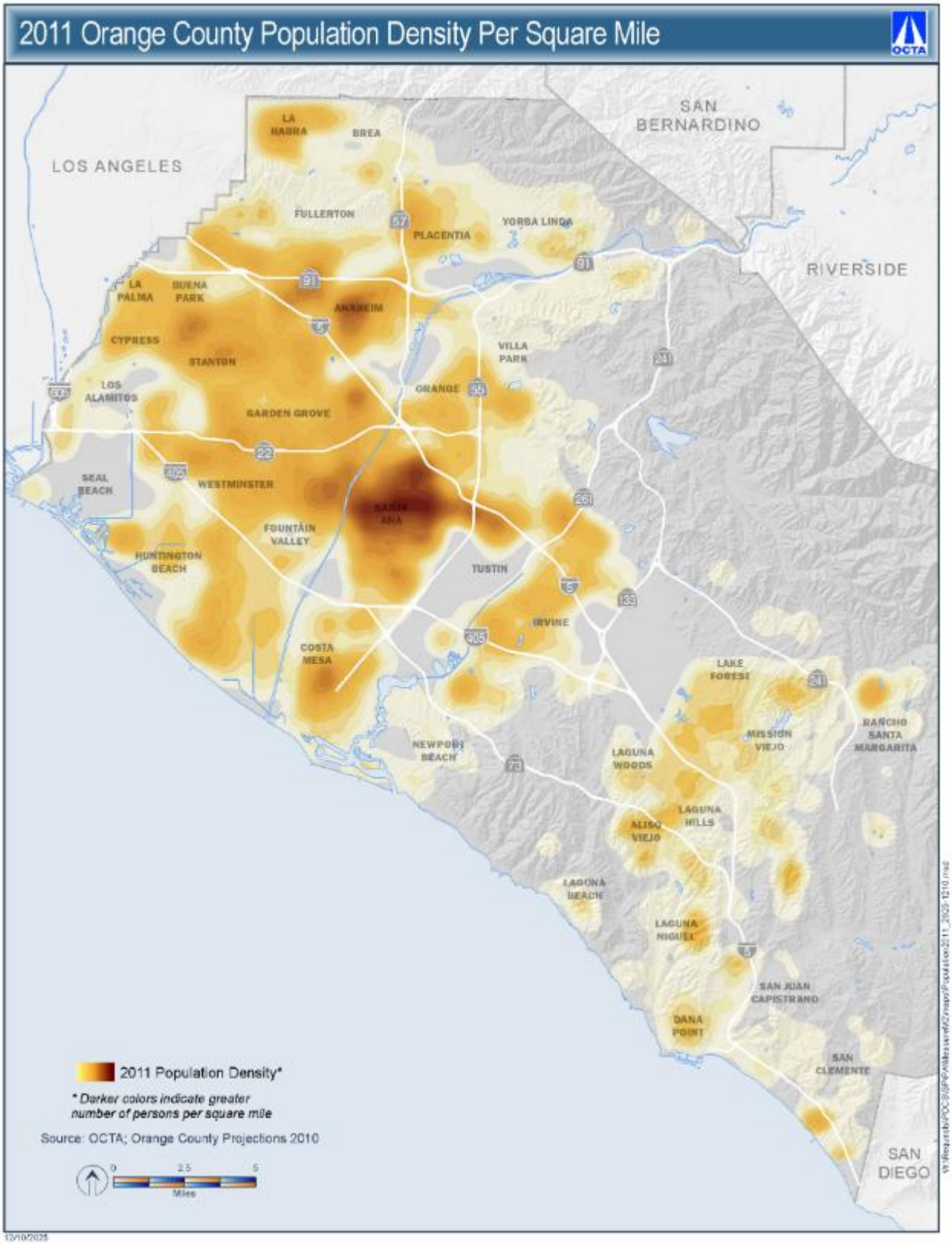


Figure 9-2: Orange County Housing Density, 2011

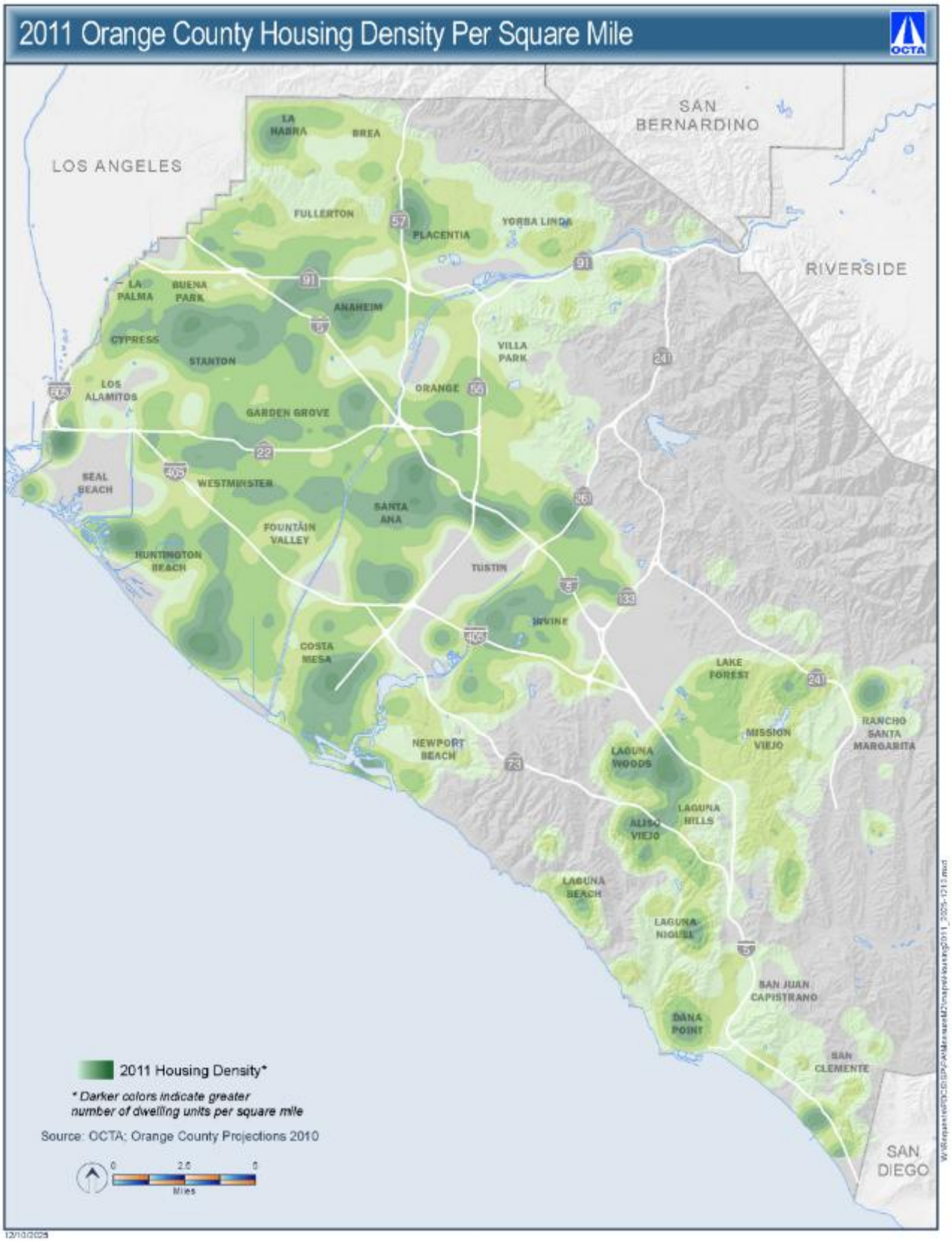
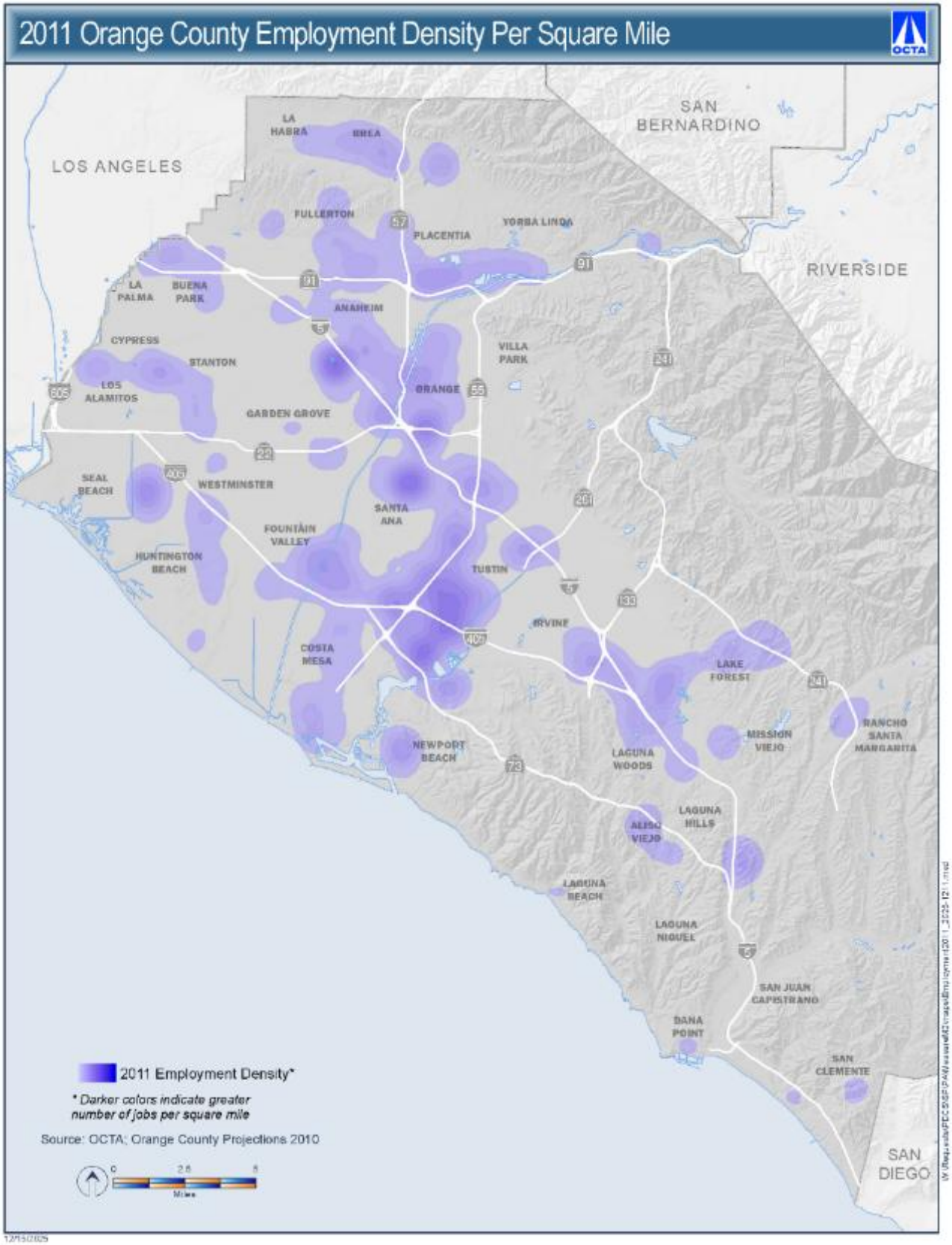


Figure 9-3: Orange County Employment Density, 2011



9.4 Appendix D: M2 Project/Program Progress and Constraints

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
Freeways			
Project A Santa Ana Freeway (I-5) Improvements Between Costa Mesa Freeway (SR-55) and "Orange Crush" Area (SR-57)	Reduce freeway congestion through improvements at the SR-55/I-5 Interchange area between the Fourth Street and Newport Boulevard ramps on I-5, and between Fourth Street and Edinger Avenue on SR-55. Also, add capacity on I-5 between SR-55 and SR-57 to relieve congestion at the Orange Crush.	This project added a second HOV lane (approximately three miles) in both directions along I-5 between SR-55 and SR-57 in the City of Santa Ana. While the M2 Ordinance originally referenced improvements between Fourth Street and Edinger Avenue, these elements were not advanced as part of this project due to lack of support and consensus among Caltrans and local jurisdictions. As a result, improvements within this segment were excluded from Project A and, where applicable, addressed through other projects, including Project F.	The final Environmental Document (ED) and Project Report (PR) were approved on April 27, 2015. Improvements opened to traffic on August 24, 2020. Construction completed on January 6, 2021, and plant establishment was completed in May 2021.
Project B Santa Ana Freeway (I-5) Improvements from the Costa Mesa Freeway (SR-55) to the El Toro "Y" Area	Build new lanes and improve the interchanges in the area between SR-55 and the State Route 133 (SR-133) (near the El Toro "Y"). This segment of I-5 is the major route serving activity areas in the cities of Irvine, Tustin, Santa Ana and north Orange County. The project will also make improvements at local interchanges, such as Jamboree Road.	*I-5, I-405 to Yale Avenue*	
		This project will add an additional general purpose lane (approximately 4.5 miles) in both directions of I-5 between I-405 and Yale Avenue, improve interchanges, and replace and add new auxiliary lanes in the City of Irvine.	The final ED and PR were approved on January 7, 2020. The project was advertised for construction on August 18, 2025. Construction bids were opened on November 18, 2025. The project is anticipated to be awarded and approved by Caltrans in early 2026 to begin construction in April 2026.
		I-5, Yale Avenue to SR-55	
		This project will add an additional general purpose lane (approximately 4.5 miles) in both directions of I-5 between Yale Avenue and SR-55, improve interchanges, and replace and add new auxiliary lanes in the cities of Irvine and Tustin.	The final ED and PR were approved on January 7, 2020. The project was advertised for construction on August 11, 2025. Construction bids were opened on October 21, 2025, construction contract was awarded on November 12, 2025, and construction began on December 10, 2025.
Project C/D San Diego Freeway (I-5)	Add new lanes to I-5 from the vicinity of the El Toro Interchange in the City of Lake Forest to the vicinity of SR-73 in the City of Mission Viejo. Also add new lanes	*I-5, Avenida Pico to Avenida Vista Hermosa/Avenida Pico Interchange (D)*	
		This project added a carpool lane (approximately 0.7 miles) in both directions of I-5 between	The final ED and PR were approved on October 26, 2011. Construction began on

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
Improvements south of the El Toro "Y"	on I-5 between PCH and Avenida Pico interchanges to reduce freeway congestion in the City of San Clemente. The project will also make major improvements at local interchanges as listed in Project D.	Avenida Pico and Avenida Vista Hermosa in the City of San Clemente, included major improvements through reconstruction of the Avenida Pico Interchange (part of Project D), and added bicycle lanes in both directions on Avenida Pico.	December 22, 2014, and completed on August 23, 2018. Plant establishment was completed in January 2021.
		I-5, Avenida Vista Hermosa to PCH	
		This project added a carpool lane (approximately 2.5 miles) in both directions of I-5 between Avenida Vista Hermosa and PCH in the City of San Clemente and reconstructed on- and off-ramps at Avenida Vista Hermosa and Camino de Estrella.	The final ED and PR were approved on October 26, 2011. Construction began on July 3, 2014, and was officially completed on July 31, 2017. Plant establishment was completed in May 2018.
		I-5, PCH to San Juan Creek Road	
		This project added a carpool lane (approximately 2.5 miles) in both directions of I-5 between PCH and San Juan Creek Road in the cities of Dana Point, San Clemente, and San Juan Capistrano and reconstructed the on- and off-ramps at PCH/ Camino Las Ramblas.	The final ED and PR were approved on October 26, 2011. Construction began on December 20, 2013, and was officially completed on July 3, 2018. Plant establishment was completed in March 2019.
		I-5, SR-73 to Oso Parkway/Avery Parkway Interchange (D)	
		This project added a general purpose lane (approximately 2.2 miles) in both directions of I-5 between Avery Parkway and Oso Parkway and reconstructed the Avery Parkway Interchange (part of Project D) in the cities of Laguna Hills, Laguna Niguel, and Mission Viejo.	The final ED and PR for all three segments were approved on May 6, 2014. Construction began on January 15, 2020, and was officially completed on July 30, 2025. The landscaping for this project is being delivered through a separate contract. See I-5, SR-73 to El Toro Road Interchange Project.
		I-5, Oso Parkway to Alicia Parkway/La Paz Road Interchange (D)	
		This project added a general purpose lane (approximately 2.6 miles) in both directions along I-5 between Oso Parkway and Alicia Parkway and reconstructed the La Paz Road Interchange	The final ED and PR for all three segments were approved on May 6, 2014. Construction began on April 4, 2019, and was officially completed on December 19, 2024.

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
		(part of Project D) in the cities of Laguna Hills and Mission Viejo.	The landscaping for this project is being delivered through a separate contract. See I-5, SR-73 to El Toro Road Interchange Project.
		I-5, Alicia Parkway to El Toro Road	
		This project added a general purpose lane in the southbound direction (approximately 1.7 miles) and extended the second HOV lane (approximately one mile) in both directions along I-5 between Alicia Parkway to El Toro Road in the cities of Laguna Hills, Laguna Woods, Lake Forest, and Mission Viejo.	The final ED and PR for all three segments were approved on May 6, 2014. Construction began on October 13, 2020, and was officially completed on July 9, 2025. The landscaping for this project is being delivered through a separate contract. See I-5, SR-73 to El Toro Road Interchange Project.
		I-5, SR-73 to El Toro Road Landscape	
		Landscaping for the I-5 between SR-73 and the El Toro Road project was separated from the mainline construction contracts.	The landscaping portion for all three segments began in June 2025 and is anticipated to be completed in December 2026.
Project D Santa Ana Freeway / San Diego Freeway (I-5) Local Interchange Upgrades (see also Project C)	Update and improve key I-5 interchanges such as Avenida Pico, Ortega Highway, Avery Parkway, La Paz Road, El Toro Road, and others to relieve street congestion around older interchanges and on-ramps.	*I-5, Ortega Highway Interchange*	
		This project widened and reconstructed the SR-74 Ortega Highway bridge over I-5 and improved local traffic flow along SR-74 and Del Obispo Street in the City of San Juan Capistrano.	The final ED and PR were approved on June 1, 2009. Construction began on September 18, 2012, and all lanes on the new bridge opened to traffic on September 4, 2015. Construction was completed on January 15, 2016, and landscaping was completed in August 2019.
		I-5, El Toro Road Interchange	
		This project would improve the I-5/El Toro Road interchange by modifying entrance and exit ramps and modifying or replacing existing bridge structures to reduce congestion and improve traffic operations at the interchange and nearby intersections.	The project is currently in the environmental phase, which began in April 2017. The environmental process was restarted in January 2023 to incorporate feedback from the cities of Laguna Hills, Laguna Woods, and Lake Forest after additional alternatives were identified. OCTA and Caltrans continue coordinating with the three cities on proposed

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
			alternatives, preliminary design, and environmental studies. Draft cost estimates for ROW and construction have been prepared, and the environmental phase is anticipated to be completed in late 2026.
Project E Garden Grove Freeway (SR-22) Access Improvements	Construct interchange improvements at Euclid Street, Brookhurst Street, and Harbor Boulevard to reduce freeway and street congestion near these interchanges.	This project made improvements at three key SR-22 interchanges (Brookhurst Street, Euclid Street, and Harbor Boulevard) in the City of Garden Grove to reduce freeway and street congestion.	This project was completed early in 2008 as a "bonus project" provided by the original M1.
Project F Costa Mesa Freeway (SR-55) Improvements	Add new lanes to SR-55 between Garden Grove Freeway (SR-22) and the San Diego Freeway (I-405), generally within existing ROW, including merging lanes between interchanges to smooth traffic flow. This project also provides for freeway operational improvements for the portion of SR-55 between SR-91 and SR-22.	*SR-55, I-405 to I-5*	
		This project will add a general purpose lane (approximately four miles) and a second HOV lane (approximately four miles) in both directions between I-405 and I-5 in the cities of Irvine, Santa Ana, and Tustin. Auxiliary lanes will be added and extended in some segments within the project limits.	The final ED and PR were approved on August 31, 2017. Construction began on August 10, 2022 and is anticipated to be completed in 2027.
		SR-55, I-5 to SR-91	
		This project includes the addition of a general purpose lane (approximately two miles) in both directions between I-5 and SR-22 and operational improvements between SR-22 and SR-91 in the cities of Anaheim, Orange, Santa Ana, and Tustin. The project limits span approximately 7.5 miles.	The final ED and PR were approved on March 30, 2020. The design of this project was initiated on August 8, 2022, and is anticipated to be completed in 2030.
Project G Orange Freeway (SR-57) Improvements	Build a new northbound lane between Orangewood Avenue and Lambert Road. Other projects include improvements to the Lambert interchange and the addition of a northbound truck climbing lane between Lambert Road and Tonner Canyon Road. The improvements will be designed and coordinated	*SR-57 Northbound, Orangewood Avenue to Katella Avenue*	
		This project will add a new northbound general purpose lane (approximately one mile) on SR-57 from Orangewood Avenue to Katella Avenue in the cities of Anaheim and Orange. The new northbound general purpose lane will join the completed Project G segments between Katella Avenue and Lambert Road, which opened to traffic in 2014.	The final ED and PR were approved on March 29, 2019. The project was advertised for construction on July 7, 2025, bids were opened on September 4, 2025, and the contract was awarded on September 26, 2025. Construction began on October 13, 2025 and is anticipated to be completed in 2028.

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
	specifically to reduce congestion at SR-57/SR-91 interchange.	*SR-57 Northbound, Katella Avenue to Lincoln Avenue*	
		This project increased capacity by adding a new general purpose lane (approximately 2.8 miles) and improved on- and off-ramps and soundwalls on northbound SR-57 between Katella Avenue and Lincoln Avenue in the City of Anaheim. Bridges at Katella Avenue and Douglas Road were also widened in the northbound direction.	The final ED was approved on September 30, 2009, and the final PR was approved on November 25, 2009. Construction began on November 17, 2011, and the improvements opened to traffic on November 19, 2014. The project reached completion on April 21, 2015, followed by landscape construction on June 1, 2018, and plant establishment in June 2021.
		SR-57 Northbound, Orangethorpe Avenue to Yorba Linda Boulevard	
		This project increased capacity by adding a northbound general purpose lane (approximately 2.4 miles) between Orangethorpe Avenue in the City of Placentia to Yorba Linda Boulevard in the City of Fullerton and improved operations with the reconstruction of northbound on- and off-ramps, widening of seven bridges, and the addition of soundwalls.	The final ED and PR were approved on November 30, 2007. Construction began on October 26, 2010, and the improvements opened to traffic on April 28, 2014. Plant establishment was completed in July 2022.
		SR-57 Northbound, Yorba Linda Boulevard to Lambert Road	
		This project improved capacity, operations, and traffic flow on SR-57 with the addition of a new northbound general purpose lane (approximately 2.5 miles) between Yorba Linda Boulevard in the City of Fullerton and Lambert Road in the City of Brea. Additional project benefits included on- and off-ramp improvements, the widening and seismic retrofit (as required) of six bridges in the northbound direction, and the addition of soundwalls. Existing lanes and shoulders were also widened to standard widths, enhancing safety for motorists.	The final ED and PR were approved on November 30, 2007. Construction began on November 2, 2010, and the improvements opened to traffic on September 23, 2013. The project was officially completed on May 2, 2014. Plant establishment was completed in July 2022.
		SR-57 Northbound, Lambert Road to Orange/Los Angeles County Line	

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
		This project proposes to improve capacity and operations on northbound SR-57 between Lambert Road in the City of Brea and the Orange/ Los Angeles County Line (approximately two miles). Improvements under study include the potential addition of a northbound general purpose or truck-climbing lane, as well as associated operational and safety enhancements within the corridor. The project builds upon the completed interchange improvements at Lambert Road, which were delivered as an initial phase through SB 1 Trade Corridor Enhancement Program funding. The current effort focuses on evaluating mainline improvements to address congestion, improve freight mobility, and enhance overall corridor performance in coordination with Caltrans and regional partners.	Project initiation is complete and the environmental phase is underway. Preparation of a new Project Study Report–Project Development Support (PSR-PDS) document began in August 2023 to reassess prior concepts and reflect current corridor conditions. Caltrans approved the final PSR-PDS in October 2025 and is leading the environmental phase, which commenced on November 25, 2025. Completion of the environmental phase is anticipated in 2028, after which the project will be positioned for future advancement, subject to funding availability and continued coordination with project partners. Plant establishment was completed in February 2018.
Project H Riverside Freeway (SR-91) Improvements from the Santa Ana Freeway (I-5) to the Orange Freeway (SR-57)	Add capacity in the westbound direction and provide operational improvements at on and off ramps to the SR-91 between I-5 and the Orange Freeway (SR-57), generally within existing ROW, to smooth traffic flow and relieve the SR-57/SR-91 interchange.	This project increased capacity by adding a general purpose lane (approximately 4.5 miles) in the westbound direction between the cities of Anaheim and Fullerton and provided operational improvements at on- and off-ramps between Brookhurst Street and State College Boulevard.	The final ED was approved on May 20, 2010, and the final PR was approved on June 16, 2010. Construction began on February 6, 2013, and the improvements opened to traffic on March 7, 2016. The project was officially completed on June 23, 2016. A separate landscape project was completed in November 2017, and plant establishment was completed in November 2020.
Project I Riverside Freeway (SR-91) Improvements from Orange Freeway (SR-57) to the Costa Mesa Freeway (SR-55) Interchange Area	Improve the SR-91/SR-55 to SR-91/ SR-57 interchange complex, including nearby local interchanges such as Tustin Avenue and Lakeview, as well as adding freeway capacity between SR-55 and SR-57.	*SR-91, SR-55 to Tustin Avenue Interchange*	
		This project improved traffic flow at the SR-55/SR-91 interchange by adding a westbound auxiliary lane (approximately two miles) beginning at northbound SR-55 to the westbound SR-91 connector through the Tustin Avenue interchange in the City of Anaheim. The project reduced weaving congestion in the area and included reconstruction of the westbound side of the Santa Ana River Bridge to accommodate the additional lane.	The final ED was approved on May 11, 2011, and the final PR was approved on May 19, 2011. Construction began on November 1, 2013, and the improvements opened to traffic on May 14, 2016. The project was officially completed on July 15, 2016. Plant establishment was completed in July 2017.

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
		SR-91, SR-55 to Lakeview Avenue	
		This project will provide westbound operational improvements (approximately 2.2 miles), which includes the realignment of the existing westbound SR-91 on- and off-ramps, the addition of a new on-ramp from the Lakeview Avenue overcrossing bridge to connect directly to southbound SR-55, and construction of a barrier to separate westbound SR-91 from SR-55. With the proposed improvements, the existing Lakeview Avenue overcrossing bridge is anticipated to be replaced with a new bridge.	The final ED and PR were approved on June 22, 2020. This project was combined with the Caltrans multi-asset project during the design phase. Construction activities began on April 8, 2025, and are anticipated to be completed in 2028.
		SR-91, La Palma Avenue to SR-55	
		This project will provide an additional eastbound general purpose lane (approximately 2.7 miles), replace the eastbound shoulder, and restore auxiliary lanes as needed throughout the project limits. With the proposed improvements, the existing Kraemer Boulevard and Tustin Avenue overcrossing bridges are anticipated to be replaced with new bridges and the Santa Ana River bridge will be widened.	The final ED and PR were approved on June 22, 2020, and design is substantially complete. The project is preparing for advertisement, with construction is anticipated to begin in late 2026. However, risks identified during the ROW certification phase may affect the construction schedule. Caltrans Headquarters has not approved ROW certification due to unresolved coordination issues, including access and maintenance agreements with the Orange County Flood Control District. In addition, extended Caltrans Office Engineer review timelines delayed final design completion through late 2025.
		SR-91, Acacia Street to La Palma Avenue	
		This project will provide westbound operational improvements (approximately 1.8 miles) by adding a fourth general purpose lane along westbound SR-91 from the northbound SR-57 to the westbound SR-91 connector, extending the southbound SR-57 to westbound SR-91 connector auxiliary lane through the State College Boulevard Interchange, tying into the existing westbound SR-91 auxiliary lane west of	The final ED and PR were approved on June 22, 2020. This project was combined with the Caltrans multi-asset project during the design phase. The project was advertised for construction on May 12, 2025, and bids were opened on August 12, 2025. The contract was awarded on October 20, 2025, and approved on December 1, 2025. Pre-construction

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
		State College Boulevard, and reconfiguring the westbound SR-91 to SR-57 connector to provide dedicated exits to SR-57. With the proposed improvements, the existing La Palma Avenue overcrossing bridge will be replaced with a new bridge.	activities began in December 2025, and construction is anticipated to be completed in 2030.
Project J Riverside Freeway (SR-91) Improvements from Costa Mesa Freeway (SR-55) to the Orange/ Riverside County Line	This project adds capacity on SR-91 beginning at SR-55 and extending to Interstate 15 (I-15) in Riverside County. The first priority will be to improve the segment of SR-91 east of SR-241. The goal is to provide up to four new lanes of capacity between SR-241 and Riverside County Line by making best use of available freeway property, adding reversible lanes, building elevated sections and improving connections to SR-241. These projects would be constructed in conjunction with similar coordinated improvements in Riverside County extending to I-15 and provide a continuous set of improvements between SR-241 and I-15. The portion of improvements in Riverside County will be paid for from other sources. This project also includes improvements to the segment of SR-91 between SR-241 and SR-55. The concept is to generally add one new lane in each direction and improve the interchanges.	*SR-91, SR-55 to SR-241*	
		This project added a general purpose lane (approximately six miles) in both directions of SR-91 between SR-55 and SR-241 in the cities of Anaheim and Yorba Linda. In addition to adding 12 lane miles to SR-91, the project also delivered a second eastbound exit lane at Lakeview Avenue, Imperial Highway, and Yorba Linda Boulevard/Weir Canyon Road off-ramps. Beyond these capital improvements, crews completed work on safety barriers, lane striping, and soundwalls.	The final ED and PR were approved on April 24, 2009. Construction began on May 27, 2011, and opened to traffic in December 2012. The project was officially completed on March 5, 2013. Plant establishment was completed in February 2018.
		SR-91 Eastbound, SR-241 to SR-71	
		This project improved mobility and operations by adding an eastbound lane (approximately six miles) through a key stretch of SR-91 between Orange County's SR-241 and Riverside County's SR-71, widened existing eastbound lanes and shoulders, and reduced traffic weaving as a result of traffic exiting at SR-71 and Green River Road.	The final ED and PR were approved on December 28, 2007. Construction began on September 16, 2009, and the improvements opened to traffic on December 2, 2010. The project was officially completed on January 31, 2011, with plant establishment was completed in May 2011. Because this project was shovel-ready, OCTA was able to obtain ARRA funding for this M2 project, saving M2 revenues for future projects.
		SR-91, SR-241 to Orange/Riverside County Line	
		This project improves mobility and operations along SR-91 between SR-241 and the Orange/ Riverside County line through a combination of coordinated improvements with the RCTC. The ultimate project includes adding a general purpose lane in each direction between SR-241 and SR-71 to	A portion of the project—the 91 Westbound Corridor Operation Project—began construction in November 2020 and was completed in January 2022. For the remaining improvements, OCTA and RCTC completed a feasibility study in April 2022 to evaluate options for

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
		address congestion and improve corridor continuity across county lines. Initial improvements have already been delivered through the 91 Westbound Corridor Operation Project (approximately two miles), which added a westbound general purpose lane between Green River Road and SR-241. Future improvements focus on eastbound capacity enhancements and operational improvements within the corridor, including potential lane additions and associated improvements to accommodate projected travel demand.	implementing the additional general purpose lane while minimizing environmental and construction impacts. RCTC is leading the environmental phase for the Eastbound Corridor Operation Project, which began in June 2023 and is anticipated to be completed by mid-2026. Preliminary engineering, environmental technical studies, and a Supplemental Project Report are underway. RCTC released a request for qualifications for a progressive design-build contract on November 13, 2025, with proposals due January 21, 2026. Project delivery requires ongoing coordination between OCTA and RCTC, as improvements span county boundaries and must be implemented jointly to ensure seamless operations. Risks to schedule, scope, and cost are dependent on this interagency coordination. In addition, engineering challenges related to corridor topography within the Santa Ana Canyon and environmental constraints associated with the Santa Ana River may affect design complexity, environmental clearance, and overall delivery timing.
Project K San Diego Freeway (I-405) Improvements between the I-605 Freeway in Los Alamitos area and Costa Mesa Freeway (SR-55)	Add new lanes to the San Diego Freeway between I-605 and SR-55, generally within the existing ROW. The project will make best use of available freeway property, update interchanges and widen all local overcrossings according to city and regional master plans. The improvements will be coordinated with other planned I-405 improvements in the I-405/SR-22/I-605 interchange area to the north and I-405/SR-73 improvements to the south. The improvements will adhere to	This project added a general purpose lane (approximately 16 miles) between Euclid Street and I-605 in both directions and a second HOV lane (approximately 14 miles) combined with the existing HOV lane to provide dual express lanes in both directions of I-405 from SR-73 to I-605, otherwise known as the 405 Express Lanes. Additional improvements included reconstruction of local interchanges and enhancements to freeway entrances and exits along the corridor from SR-73 to I-605 through the cities of Costa Mesa, Fountain Valley, Garden Grove, Huntington Beach, Los Alamitos, Seal Beach, and Westminster. Note, the general	The final ED and PR were approved on June 15, 2015. Construction activities began on January 31, 2017, and the project fully opened to traffic on December 1, 2023. Final acceptance and relief of maintenance is expected in 2026.

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
	recommendations of the Interstate 405 Major Investment Study (as adopted by the Board on October 14, 2005) and will be developed in cooperation with local jurisdictions and affected communities.	purpose lane portion of the project is an M2 project and was funded by a combination of local, state, and federal funds. The express lanes portion of the project was financed and will be paid for by those who choose to pay a toll and use the 405 Express Lanes.	
Project L San Diego Freeway (I-405) Improvements between Costa Mesa Freeway (SR-55) and Santa Ana Freeway (I-5)	Add new lanes to the freeway from SR-55 to the I-5. The project will also improve chokepoints at interchanges and add merging lanes near on- and off- ramps such as Lake Forest Drive, Irvine Center Drive and SR-133 to improve the overall freeway operations in the I-405/I-5 El Toro "Y" area.	This project studied potential improvements along approximately 8.5 miles of I-405 between I-5 and SR-55 in the City of Irvine. The project development team reviewed the alternatives and public comments received during public circulation, and as a result of the effort, recommended adding one general purpose lane in both directions.	The final ED and PR were approved on August 31, 2018. The design phase is anticipated to begin in 2030.
Project M I-605 Freeway Access Improvements	Improve freeway access and arterial connection to I-605 serving the communities of Los Alamitos and Cypress. The project will be coordinated with other planned improvements along SR-22 and I-405.	This project will make enhancements to the on- and off-ramps and operational improvements on Katella Avenue at the I-605 Interchange in the City of Los Alamitos. In addition, pedestrian and bicycle improvements will incorporate complete streets components, including enhanced safety for all modes of travel.	The final ED and PR were approved on October 3, 2018. The project was awarded and construction activities began on April 3, 2025. Construction is anticipated to be completed in 2027.
Project N FSP	The FSP provides competitively bid, privately contracted tow truck service for motorists with disabled vehicles on the freeway system. This service helps stranded motorists and quickly clears disabled vehicles out of the freeway lanes to minimize congestion caused by vehicles blocking traffic and passing motorists rubbernecking.	The FSP assists motorists whose vehicles become disabled along Orange County freeways and removes congestion-causing debris from traffic lanes to reduce freeway congestion and collisions.	In June 2012, M2 began supporting FSP with local funds to maintain existing service levels and expand services through 2041. Since then, FSP has provided over 889,000 services on the Orange County freeway system.
Projects A-M Freeway EMP	Provide for comprehensive, rather than piecemeal, mitigation of the environmental impacts of freeway improvements. Using a proactive, innovative approach, the Master Agreement negotiated between OCTA	The Freeway EMP provides comprehensive mitigation for the environmental impacts of M2 freeway improvements (Projects A–M). The program includes acquisition and preservation of open space, habitat restoration, and implementation of a Conservation Plan to protect biological resources. Through a	The EMP is fully established, with biological resource permits issued in 2017 following completion of the Conservation Plan, and additional regulatory assurances secured in 2018 to support streamlined delivery of M2 freeway projects. OCTA continues to

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
	and state and federal resource agencies will provide higher-value environmental benefits such as habitat protection, wildlife corridors and resource preservation in exchange for streamlined project approvals for the freeway program as a whole.	programmatic approach, the EMP enables streamlined environmental approvals for freeway projects while delivering higher-value environmental benefits, including habitat protection, wildlife connectivity, and resource preservation. Key elements include management of seven Preserves totaling approximately 1,300 acres and implementation of approximately 350 acres of habitat restoration projects.	manage the Preserves and implement restoration projects in coordination with Wildlife Agencies. RMPs for all Preserves were completed in 2018 and are currently being updated, and annual reporting confirms the program remains in compliance with permit requirements. The endowment established to fund long-term preserve management continues to be funded through annual deposits of approximately $2.9 million and remains on track to meet the long-term funding target. While the program has largely met its objectives, risks remain related to environmental conditions such as drought and wildfires, which may impact restoration success and require adaptive management or additional funding. In addition, endowment performance may influence the timing of achieving full funding for long-term management.
Streets and Roads			
Project O RCP	This program, in combination with local matching funds, provides a funding source to complete the Orange County MPAH. The program also provides for intersection improvements and other projects to help improve street operations and reduce congestion. The program allocates funds through a competitive process and targets projects that help traffic the most by considering factors such as degree of congestion relief, cost effectiveness, project readiness, etc. Local jurisdictions must	*Regional Capacity Program*	
		This program, in combination with required local matching funds, provides funding for improvements on Orange County's MPAH.	Since 2011, through 15 calls, the Board has awarded 195 projects (237 project phases) totaling more than $432 million, including $23.4 million in external funding. To date, 157 project phases have been completed, 53 are in various stages of implementation, and 27 have been cancelled by the awarded local jurisdictions.

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
	provide a dollar-for-dollar match to qualify for funding, but can be rewarded with lower match requirements if they give priority to other key objectives, such as better road maintenance and regional signal synchronization. Roughly 1,000 miles of new street lanes remain to be completed, mostly in the form of widening existing streets to their ultimate planned width. Completion of the system will result in a more even traffic flow and efficient system. Another element of this program is funding for construction of railroad over or underpass grade separations where high-volume streets are impacted by freight trains along the BNSF railroad in northern Orange County.	*OC Bridges Program*	
		This program built seven grade separations (either under or overpasses) where high-volume streets are impacted by freight trains along the BNSF railroad in north Orange County. • Kraemer Boulevard – vehicle underpass • Lakeview Avenue – vehicle overpass • Orangethorpe Avenue – vehicle overpass • Placentia Avenue – vehicle underpass • Raymond Avenue – vehicle underpass • State College Boulevard – vehicle underpass • Tustin Avenue/Rose Drive – vehicle overpass	On September 13, 2021, the Board approved program closeout and budget adjustment to approximately $666.55 million for all the OC Bridges grade separation projects, of which $152.6 million was committed M2 and $513.9 million in leveraged external funding. Funding reimbursement and closeout for all seven grade separation projects have been completed. • Kraemer Boulevard – completed in 2014 • Lakeview Avenue – completed in 2017 • Orangethorpe Avenue – completed in 2016 • Placentia Avenue – completed in 2014 • Raymond Avenue – completed in 2018 • State College Boulevard – completed in 2018 • Tustin Avenue/Rose Drive – completed in 2015
Project P RTSSP	This program targets over 2,000 signalized intersections across the County for coordinated operation. The goal is to improve the flow of traffic by developing and implementing regional signal coordination programs that cross jurisdictional boundaries. The County of Orange and Caltrans will be required to work together and prepare a common traffic signal synchronization plan and the necessary governance and legal arrangements before receiving funds. In addition, cities will be required to provide 20 percent of the costs. Once in place, the program will provide funding for ongoing maintenance and operation of the synchronization plan. Local jurisdictions will be required to publicly report on the performance of their signal	This program provides funding and assistance to implement multi-agency signal synchronization. The target of the program is to regularly coordinate a network of over 2,000 signalized intersections along 750 miles of roadway within Orange County. OCTA also leverages external funding to further enhance the efficiency of the street grid and reduce travel delays.	To date, OCTA and local agencies have synchronized 3,789 intersections over 979 miles of streets (109 completed projects). Through 15 calls, 123 projects totaling approximately $162.3 million have been awarded. Overall, OCTA has funded 143 projects totaling nearly $196.8 million, including $40.1 million in leveraged external funding.

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
	synchronization efforts at least every three years.		
Project Q LFS Program	This element of the program will provide flexible funding to help cities and the County of Orange keep up with the rising cost of repairing the aging street system. In addition, cities can use these funds for other local transportation needs such as residential street projects, traffic and pedestrian safety near schools, signal priority for emergency vehicles, etc. The funds under this program are distributed to cities and the County of Orange by formula. The formula will account for population, street mileage, and amount of sales tax collected in each jurisdiction.	To help cities and the County of Orange keep up with the rising cost of repairing the aging street system, this program provides flexible funding intended to augment, not replace, existing transportation expenditures by the cities and the County. On a bimonthly basis, 18 percent of net revenues are allocated by formula. On a bimonthly basis, 18 percent of net revenues are allocated by formula.	Since 2011, approximately $835.3 million in LFS payments have been provided to local jurisdictions.
Transit			
Project R High-Frequency Metrolink Service	This project will increase rail services within the county and provide frequent Metrolink service north of Fullerton to Los Angeles. The project will provide for track improvements, more trains, and other related needs to accommodate the expanded service. This project is designed to build on the successes of Metrolink and complement service expansion made possible by the current M2. The service will include upgraded stations and added parking capacity; safety improvements and quiet zones along the tracks; and frequent shuttle service and other means, to move arriving passengers to nearby destinations. The project also includes funding for improving grade crossings and constructing over or underpasses at	*Metrolink Grade Crossing Improvements*	
		Improvements were implemented at designated at-grade rail-highway crossings throughout Orange County to enhance safety, reduce conflicts between rail and roadway users, and support expanded Metrolink service. Enhancements included upgraded warning devices, improved signalization and gate systems, crossing surface improvements, and other safety treatments. These improvements also enabled the establishment of quiet zones in participating jurisdictions by meeting federal safety requirements.	This project is complete. Safety enhancements were implemented at 50 of the originally identified 52 at-grade rail crossings in support of the Metrolink Service Expansion Program, with completion in October 2012. Two crossings were not improved due to a private crossing constraint and a roadway closure that eliminated the need for improvements.
		Metrolink Service Expansion Program	
		This program provides funding to support Metrolink operations and expand regional rail service within Orange County. The program includes investments in rail infrastructure, service expansion, and operational	Initial capital and service expansion elements of the program were completed in 2012, including the deployment of ten new Metrolink intracounty trains operating between the cities

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
	high-volume arterial streets that cross the Metrolink tracks.	enhancements to increase train frequency, improve system reliability, and expand access to regional rail. Initial improvements included track and signal upgrades, station enhancements, and the deployment of additional trains to support expanded service, particularly during midday and evening periods.	of Fullerton and Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo, expanding service beyond traditional peak periods. Service has since evolved in response to changing travel patterns. In October 2024, Metrolink implemented the *Metrolink Reimagined* service change, increasing midday and evening service and improving operational efficiency. As a result, the three Metrolink lines serving Orange County now operate 58 weekday trains, exceeding pre-pandemic service levels. Despite these increases, ridership recovery remains below pre-pandemic levels, affecting farebox revenue and cost recovery, while operating and rehabilitation costs continue to rise. Although external funding sources are expected to support operations in the near term, current projections indicate that without adjustments to service levels, sustained ridership growth, or additional funding, existing service levels may not be financially sustainable through the full M2 program horizon. Additional risks include reliance on external funding, coordination with rail partners, and ongoing vulnerabilities along the coastal rail corridor that may affect service reliability and costs.
		Anaheim Canyon Metrolink Station Improvements	
		This project enhanced capacity and functionality to support increased rail service. Improvements included construction of a second main track and passenger platform, extension of the existing platform, upgrades to at-grade crossings to improve pedestrian circulation and safety, and installation of new station amenities such as benches, shade structures, and ticket vending machines.	This project was completed in January 2023.

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
		Fullerton Transportation Center Improvements	
		This project enhanced multimodal access and passenger amenities at the Fullerton Transportation Center. Improvements included construction of a new five-level parking structure to expand transit parking capacity for Metrolink and Amtrak users, as well as subsequent upgrades to station accessibility. These later improvements included modifications to the existing pedestrian bridge and installation of new traction elevators to improve vertical circulation and ADA accessibility across the rail platforms.	Construction on the city-led parking expansion project began in October 2010, and the improvements were completed in June 2012. After completion, the elevator upgrade project was initiated with leftover savings. The City of Fullerton was the lead on this project, which was completed on May 1, 2019.
		Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo Metrolink Station ADA Ramps	
		This project improved accessibility and passenger amenities at the Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo Metrolink Station. Improvements included construction of new ADA-compliant access ramps on both sides of the pedestrian undercrossing, replacing elevators that were prone to outages. Additional enhancements included installation of passenger canopies, a unisex ADA-compliant restroom, and supporting station facilities such as a vending machine room.	Construction began in February 2016, and the improvements were completed in September 2017.
		Orange Transportation Center Metrolink Parking Structure	
		This project constructed a 608-space, five-level, shared-use parking structure located on Lemon Street between Chapman Avenue and Maple Street in the City of Orange. Delivered through a cooperative agreement between OCTA and the City of Orange, the City led the design phase and OCTA led construction. The project expanded parking capacity to support Metrolink and bus transit users, while accommodating shared-use parking for the surrounding area.	Construction began in July 2017, and the improvements were completed in February 2019.

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
		Placentia Metrolink Station and Parking Structure	
		This project will construct a new Metrolink station in the City of Placentia, including a passenger platform, parking structure, bus stop, and supporting passenger amenities. The project scope was expanded during design to replace planned surface parking with a structured parking facility through a cooperative agreement with the City of Placentia, which also includes a local funding contribution. The project also includes construction of a third main track to improve operational flexibility and support more reliable passenger and freight rail service.	Final design was completed in July 2017, and the project is currently ready for advertisement. However, advancement to construction remains on hold pending execution of a shared-use agreement between Metrolink and BNSF, as well as potential design refinements. As a result, the project schedule is uncertain and subject to resolution of these external dependencies. Key risks include reliance on third-party agreements with BNSF, potential scope or design modifications, and broader considerations related to Metrolink's long-term operational and financial capacity to support new service. OCTA continues to coordinate with partner agencies to advance the project when conditions allow.
		San Clemente Pier Station Lighting	
		This OCTA-led project enhanced the San Clemente Pier station platform by installing new bollard lighting along the full platform length, upgrading passenger amenities, and adding decorative safety railings. Improvements also included resurfacing the platform and related safety repairs to improve visibility, accessibility, and overall passenger safety.	This project was completed in March 2017.
		Tustin Metrolink Station Parking Structure	
		This project expanded parking capacity at the Tustin Metrolink Station through construction of a four-story parking structure and associated surface parking facilities. The project was delivered to support increased ridership and improve access to Metrolink and bus transit services.	Construction on the parking structure began in October 2010, and opened to the public in September 2011.

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
		Laguna Niguel to San Juan Capistrano Passing Siding Project	
		This project improved rail operations within the LOSSAN corridor through construction of approximately 1.8 miles of passing siding track adjacent to the existing mainline. The project enables trains traveling in opposite directions to pass without delay, increasing operational flexibility and supporting more efficient passenger rail service.	Construction began on March 2019, and the improvements were completed in November 2020.
		Sand Canyon Grade Separation	
		This project improved mobility and safety in the City of Irvine by separating roadway and rail operations along the LOSSAN Rail Corridor. The project constructed an underpass to carry Sand Canyon Avenue beneath the railroad tracks, widened the roadway to increase capacity, and included related improvements such as retaining walls, drainage, and bicycle and pedestrian enhancements.	Construction began in May 2011, and the improvements opened to traffic in July 2014. The project was completed, and construction acceptance was obtained from the City of Irvine in January 2016. The project completed the one-year warranty period, and no repairs were identified. The project closed out in January 2017.
		San Clemente Beach Trail Safety Enhancements	
		This project enhanced safety at multiple pedestrian crossings along the San Clemente Beach Trail by implementing a comprehensive set of improvements at locations including Dije Court, El Portal, Corto Lane, San Clemente Pier, T Street, Lost Winds, and Calafia. Enhancements included installation of an audible pedestrian warning system, emergency exit swing gates, pedestrian channelization and fencing, additional active warning devices, and widening of crossing surfaces and walkway approaches. These improvements reduced the risk of pedestrian-train conflicts and improved overall safety for trail users by increasing awareness and providing safer crossing conditions. OCTA led the design phase, while Metrolink led construction.	Construction was completed in March 2014, and the pedestrian audible warning system was activated on June 24, 2016.

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
		Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo Station Surface Parking Lot	
		This project expanded parking capacity at the Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo Metrolink Station to accommodate increased demand associated with expanded rail service. The project constructed a new surface parking lot adding approximately 176 spaces on OCTA-owned property located south of the existing station, increasing total parking supply and supporting park-and-ride access.	This project was completed in October 2013.
		San Juan Creek Railroad Bridge Replacement	
		This project will replace the existing rail bridge over San Juan Creek in the City of San Juan Capistrano to improve safety, reduce maintenance needs, and meet current design and load standards. The project includes demolition of the existing bridge, construction of a new bridge structure, and development of supporting substructure elements designed to accommodate potential future rail infrastructure. The project also preserves the opportunity for future bicycle trail connectivity along the creek corridor.	Construction is underway, with completion anticipated in early 2027. The project is being delivered in coordination with Metrolink and requires careful sequencing to maintain rail operations during construction. Key risks include construction complexity within an environmentally sensitive creek area, coordination with multiple stakeholders, and potential schedule impacts associated with maintaining active rail service during construction and bridge changeover activities.
Project S Transit Extensions to Metrolink	Frequent service in the Metrolink corridor provides a high-capacity transit system linking communities within the central core of Orange County. This project will establish a competitive program for local jurisdictions to broaden the reach of the rail system to other activity centers and communities. Proposals for extensions must be developed and supported by local jurisdictions and will be evaluated against well-defined and well-known criteria.	*OC Streetcar*	
		The OC Streetcar is a 4.15-mile fixed-guideway transit project connecting the SARTC to Downtown Santa Ana and Harbor Boulevard in the City of Garden Grove. The project includes construction of track within existing streets, stations, an overhead contact system, bridges, and an MSF, as well as procurement of modern streetcar vehicles. The project is intended to improve transit connectivity, expand access to regional rail, and provide an alternative to automobile travel.	Construction on the project began on November 19, 2018, and is approximately 96 percent complete as of December 2025. All eight vehicles have been delivered, and system testing, integration, and operational readiness activities are ongoing in preparation for service.
		Bus and Station Van Extension Projects	

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
		Bus and Station Van Extension Projects were implemented to improve first- and last-mile connections to Metrolink stations by linking surrounding communities and activity centers to commuter rail. These projects included local bus and van services designed to enhance access to the regional rail system and improve overall transit connectivity within central Orange County.	The program is complete, with the final service concluded on June 30, 2020. One project in the City of Anaheim successfully operated service connecting the Anaheim Canyon Metrolink Station to key destinations, while previously approved projects in the City of Lake Forest were ultimately cancelled. The Anaheim service continues under the Project V (Community-Based Transit/Circulators Program), subject to performance requirements. No additional calls for Bus and Station Van Extension Projects are anticipated. There are no remaining delivery risks, as the program has been completed. Future first- and last-mile transit needs are expected to be addressed through other M2 transit programs, including Project V.
Project T Convert Metrolink Station(s) to Regional Gateways to Connect Orange County with HSR	This program will provide the local improvements that are necessary to connect planned future HSR systems to stations on the Orange County Metrolink route. The State of California is currently planning an HSR system linking Northern and Southern California. One line is planned to terminate in Orange County. In addition, several magnetic levitation systems that would connect Orange County to Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties, including a link from the City of Anaheim to Ontario airport, are also being planned or proposed by other agencies.	Project T funded improvements to Metrolink stations along the LOSSAN Rail Corridor to support future connections to HSR. The primary project delivered under this program was ARTIC, a multimodal transportation hub that serves Metrolink, Amtrak, local and regional bus services, and other transportation modes. The facility was designed to accommodate future HSR connectivity and enhance regional mobility.	Project T is complete. The ARTIC facility began construction on September 24, 2012, and opened to rail and bus service on December 6, 2014. In December 2015, the Board amended the M2 Ordinance to formally close out Project T, determining that completion of ARTIC fulfilled the intent of the program as the only Orange County station on the planned HSR corridor. There are no remaining delivery risks, as the program has been completed. Future HSR connectivity in Orange County remains dependent on statewide implementation of the HSR system, which is outside OCTA's control.
Project U Expand Mobility Choices for Seniors and	This project will provide services and programs to meet the growing transportation needs of seniors and persons with disabilities as follows:	*Fare Stabilization*	
		From 2011 to 2015, one percent of net M2 revenues was dedicated to stabilizing fares and providing fare discounts for bus services and specialized OC ACCESS services for seniors and persons with disabilities.	Since inception, nearly $63.5 has been allocated to support more than 166 million program-related boardings recorded on fixed-route and ACCESS services. The amount

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
Persons with Disabilities	• 1.47 percent of net revenues will stabilize fares and provide fare discounts for bus services, specialized OC ACCESS services and future rail services. • One percent of net revenues will be available to continue and expand local community van service for seniors through the existing Senior Mobility Program. • One percent will supplement existing countywide senior non-emergency medical transportation services.	Effective January 28, 2016, an amendment to the M2 Ordinance adjusted this amount to 1.47 percent of net M2 revenues to be dedicated to the Fare Stabilization Program.	of funding utilized is based on ridership, which is based on pass sales and ACCESS boardings figures.
		Senior Mobility Program	
		The SMP provides one percent of net M2 revenues to eligible local jurisdictions to provide transit services that best meet the needs of seniors living in their community. According to the SMP Guidelines, M2 revenue is allocated to local jurisdictions proportionally, relative to the total county's senior population, by the residents aged 60 and above multiplied by available revenues.	Since inception, more than $43.7 million has been provided to support nearly 3.4 million boardings for seniors traveling to medical appointments, nutrition programs, shopping destinations, and senior and community center activities.
		Senior Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Program	
		This program provides one percent of net M2 revenues to supplement existing countywide SNEMT services.	Since inception, approximately $46.9 million has been allocated to support more than 1.7 million SNEMT boardings.
Project V Community-Based Transit/ Circulators	This project will establish a competitive program for local jurisdictions to develop local bus transit services such as community-based transit/circulators, shuttles and bus trolleys that complement regional bus and rail services, and meet needs in areas not adequately served by regional transit. Projects will need to meet performance criteria for ridership, connection to bus and rail services, and financial viability to be considered for funding. All projects must be competitively bid, and they cannot duplicate or compete with existing transit services.	This program provides funding for local jurisdictions to develop local bus transit services, such as community-based circulators and shuttles, which complement regional bus and rail services to meet needs in areas not adequately served by regional transit.	To date, through five calls, the Board has awarded 50 projects and ten planning studies totaling approximately $99.4 million. Of the 50 transit circulator projects, 16 are currently active, four are planned, 13 have been cancelled (primarily due to low ridership), and 17 have been completed.
Project W	This project provides for passenger amenities at 100 busiest transit stops across the County. The stops will be	This program provides funding for passenger amenities at the busiest transit stops across Orange County. Stop improvements are designed to	To date, through a competitive process, OCTA has issued three calls (July 2014, June 2019, and September 2020), which have awarded

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
Safe Transit Stops	designed to ease transfer between bus lines and provide passenger amenities such as improved shelters, lighting, current information on bus and train timetables and arrival times, and transit ticket vending machines.	ease transfers between bus lines and provide passenger amenities such as the installation of bus benches or seating, shelters, and lighting.	just over $3.1 million to support improvements at 122 locations. Of the 122 projects, 94 have been completed, 18 are in various stages of implementation, and ten have been cancelled.
Environmental			
Project X ECP	Implement street and highway related water quality improvement programs and projects that will assist Orange County cities, the County of Orange, and special districts to meet federal Clean Water Act standards for urban runoff. The environmental cleanup monies may be used for water quality improvements related to both existing and new transportation infrastructure, including capital and operations improvements.	This program implements street- and highway-related water quality improvement programs and projects that assist agencies countywide with federal Clean Water Act standards for urban runoff. It is intended to augment, not replace, existing transportation-related water quality expenditures and to emphasize high-impact capital improvements over local operations and maintenance costs. The Environmental Cleanup Allocation Committee is charged with making recommendations to the Board on the allocation of funds. These funds are allocated on a countywide, competitive basis to assist agencies in meeting the Clean Water Act standards for controlling transportation-related pollution. The ECP is composed of a two-tiered funding process focusing on early priorities (Tier 1), and a second program designed to prepare for more comprehensive capital investments (Tier 2). All Orange County cities plus the County of Orange have received funding under this program. To date, there have been 15 rounds of funding under the Tier 1 grants program.	**Tier 1:** On October 13, 2025, programming recommendations for the 15th Tier 1 call were approved by Board for approximately $3.1 million. To date, 241 Tier 1 projects, totaling approximately $43 million, have been awarded by the Board since 2011. Of the 241 projects, construction on 203 projects have been completed, 21 are in various stages of implementation, and 17 have been cancelled by the awarded agency. The 16th Tier 1 call is anticipated to be released in early 2026. It is estimated that approximately 91.7 million gallons of trash have been captured since the inception of the program, which equates to over 16,200 trash truck loads of garbage that could have been deposited in Orange County streams and waters. Over time, the volume of trash captured is expected to increase. **Tier 2:** To date, 26 Tier 2 projects totaling approximately $35 million have been awarded by the Board since 2013. Of the 26 projects, construction on 18 projects have been completed, four projects are in progress, and four projects have been cancelled by the awarded agency. It is estimated that Tier 2-funded projects, once fully functional, will have an annual groundwater recharge and

Project	Plan Description	Scope/Project Description	Status/Discussion
			water savings potential of approximately 352 million gallons of water from infiltration, recharge facilities, and diversion to recycled water supply. The appropriate timing of the next Tier 2 call will be assessed and determined by funding availability as well as the number of viable projects from eligible agencies.

9.5 Appendix E: M2 Project/Program Schedules

This appendix presents current M2 project and program schedules from the 2025 Next 10 Plan, approved by the Board on November 10, 2025. The schedules reflect updates through December 31, 2025.

Figure 9-4: M2 Freeway Projects Through Construction Schedule

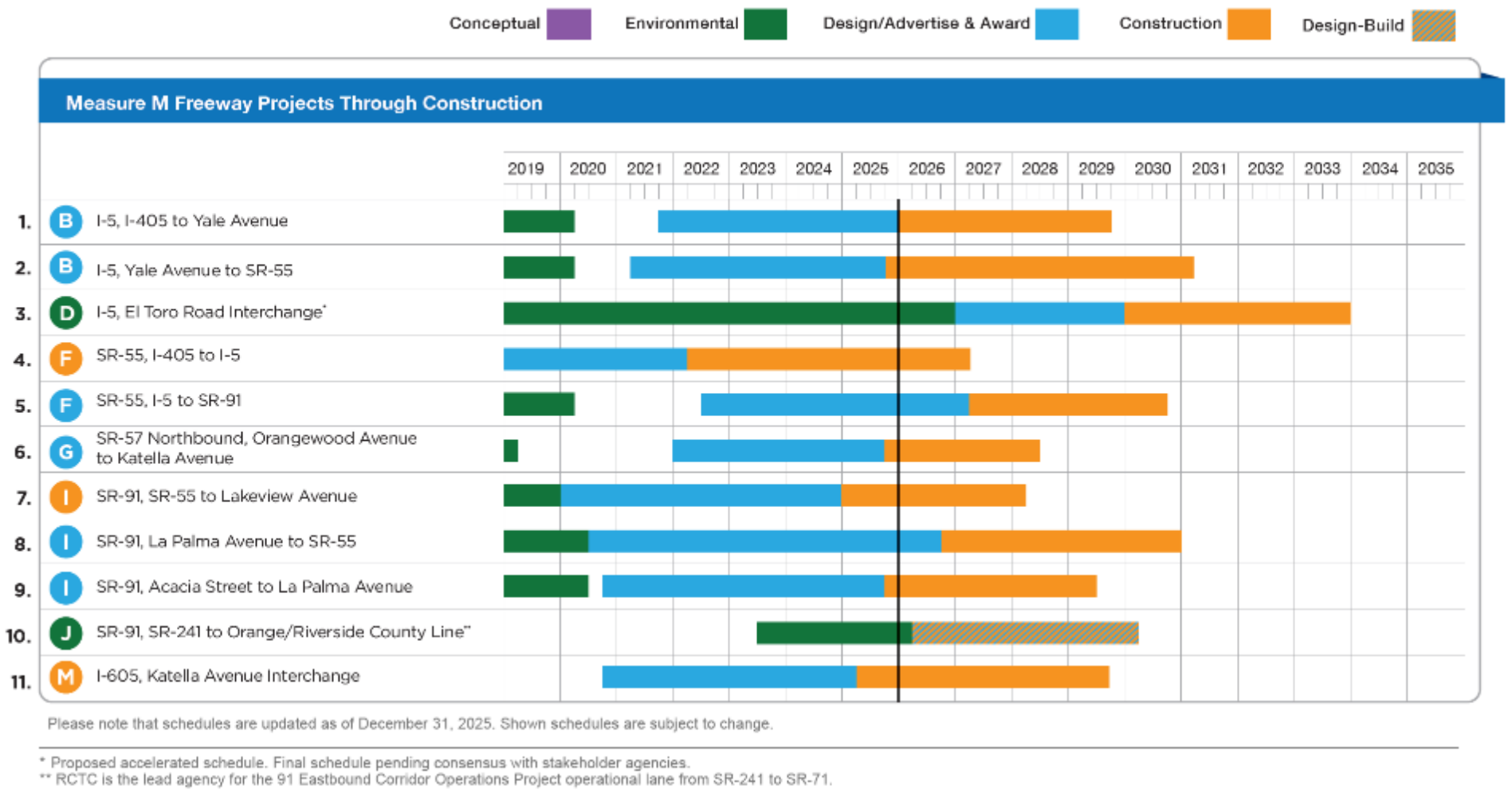
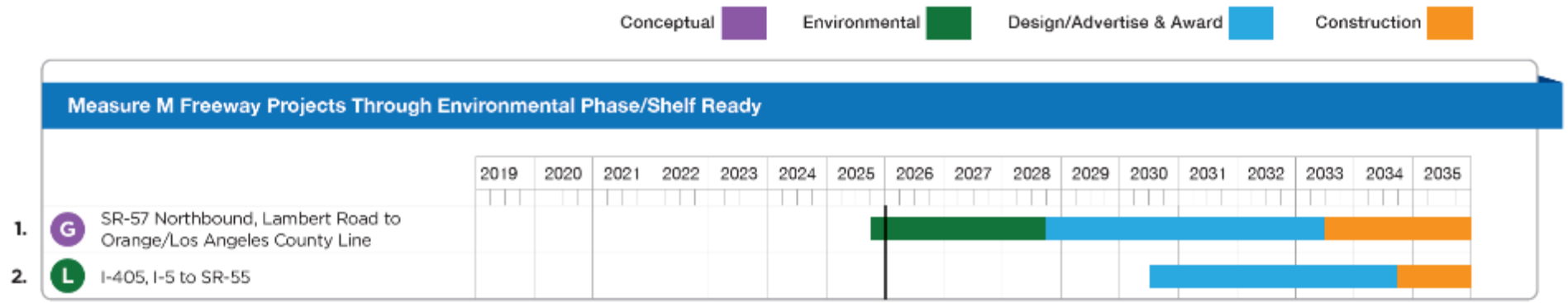


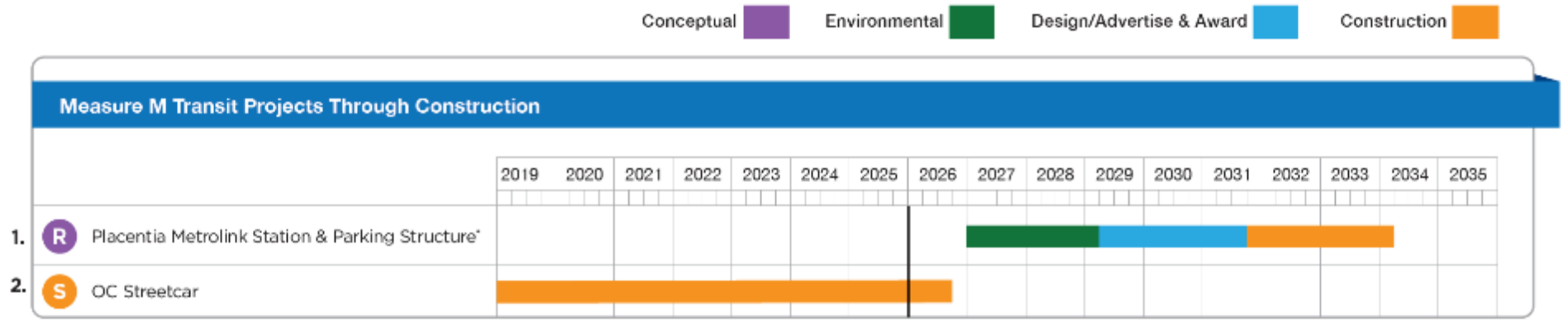
Figure 9-5: M2 Freeway Projects Through Environmental Phase/Shelf Ready Schedule



Please note that schedules are updated as of December 31, 2025. Projected and active project schedules are subject to change.

The Next 10 Plan provides direction through 2035. Schedules and revenues will be reviewed annually. The Board will adopt an updated delivery plan to provide direction on further advancement as appropriate.

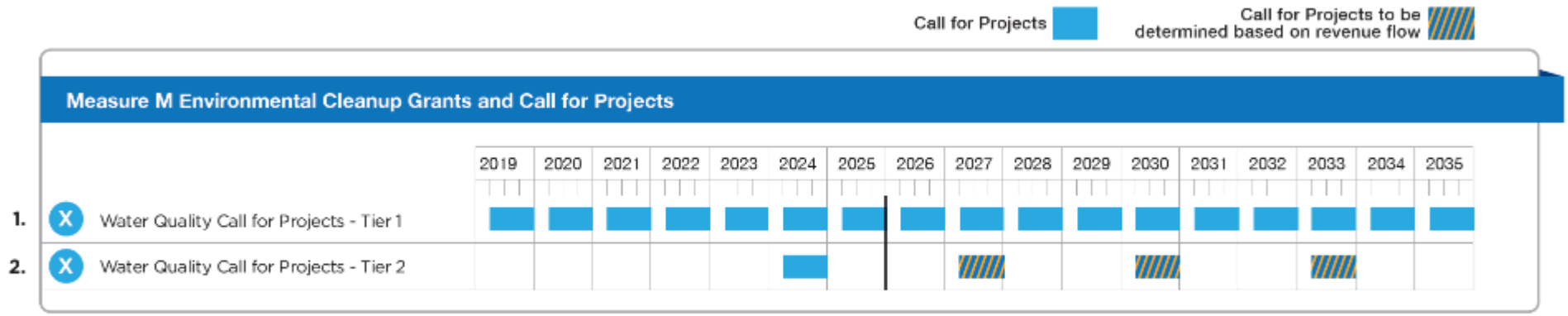
Figure 9-6: M2 Transit Projects Through Construction Schedule



OC Streetcar schedule updated as of December 31, 2025. Shown schedules are subject to change.

*Proposed accelerated schedule. Final schedule pending consensus with stakeholder agencies.

Figure 9-7: M2 ECP Grants and Call Schedule



Tier 1 grants program consists of funding for equipment purchases and upgrades to existing storm drains and related best management practices.

Tier 2 grants program consists of funding for regional, potentially multi-jurisdictional, capital-intensive projects.

9.6 Appendix F: M2 Ten-Year Review Community Engagement Summary Report

APPENDIX F

Measure M2 Ten-Year Review

Community Engagement Summary Report

February 2026

Community Engagement Summary Report

February 2026

Prepared for: Orange County Transportation Authority
550 South Main Street
Orange, CA 92868

Prepared by: Arellano Associates
5851 Pine Avenue, Suite A
Chino Hills, CA 91709
and
OCTA Staff

Page intentionally left blank.

Table of Contents

Tables

Appendices

Page intentionally left blank.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Measure M2 is a 30-year, half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements administered by the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA). The program was approved by nearly 70% of voters in 2006 and took effect in 2011, following the end of the original Measure M (1991-2011), which generated approximately $4 billion for local transportation projects. Established through Ordinance No. 3 (Ordinance), Measure M2 includes a Transportation Investment Plan (Plan) that funds a range of improvements – enhancing freeways, local streets, and public transit, while also addressing environmental mitigation and sustainability. The Ordinance requires that, at least every ten years, OCTA shall conduct a comprehensive review of all projects and programs implemented under the Plan to evaluate the performance of the overall program and may revise the Plan to improve its performance.

The Measure M2 Ten-Year Review (Review) takes into consideration changes in policies, regulations, land use, travel patterns, growth projections, project cost estimates, and revenue projections. It also considers right-of-way constraints and other project constraints, the level of public support for the Plan, and the progress of OCTA, the County, and its 34 cities in implementing the Plan. Public and stakeholder engagement is a key component of this process, providing valuable input to assess the level of public support for the Plan and to identify potential areas for refinement.

To that end, OCTA implemented a comprehensive community outreach program designed to inform and engage stakeholders about Measure M2 and the Review, and to gather feedback. Engagement efforts included a virtual webinar, multiple briefings and presentations with key stakeholders and interest groups, and four focus groups. A qualitative feedback survey was also developed and conducted to gauge the public's needs and priorities in the county. Throughout engagement efforts, the outreach team promoted the Review and survey at several community and cultural events, as well as through print and digital advertisements. In addition, a quantitative survey of Orange County residents was developed and conducted to assess transportation priorities and perceptions of OCTA and Measure M2. Feedback from the engagement effort was used to develop recommendations to guide potential refinements and ensure the continued success of Measure M2 initiatives.

i. Community Engagement Approach

A comprehensive outreach plan was prepared at the beginning of the Review process to outline key engagement activities used to collect input from key stakeholders and the community from January through August 2025. The outreach plan, presented to the OCTA Board of Directors (Board), also outlined the anticipated timeline, identified target audiences, and detailed strategies for effectively engaging them. Outreach strategies prioritized connecting with hard-to-reach communities while focusing on a broad reach across the county.

Prior to launching community engagement efforts, OCTA developed a suite of informational resources to raise awareness about the Review and the Plan. These materials included a dedicated webpage (octa.net/M2Review) and multilingual (English, Spanish, and Vietnamese) fact sheets and FAQs. These resources were shared at community events across Orange County, distributed via email, and linked during online meetings to expand reach.

Throughout the Review, OCTA engaged key stakeholders, including OCTA committees, elected officials, city staff, and other prominent Orange County organizations, to gather feedback on the Plan. In May 2025, a qualitative survey was launched and remained open through July to capture community needs and priorities across Orange County. During the engagement period, OCTA hosted a public webinar and presented at one of OCTA's Bus Customer Roundtable to share information about Measure M2 projects and programs, answer questions, and collect additional feedback. OCTA also hosted several focus groups to learn about residents' transportation experiences, priorities, challenges, and suggestions for improving mobility across the county. To ensure widespread participation in the Review, outreach efforts combined traditional and digital methods, including email, paid and organic social media, print and online newspaper advertisements, and a promotional digital toolkit. OCTA also focused on reaching current transit riders by promoting the survey via bus interior advertising. Additional key engagement strategies included connecting with the public at community events and distributing informational flyers at community centers and libraries throughout the county.

ii. Balanced and Inclusive Engagement

OCTA remained committed to reaching communities that have been historically hard to reach in the planning process. Targeted efforts were made to design and implement outreach strategies that effectively reached those communities throughout the county. This included engaging with and receiving feedback from organizations representing communities from a range of demographic backgrounds, age groups, and socioeconomic status to gather meaningful input. To increase reach and accessibility, all informational materials and presentations were translated into Spanish and Vietnamese. Each e-blast was translated in Spanish and Vietnamese, and OCTA placed advertisements in local Spanish- and Vietnamese-language newspapers. In addition, the qualitative survey was offered in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, and Mandarin. Bilingual outreach staff also promoted the survey at a variety of cultural events and supported language inclusivity by offering Spanish and Vietnamese interpretation during the virtual webinar.

iii. Key Themes

The following themes reflect input gathered through community surveys, focus groups, regional stakeholder interviews, stakeholder briefings, agency meetings, and a countywide quantitative survey. Together, these engagement activities provide insight into current public perceptions, priorities, and opportunities for refinement of the Measure M2 program.

- **Continued Support for Local Transportation Investment:** Residents broadly expressed support for continued local transportation funding. Survey findings indicate that 80% of residents consider continuing local transportation funding important, including 60% who say it is extremely or very important. After hearing how Measure M2 funds are used, support increases to 85% overall, including 65% who rate it extremely or very important. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of protecting local control, demonstrating measurable value, and clearly communicating program outcomes – particularly considering affordability concerns and evolving state policy requirements. These findings suggest that continued investment in transportation infrastructure remains a priority for Orange County residents.
- **Moderate Satisfaction with the Transportation System:** While overall quality of life in Orange County remains positively rated (73% excellent/good), perceptions of the transportation system are more measured. Only 40% rate the system excellent or good, while 36% describe it as "fair," and 21% rate it poor or very poor. This indicates that while the transportation system is generally viewed as functional, residents continue to expect ongoing improvement – particularly in addressing traffic congestion and road conditions.
- **Roadway Maintenance, Traffic Operations, and Congestion Relief Remain Top Priorities:** Across engagement formats, roadway maintenance, traffic signal coordination, interchange improvements, and congestion management were consistently identified as the highest priorities. Fixing potholes, repairing streets, synchronizing signals, and improving traffic flow on major corridors ranked above other tested improvements. These priorities reflect the daily travel patterns of most residents, who primarily rely on automobiles. Stakeholders also emphasized improving system efficiency through operational enhancements and technology-based solutions.
- **Broad Support for Transit, with Emphasis on Accessibility and First-/Last-Mile Connections:** Transit investments received majority support, particularly services for seniors and people with disabilities (79% medium/high priority; 50% high priority). Participants emphasized the importance of maintaining reliable, affordable, and accessible transit options for residents who depend on them. Expansion of bus and rail services also received support, though these investments ranked below roadway maintenance in relative priority. Stakeholders noted that improving convenience – including better first- and last-mile connections, microtransit options, and coordination with major destinations – is essential to increasing transit usage. These findings reinforce the importance of maintaining a balanced transportation program that addresses both roadway performance and transit accessibility.

- **Awareness of Measure M2 and Specific Improvements Is Limited:** Although nearly all residents recognize OCTA (94%), fewer than half have heard of Measure M2 (46%), and only 39% report awareness of specific improvements funded by the program. A substantial share of respondents selected "not sure" when evaluating OCTA's performance or use of public funds. Stakeholders similarly emphasized the need for stronger communication and visibility of Measure M2 investments, and broader outreach to emerging and hard-to-reach communities. These results point to an opportunity to strengthen public understanding of how Measure M2 funds are allocated and delivered.
- **Differences in Priorities Reflect Changing Demographics and Travel Behavior:** Engagement findings indicate variation in transportation priorities across demographic groups. Younger and lower-income residents were more likely to rely on transit and prioritize multimodal investments, while older residents placed greater emphasis on roadway maintenance and congestion relief. Stakeholders also noted generational shifts in travel preferences, increasing interest in micro-mobility options, and the increasing need to serve aging populations. These differences highlight the importance of long-term planning that responds to evolving travel behavior and demographic trends while maintaining core infrastructure performance.
- **Administrative Efficiency, Regional Coordination, and Cross-Jurisdictional Leadership Are Important to Partner Agencies:** City and agency partners emphasized the importance of streamlined reimbursement processes, funding flexibility, and continued interjurisdictional coordination to improve project delivery. Stakeholders encouraged OCTA to maintain its role as a regional integrator – aligning investments across city boundaries, corridors, and modes – and to help jurisdictions efficiently compete for and administer available transportation funding. Participants also highlighted the value of multi-benefit investments that integrate transportation performance with environmental stewardship, resilience, and community health outcomes.

iv. Engagement Highlights

OCTA conducted extensive outreach throughout the Review to connect with the community and gather feedback. The main highlights of these efforts include:

- Collected 2,585 completed qualitative surveys from May to July 2025
- Surveyed 1,025 residents in January 2026 as part of a statistically valid, quantitative research survey
- Held 1 Community Webinar, 2 Stakeholder Briefings, 2 Elected Official Roundtable Meetings, 5 Technical Advisory Committee Focus Groups, 15 Regional Stakeholder Interviews, 4 Focus Groups

- Presented at 4 Mayors Forums, 1 OC Bus Customer Roundtable, 5 Taxpayer Oversight Committee Meetings, 1 Stakeholder Working Group Meeting, 1 Accessible Transit Advisory Committee Meeting, 1 Legislative Briefing, 1 Diverse Community Leaders Meeting, 1 Senior Mobility Program Roundtable, 1 CAC Bicycle and Pedestrian Active Transportation Subcommittee Meeting, and 1 Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting
- Delivered multilingual printed meeting notices to local organizations, businesses, and neighborhoods
- Expanded awareness through elected official outreach, including providing e-toolkits to Board members
- Placed ads inside buses traveling throughout Orange County
- Provided multilingual office-hour appointments for stakeholders to learn more about the Review and share feedback
- Engaged 3,000+ community members across 26 community events in Orange County, spanning all five Orange County Supervisorial Districts
- Distributed 7 email notices to nearly 2,000 interested community stakeholders
- Reached 119,000+ readers in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese through seven Orange County newspapers
- Advertised the survey and community webinar through 5 social media advertisements that received 748,000 total impressions
- Developed and distributed a digital communication toolkit with the survey link, webinar details, and project information, and shared it with the County, 34 cities, and the offices of local state and federal elected officials, among other agencies
- Provided materials in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese and offered the survey in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, and Mandarin
- Announced the project through OCTA's On the Move and NextStop blogs

II. MEETINGS & EVENTS

As part of the outreach process, a robust series of meetings and events were conducted to engage with the community, key stakeholders, and city and elected representatives on Measure M2. This section provides an overview of the various engagement touchpoints conducted throughout the project.

i. Virtual Public Webinar

A virtual community webinar was held to gather feedback from Orange County stakeholders on Measure M2. The community webinar began with an overview of the project, followed by an interactive poll, Q&A session, and open discussion section. The community webinar was held on June 5, 2025, and focused on providing a project overview to the community and gathering

feedback on their priorities for Measure M2 and potential improvements. To increase accessibility for and engagement with non-English speakers, Spanish and Vietnamese interpretation was provided during the webinar. For an overview of webinar participation, please see Table 1 below.

Table 1: Virtual Community Webinar Overview

Webinar Details	Webinar
Registrants	60
Meeting Participants	45
Questions/Comments	17

Key themes from the webinar are summarized below:

- Improvements to streets and roads are most prioritized by the community.
- Strong interest in increasing rail services and expanding trolley connections and neighborhood shuttles.
- Main transportation improvement challenges are limited grant funding and rising construction costs.
- Maintaining Metrolink services remains an important community priority.
- Requests for clearer communication, accessible reports, and more convenient meeting times.

ii. Agency Stakeholder Engagements

As part of the Review engagement process, OCTA conducted a series of in-person meetings with agency stakeholders, elected officials, and city staff. These included five Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) focus group discussions, and two Elected Official Roundtables designed to facilitate discussion and share an overview of Measure M2 and gather input on transportation priorities and regional needs.

A. Technical Advisory Committee Focus Groups

OCTA held five focus group sessions with Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members at its headquarters to engage Public Works Directors and staff from local jurisdictions across Orange County. These sessions provided an opportunity to gather input, discuss regional transportation needs, assess the performance and impact of Measure M2 programs, and identify opportunities to improve program delivery and effectiveness. Discussions were guided by six key questions covering topics such as current transportation challenges, the effectiveness of Measure M2, and ways OCTA can enhance transparency and collaboration moving forward. TAC participation is found in Table 2.

Table 2: Technical Advisory Committee Focus Groups Overview

Group A Jan 22, 2025	Group B Jan 22, 2025	Group C Jan 28, 2025	Group D Jan 23, 2025	Group E Jan 23, 2025
Aliso Viejo	County of Orange	Fountain Valley	Garden Grove	Buena Park
Anaheim	Fullerton	Laguna Beach	Laguna Niguel	Costa Mesa
Brea	La Habra	Los Alamitos	Laguna Woods	Dana Point
Cypress	Lake Forest	Placentia	Newport Beach	Huntington Beach
Dana Point	San Clemente	San Juan Capistrano	Rancho Santa Margarita	La Palma
Irvine	Seal Beach	Westminster	Stanton	Laguna Hills
Orange	Villa Park		Tustin	Mission Viejo
Yorba Linda				Santa Ana

Key themes from the five sessions were:

- Transportation and Infrastructure Priorities: Focus on improving roadways, traffic flow, and multimodal connectivity to enhance regional mobility.
- Safety and Accessibility: Prioritize pedestrian and cyclist safety through infrastructure upgrades, design standards, and education programs.
- Land Use and Development Coordination: Integrate transportation planning with land use and development to promote efficient, transit-oriented growth.
- Regional Collaboration and Funding: Strengthen coordination among agencies and pursue diverse funding sources to implement transportation priorities.
- Public Outreach and Engagement: Maintain transparency, inclusive communication that involves stakeholders and improves community understanding.
- Emerging Trends: Plan for sustainable technologies, climate resilience, and data-driven transportation solutions.

B. Elected Official Roundtables

Two in-person Elected Official Roundtables were held at OCTA Headquarters on June 5 and July 16, 2025. These sessions included participation from elected representatives across Orange County and served as a forum to discuss transportation priorities, assess program performance, and identify opportunities for future enhancements.

Each meeting featured a presentation outlining the purpose and scope of the Review, key program accomplishments, ongoing challenges, and priorities for the next decade. City-specific allocation packets were shared, and participants were invited to provide feedback on the impact of Measure M2-funded projects, programs, and services, and ways OCTA could improve

coordination with local jurisdictions. Input gathered during these discussions helped shape the Review's findings and guide potential areas for refinement to Measure M2. Orange County cities represented at each roundtable are found in Table 3.

Table 3: Elected Official Roundtable Meetings Overview

Roundtable Details	Elected Official Roundtable #1 Thursday, June 5, 2025 9:00 – 11:00 AM	Elected Official Roundtable #2 Wednesday, July 16, 2025 9:00 – 11:00 AM
Attendance	• 11 Elected Office / City Staff Attendees	• 31 Elected Office / City Staff Attendees
OC Cities Represented	• Aliso Viejo • Cypress • Fountain Valley • Garden Grove • Irvine • Orange • San Clemente • Seal Beach • Villa Park	• Anaheim • Brea • Cypress • Dana Point • Fullerton • Huntington Beach • Irvine • Laguna Niguel • Los Alamitos • Mission Viejo • Newport Beach • Orange • San Clemente • San Juan Capistrano • Seal Beach • Villa Park • Yorba Linda

Key themes from the meetings are summarized below:

- Regional Growth and Land Use Coordination: Emphasize regional collaboration to align land use, housing, and transportation planning while maintaining local character and streamlining development processes.
- Transportation and Infrastructure Investment: Improve multimodal transportation networks, expand first- and last-mile connections, and ensure balanced, transparent distribution of regional infrastructure funding.
- Environmental Sustainability and Climate Resilience: Advance green infrastructure, water and energy efficiency, and regional climate action to address wildfire, heat, and drought impacts, and prioritize vulnerable communities.

- Collaboration and Public Engagement: Strengthen coordination among agencies, promote consistent messaging, and engage communities through inclusive, transparent outreach efforts.
- Policy and Legislative Priorities: Advocate for funding flexibility, streamlining of the California Environmental Quality Act review process, and incentives that support interjurisdictional cooperation and accelerate sustainable regional development.

iii. Stakeholder Briefings

Stakeholder briefings were held to engage community leaders and key stakeholders on the Review. This included three Community Leader Roundtables, additional briefings, and interviews. These briefings focused on gathering input from leaders on the Review, understanding their vision for transit in Orange County, and encouraging continued participation in the process.

A. Regional Stakeholder Interviews

One-on-one interviews were held with OCTA leadership and regional stakeholders across Orange County, including major employers and policy influencers. These discussions provided valuable insights into stakeholders' perspectives on Measure M2, opportunities for improvement, and strategies to help OCTA achieve its future transportation goals. A summary of interview participation is provided in Table 4.

Table 4: Regional Stakeholder Interviews

No.	Organization	Date
1	Automobile Club of Southern California	8/5/25
2	Rancho Mission Viejo	8/27/25
3	Orange County Business Council	8/28/25
4	UC Irvine	10/14/25
5	Hills for Everyone	11/13/25
6	Endangered Habitats League	11/14/25
7	American Council of Engineering Companies – OC	12/19/25
8	Disney	12/22/25
9	Southern California Association of Governments	1/5/26
10	Orange County Coastkeeper	1/6/26
11	Irvine Company	1/19/26
12	Asian American Architects/Engineers Association	1/19/26
13	WTS OC	2/3/26
14	Orange County Public Works	2/5/26
15	International Chinese Transportation Professionals Association	2/20/26

Key themes from the interviews are summarized below:

- Measure M2 Credibility, Local Control, and Delivering on Promises: Stakeholders consistently expressed confidence that Measure M2 has delivered on its commitments, particularly citing transparency, fiscal discipline, and the Environmental Mitigation Program. At the same time, several participants emphasized the importance of protecting local control, guarding against state and federal overreach, and clearly demonstrating the measurable value of investments as affordability concerns increase.
- Balancing Capacity, Operations, and Livability: Continued investment in roadway capacity remains important – especially in high-demand corridors and South County – but stakeholders increasingly emphasized optimizing what exists. Operational improvements, interchange enhancements, signal synchronization, and congestion management were viewed as critical to improving everyday mobility while advancing safety, sustainability, and community livability goals.
- Technology and Data as System Performance Tools: There was widespread support for integrating emerging technologies, including adaptive signal systems, connected and autonomous vehicles, AI-driven optimization, and improved interagency data sharing. Stakeholders stressed that technology should enhance reliability and safety, while also acknowledging cybersecurity and governance considerations.
- Transit Experience, First/Last Mile, and Micro-Mobility: While car dependency remains strong in Orange County, stakeholders noted that transit must be convenient, frequent, and well-integrated with development to succeed. Microtransit, smaller vehicles, better first- and last-mile connections, and coordination with Metrolink and major destinations were repeatedly identified as opportunities. Participants emphasized that improving the user experience is essential to increasing ridership.
- Environmental Mitigation and Multi-Benefit Infrastructure: The Freeway Mitigation Program was frequently cited as a signature success of Measure M2. Stakeholders encouraged continued investment in habitat connectivity, resilience, wildfire mitigation, stormwater management, and multi-benefit infrastructure that addresses transportation, environmental, and public health outcomes simultaneously.
- Cross-Boundary Coordination and Regional Leadership: Many participants highlighted the need for stronger coordination across city boundaries, corridors, and agencies. OCTA was viewed as uniquely positioned to provide regional integration, technical assistance to smaller jurisdictions, and leadership on multi-jurisdictional projects.
- Communication, Public Awareness, and Storytelling: A consistent theme across business, environmental, and industry stakeholders was the need to increase public

awareness of Measure M2 investments. Participants noted that while projects are visible, residents often do not associate them with Measure M2 funding. Stronger communication, clearer recognition of funding sources, and broader outreach to emerging and underrepresented communities were recommended.

B. Stakeholder Virtual Briefings

On July 31, 2025, the project team conducted two stakeholder briefings with representatives from a range of Orange County organizations to gather feedback on the Review. Participants represented diverse sectors, including healthcare, transportation, education, community-based organizations, and countywide agencies. Organization leaders were invited to share their perspectives on Measure M2, discuss current transportation challenges facing their organizations, and provide input on future transportation investments. Participating organizations included:

- Braille Institute
- Huntington Beach City School District
- LGBTQ Center OC
- OC Labor
- Regional Center of Orange County (RCOC)
- Santa Ana Active Streets Coalition
- Streets for All
- Unidos South OC

Key themes from the stakeholder briefings are summarized below:

- Community Awareness and Communication: Stakeholders emphasized the need for OCTA to increase public awareness of Measure M2 and clearly communicate its benefits. Stakeholders noted that the community can recognize transportation projects but do not associate them with Measure M2 funding.
- Balance and Access: A key focus of discussion centered on balanced transportation access. Participants stressed that investments should extend beyond freeway expansion and instead include improvements to public transit options for families and individuals without cars.
- Transit Experience and Reliability: Participants frequently described bus service as inconvenient, inefficient, or unreliable. While people would be willing to use more transit services, it is not a practical solution for people who currently have personal vehicles.
- Environmental and Health Concerns: Stakeholders recognized how transportation investments affect air quality, noise, and public health, especially in communities located near major freeways. Participants emphasized that environmental justice considerations should be integrated into planning to address disproportionate impacts on low-income communities.

C. OCTA Committee and Stakeholder Briefings

Throughout the Review, the project team presented at 10 OCTA-led committees, roundtables, and stakeholder briefings. These sessions provided opportunities to share an overview of the Review, gather feedback, and respond to questions from committee members, community leaders, transit riders, and elected official staff. Table 5 provides an overview of these engagements.

Table 5: OCTA Committee and Stakeholder Briefings

No.	Date	Committee/Group
1	9/10/24	Taxpayer Oversight Committee (TOC)
2	3/11/25	Taxpayer Oversight Committee (TOC)
3	3/25/25	Senior Mobility Program (SMP) Roundtable
4	4/15/25	Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
5	4/17/25	Legislative Staff Briefing
6	4/22/25	Accessible Transit Advisory Committee (ATAC)
7	6/4/25	Diverse Community Leaders Group
8	6/10/25	Taxpayer Oversight Committee (TOC)
9	6/12/25	OCTA Bus Customer Roundtable
10	6/17/25	CAC Bicycle and Pedestrian Active Transportation Subcommittee
11	6/18/25	Elected Official Briefing: Assemblymember Dixon
12	9/9/25	Taxpayer Oversight Committee (TOC)
13	12/9/25	Taxpayer Oversight Committee (TOC)

iv. Community & Pop-up Events

As part of the outreach campaign, the project team conducted 26 pop-up events throughout Orange County between May and August 2025. These in-person engagements were designed to inform the public about Measure M2 and collect feedback on how residents prioritize investment in mobility projects. Events were strategically selected to reach a cross-section of the county, including all five Supervisorial Districts. Information booths were hosted at a variety of events such as farmers markets, summer concert series, street fairs, wellness expos, senior community events, and cultural celebrations such as Cinco de Mayo, Juneteenth, and local Pride events.

Across the 26 events, the project team interacted with more than 3,000 community members, providing information through multilingual fact sheets and display boards. All materials were available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese, and staff fluent in Spanish and Vietnamese supported outreach efforts at several events. These pop-ups were especially effective for

connecting with seniors, families, and residents who were unfamiliar with Measure M2 prior to the event.

Key themes that emerged during the engagement series included a strong interest in how Measure M2 funds are distributed, especially for projects such as street repairs, signal synchronization, and expanded community-based circulator services. Many attendees voiced the need for more frequent and reliable bus service, particularly in areas like Mission Viejo, Santa Ana, and Costa Mesa. In nearly every city, residents requested greater transparency and updates on project timelines and tax usage. A recurring point of clarification was that Measure M2 is not a new tax but a continuation of a local funding source approved by voters.

While overall awareness of Measure M2 varied, most participants expressed appreciation for the improvements funded by the measure once provided with additional information. The use of multilingual materials, visual displays, and community-specific engagement strategies helped foster meaningful conversations. Several residents shared that they rely on the OC Bus system for commuting or accessing essential services and welcomed continued investments in connectivity and infrastructure. Table 6 provides an overview of these events.

Table 6: Community Events

No.	Date	Event	City
1	5/3/2025	Cinco de Mayo	Anaheim
2	5/9/2025	Southwest Senior Center's Mother's Day Celebration*	Santa Ana
3	5/9/2025	Mother's Day Celebration*	Santa Ana
4	5/10/2025	Korean American Seniors Association of O.C.'s Resource Fair*	Buena Park
5	5/16/2025	Norooz Clinic Foundation's Community Health event*	Costa Mesa
6	5/17/2025	Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Event*	Westminster
7	5/23/2025	San Clemente Senior Community Resource Fair	San Clemente
8	5/25/2025	Santa Ana Zoo - Party for the Planet	Santa Ana
9	5/27/2025	Surf City Nights	Huntington Beach
10	5/28/2025	Fullerton Farmers Market	Fullerton
11	5/31/2025	Spring into Summer Concert with O.C. Parks*	Santa Ana
12	5/31/2025	Health and Wellness Expo	Brea
13	6/1/2025	Tustin Street Fair & Cook-Off	Tustin
14	6/5/2025	Anaheim Farmers Market	Anaheim
15	6/14/2025	Juneteenth Celebration	Santa Ana
16	6/14/2025	O.C. Philippines Independence Day Celebration*	Irvine
17	6/18/2025	Santa Ana Father's Day Celebration*	Santa Ana
18	6/18/2025	San Juan Summer Nites Concert Series	San Juan Capistrano

19	6/19/2025	Garden Grove Summer Series	Garden Grove
20	6/21/2025	Mission Viejo Pride's Second Annual Pride Event	Mission Viejo
21	6/21/2025	Irvine Juneteenth Celebration*	Irvine
22	6/22/2025	Fountain Valley Summerfest 2025	Fountain Valley
23	6/27/2025	Family Summer Resource Fair*	Anaheim
24	6/28/2025	Older Adults Resource Fair*	Irvine
25	7/3/2025	Independence Day Community Celebration	Costa Mesa
26	8/23/2025	Lake Forest Concert in the Park & Car Show	Lake Forest

**Events OCTA's Community Engagement Team participated in*

v. Public Opinion Research

A. Focus Groups Findings

In April and May 2025, FM3 Research conducted four focus groups with 40 Orange County residents representing diverse geographic areas, demographic backgrounds, and transportation usage patterns. Two sessions were held north of the SR-55 Freeway (including one Spanish-language group) and two south of the SR-55. The discussions provided qualitative insight into residents' transportation experiences, priorities, and perceptions of Measure M2.

Traffic congestion emerged as the dominant concern across all groups. Participants widely agreed that congestion has worsened or remained persistently high, often attributing this to population growth and development outpacing infrastructure improvements. Despite these concerns, most participants described the transportation system overall as "fair" to "good," with residents south of the SR-55 generally offering more positive assessments than those north of the SR-55.

When discussing public transportation, participants focused primarily on bus service, citing concerns about convenience, frequency, reliability, and safety. While most acknowledged Orange County's strong car culture, several expressed interest in expanded rail, trolley, and first-/last-mile options if service were more accessible and efficient. Views were mixed on toll roads and express lanes, with some questioning fairness and congestion impacts, while others acknowledged time-saving benefits.

Awareness of Measure M2 was limited. Few participants could describe the program prior to reviewing ballot language, though most responded positively to its stated goals. Support was frequently qualified by skepticism about whether improvements have kept pace with growth and whether funds are distributed fairly across communities. Participants emphasized the importance of transparency, accountability, and clearly communicated outcomes.

Overall, the focus groups reinforced themes later confirmed in the quantitative survey: roadway maintenance and congestion relief remain top priorities, transit investments are broadly supported – particularly when focused on convenience and accessibility – and there is opportunity to increase public awareness of Measure M2 and its funded improvements. Additional details and findings from these sessions are provided in ***Appendix A***.

B. Quantitative Survey Findings

The quantitative survey results provided insight into how residents experienced the transportation system and what they viewed as the highest priorities for investment. While residents generally reported positive perceptions of quality of life in Orange County, views of the transportation system were more mixed. Many respondents rated overall transportation conditions as fair, indicating moderate satisfaction alongside opportunities for continued improvement.

Roadway maintenance and congestion relief emerged as the highest transportation priorities across the county. Fixing potholes and repairing streets, coordinating traffic signals to improve traffic flow, and reducing congestion on major roadways consistently ranked as top priorities. These findings reflected the fact that most residents primarily travel by car and interact most frequently with local streets and freeways.

Awareness of Measure M2 was limited prior to the survey, with approximately half of respondents reporting they were unfamiliar with the program. Most respondents were also unable to identify specific transportation improvements funded by Measure M2. Out of the 1,025 respondents, 80 percent indicated that continuing local transportation funding was at least somewhat important, with support increasing further after respondents received additional information about Measure M2's purpose and use of funds.

The survey also revealed differences in transportation use and priorities across demographic groups. Younger residents and lower-income residents were more likely to rely on transit and to prioritize transit services, safety, and accessibility. Older and higher-income residents placed greater emphasis on roadway maintenance and traffic operations. Together, these findings highlighted the importance of maintaining a balanced transportation program that addressed core infrastructure needs while responding to the diverse mobility needs of Orange County's communities. Quantitative survey findings are provided in ***Appendix B*.**

III. INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES & TOOLS

Section III outlines the informational resources and tools developed to support public understanding and participation throughout the engagement process. These materials were designed to communicate key Review information, encourage stakeholder involvement, and gather feedback.

i. Stakeholder Database

A comprehensive stakeholder database served as a key tool to organize, track, and engage contacts and organizations with an interest in or involvement with Measure M2 programs and policies. For this effort, contacts were sourced from existing OCTA project databases including OC Transit Vision, Transportation Demand Management, and Long-Range Transportation Plan. Additional research was conducted to identify and include other relevant organizations. Two opt-in emails were also distributed to contacts who had previously engaged with OCTA projects. These emails introduced the Review and invited recipients to confirm their interest in receiving future updates and participating in upcoming engagement opportunities. As outreach activities progressed, the stakeholder database was updated with contacts gathered through meetings, briefings, community events, and surveys. The database was used to disseminate updates, invite participation in the qualitative survey and webinar, and track engagement across all outreach efforts.

ii. Fact Sheet

A fact sheet was developed to provide the community with background on Measure M2 as well as an overview of the Review. The fact sheet was translated into Spanish and Vietnamese and was featured on the Review webpage, distributed at all community events, included in the electronic resource toolkit, and shared through email campaigns.

iii. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

An FAQ document was developed to provide more detailed information about the Review. It featured commonly asked questions and responses regarding Measure M2 and the Ten-Year Review process. The FAQ was translated into Spanish and Vietnamese and made available at community pop-up events, on the Review webpage, and through the electronic toolkit.

iv. Infographic

A high-level infographic was developed to visually showcase Measure M2 milestones and accomplishments to date. The infographic highlighted key achievements, revenue allocations, completed projects, and overall program outcomes. It was translated into English, Spanish, and Vietnamese, and made available at community events. In addition, a full-size pull-up banner version of the infographic was also created and displayed at events as a visually engaging summary of the program.

v. Webpage

The OCTA Measure M2 Ten-Year Review webpage served as a comprehensive resource for information and updates. It provided background information on Measure M2 and the Review, outlined the Plan development timeline, and included community event details to support public

involvement. The webpage also featured collateral materials including fact sheets, FAQs, infographics, and recordings and presentations from the June 2025 webinar. The webpage was promoted through printed materials distributed at community events and across social media platforms, encouraging the public to explore additional information and sign up for updates.

vi. Community Survey

A key component of garnering public input was a comprehensive, countywide qualitative community survey. The survey was active from May to August 2025 and was designed to better understand public awareness of Measure M2, assess perceptions of its impact, and identify priorities for future transportation investments.

The survey included questions regarding familiarity with Measure M2-funded projects, transportation needs, and preferred improvements. Optional demographic questions were included to ensure broad and representative feedback. Community input collected through this effort helped inform the Review process and guide OCTA's long-term planning and investment strategies.

The survey was offered in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, and Mandarin to promote inclusivity and expand participation, especially among hard-to-reach communities. Notification campaigns followed a similar approach, promoting the survey through traditional and digital tactics, including e-blasts, social media, newspaper advertisements, flyer distribution, stakeholder engagements (see section IV), and bus interior advertisements. Community events also served as an important platform for encouraging participation. Survey participation by language is described in Table 7.

For a full overview and analysis of the qualitative survey, please visit ***Appendix C***.

Table 7: Community Survey Metrics

Date	Surveys Collected by Language					Total Surveys Collected
	English	Spanish	Vietnamese	Korean	Mandarin	Total
5/6/25 - 8/23/25	1,977	226	165	178	39	2,585

IV. NOTIFICATION EFFORTS

Notification efforts were made through the combined utilization of electronic mail distribution (eblasts), print advertisements, social media posts, website notices, a digital toolkit, and advertisement and promotion through bus interior advertisements.

i. Electronic Mail Distribution (E-blasts)

Electronic mail distribution was a primary method of communicating with the public, including Spanish- and Vietnamese-speaking communities. A total of seven e-blasts were distributed to invite interested stakeholders and community organizations to participate in the community webinar, complete the survey, and provide input. E-blasts were sent to contacts within the project's stakeholder database, which was updated regularly as new individuals subscribed for updates. See Table 8 for a full list of electronic email distribution.

Table 8: Eblast Distribution Metrics

Date	Type of Eblast	Sent	Open Rate
Community Webinar Eblasts			
5/6/25	Save The Date Eblast #1	1,436	57%
5/15/25	Reminder Eblast #2	1,434	38%
5/29/25	Reminder Eblast #3	1,500	41%
6/4/25	Reminder Eblast #4	1,499	41%
6/12/25	Webinar Thank You Eblast	1,533	45%
Survey Eblasts			
6/19/25	Survey Reminder & Updates Opt-in Eblast	1,974	10%
7/1/25	Survey Closure Eblast	3,112	23%

ii. Print Advertisements

Print and digital newspaper advertisements were placed in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese to promote the Review, invite public participation in the virtual community webinar, and encourage survey responses. As shown in Table 9, between May 12 and June 30, 2025, a total of 13 English-language advertisements ran across five newspapers – Dana Point Times, San Clemente Times, Orange County News, Fullerton Observer, and Foothill Sentry – collectively reaching over 220,000 readers throughout Orange County. To expand access and promote inclusive participation, Vietnamese-language advertisements were published three times in Vien Dong Daily News, reaching nearly 20,000 readers. Spanish-language promotions were shared through Miniondas' digital channels. This multilingual outreach approach was strategically designed to reflect regional demographics and maximize community engagement.

Table 9: Print Advertisements

No.	Newspaper	Run Dates	Circulation (Approx)	Type
1	Fullerton Observer	5/12/25, 6/1/25	79,000	Print/Digital
2	Dana Point Times	5/21/25, 5/28/25, 6/4/25	28,750	Print/Digital
3	Orange County News - Garden Grove	5/21/25, 5/28/25	2,500	Print

No.	Newspaper	Run Dates	Circulation (Approx)	Type
4	San Clemente Times	5/22/25, 5/9/25, 6/5/25	43,750	Print/Digital
5	Orange County News - Stanton	5/23/25, 5/30/25	2,500	Print
6	Vien Dong Daily News (Vietnamese)	5/23/25, 5/30/25, 6/6/25	20,000	Print
7	Miniondas (Spanish)	6/1/25 – 6/22/25	3,800	Digital
8	Foothill Sentry	6/1/2025 – 6/30/25	41,750	Print/Digital

iii. Paid Social Media Advertisements

Paid social media advertisements on Facebook and Instagram were used to extend the reach of community surveys and beyond OCTA's existing followers. These targeted advertisements ensured content reached specific audiences based on location, interests, and demographics. The paid campaigns ran across both platforms to maximize visibility and engagement, as shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Paid Social Media Metrics

Date	Platforms Distributed	Total Reach	Total Impressions
7/1/25-7/6/25	Facebook, Instagram	162,978	748,753

iv. Organic Social Media Posts

Organic social media posts on Facebook (FB) and X were used to promote the community survey and the webinar to OCTA's followers. To support promotion efforts, four posts were published on Facebook, and four on X. A complete list of posting dates is shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Organic Social Media

Date	Platforms Distributed
5/13/25	FB, X
5/22/25	FB, X
5/30/25	FB, X
6/19/25	FB, X

v. Website Notice

OCTA's Measure M2 Ten-Year Review webpage was continuously updated to inform the public of upcoming engagement opportunities, provide informational resources, and encourage participation through the community survey. The page was featured within the main Measure M2 website, which includes additional background, funding, and project information.

vi. Letter to State and Federal Offices

OCTA transmitted a formal notification letter regarding the Measure M2 Ten-Year Review to 22 state and federal elected officials representing Orange County. The correspondence provided an overview of the Review process, key milestones, and opportunities for engagement. This effort ensured that members of the Orange County legislative delegation were informed of the Review and invited to share input. For a sample letter, please see ***Appendix D***.

vii. Stakeholder Electronic Communications Toolkit

An electronic toolkit was developed to promote the community webinar and survey, featuring ready-to-use copy, content, and graphics for stakeholders to share with their audiences. The toolkit was posted on OCTA's digital campaign webpage and distributed twice to local municipalities, community organizations, local and federal government officials, Board members, and OCTA committee partners. Suggested promotional tactics included template content for e-blasts, newsletters, social media, website posts, calendar postings, and a phone script.

viii. Flyer Distribution

Bilingual flyers were distributed in two coordinated rounds across Orange County in May and June 2025. The initial May distribution effort focused on raising awareness of the community webinar and survey. Following the webinar, a second distribution campaign was implemented to encourage additional survey participation. In total, flyers were delivered to 53 libraries, city halls, and community centers. Locations were selected based on their proximity to key neighborhoods, public accessibility, and high foot traffic to help increase outreach to hard-to-reach communities. Materials were available in English/Spanish and English/Vietnamese to support broader language access.

ix. Bus Interior Advertisements

To increase awareness and engagement, the Review was promoted through interior bus advertisements which were placed on OCTA buses across the county. The bus advertisements featured the Review webpage and a QR code directing riders to the survey. The advertisement was presented in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

x. OC Bus App

The Review was also promoted through the OC Bus App, strategically positioning information where frequent riders could easily access it. Integrating the survey details into a platform regularly used by transit riders increased and encouraged broader community participation.

xi. OCTA Blog

Two posts were published on OCTA's *On the Move* and *NextStop* blogs to promote the community webinar and survey. The posts helped raise awareness and encouraged public participation in the Review process.

xii. Earned Media Coverage

Throughout the engagement period, several cities and media organizations shared information about the Review, community survey, and webinar. Table 12 below provides an overview of the coverage.

Table 12: Earned Media Coverage

Date	Source	Media Type
5/17/25	City of Huntington Beach	Instagram Post
5/29/25	City of Laguna Hills	Instagram Post
6/3/25	City of Fountain Valley	Online Article
6/12/25	City of Laguna Hills	Instagram Post
6/17/25	City of Fountain Valley	Facebook Post
6/21/25	Fullerton Observer	Online Article

V. CONCLUSION

The Measure M2 Ten-Year Review outreach program was designed to engage, inform, and gather meaningful feedback from stakeholders representing all of Orange County. Through surveys, public meetings, stakeholder briefings, focus groups, pop-up events, and digital outreach efforts conducted across all five Supervisorial Districts, OCTA incorporated input from thousands of community members and partners throughout the county.

Feedback from agency partners and regional stakeholders recognized Measure M2's record of delivery while also emphasizing the importance of continued transparency and visibility. Public and community participants emphasized the importance of greater visibility and clear communications regarding how Measure M2 funds are allocated and projects and programs are delivered.

While many acknowledged the program's achievements, participants also identified ongoing challenges related to traffic congestion and emphasized the need to balance continued roadway investment with community livability, sustainability, and safety. Across all engagement activities, stakeholders encouraged stronger collaboration among OCTA, local governments, businesses, and research institutions, as well as expanded investment in public transit, emerging mobility technologies, and other innovative transportation solutions to address evolving travel needs.

The cumulative input received provided OCTA with valuable insights into community priorities and the level of public support for the Plan. The Ten-Year Review process reinforced OCTA's commitment to accountability and ensuring that voter-approved transportation funds remain aligned with community needs and expectations. The insights gathered through this process will help guide future decision-making and ensure that Measure M2 investments continue to support a safe, efficient, and sustainable transportation system in Orange County.

Appendix A: Focus Group Executive Summary

Executive Summary
Orange County
Transportation Focus Groups
April 30 and May 6, 2025

Submitted by FM3 Research

Contact:
Richard Bernard, Ph.D.
Partner

FM3 RESEARCH | OPINION RESEARCH & STRATEGY

July 2, 2025 330-388

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This report provides a summary of key findings from four focus groups conducted on behalf of the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA).

The focus groups were conducted as part of OCTA's review of Measure M priorities for its Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

It is important to note that while we spoke to 40 Orange County residents of diverse backgrounds, they do not constitute a random and representative sample of County residents or voters. Focus group findings are not intended nor can they be generalized to the broader population of residents with any kind of statistical precision. However, focus groups provide the unique opportunity to dig deeply into mindsets, customary actions or beliefs and provide in-depth evaluations of issues that explain the thinking behind residents' answers to questions that can be asked in a survey. Qualitative research helps to better inform decisions by allowing for wide-ranging and open-ended discussion where we hear from residents in their own words rather than being limited to yes and no and multiple choice questions most commonly found in survey research. The focus group findings will be valuable to inform the content of a survey which will quantify the opinions expressed in the groups.

METHODOLOGY

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates conducted four focus groups among Orange County residents, with two groups held on April 30, 2025, and two groups on May 6, 2025.

Research Objectives

The objective of the research broadly was to assess opinions regarding transportation in the County. More specifically, the research addressed the following topic areas:

- Awareness of OCTA, including familiarity with who is responsible for transportation in Orange County
- Opinions of and concerns with the Orange County transportation system, including highways and freeways, public transportation (including the difference between streetcars, trolleys, and light rail), toll roads, local roads, and active transportation
- Views on current and future transportation funding
- Opinions of and priorities regarding the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
- Awareness and opinions of Measure M/M2 and assess OCTA efforts to continue to be in line with public expectations/needs

Participant Recruitment Parameters

The participants were recruited to reflect much of the diversity of Orange County, including geographic, racial/ethnic, income, educational attainment, transit use, gender, age (participants were recruited between the ages of 21 and 75), political, and occupational differences.

The focus groups included residents (both registered voters and non-voters) who live in Orange County. Each group included 10 participants and was approximately two hours in duration. The groups were segmented by geography.

- Two groups of residents living north of the 55 were held in Garden Grove on April 30, 2025, with one group conducted in English and the other conducted in Spanish for those whose preferred language is Spanish (referred to in this report as "English-speaking" and "Spanish-speaking" groups).

- Two groups of residents living south of the 55 Freeway were held in Irvine on May 6, 2025. One group was made up of residents from the Central subregion of cities south of the 55 and the other from the South subregion. Both groups were conducted in English.

By segmenting the groups by geographic region, it allowed us to hear perspectives that may be influenced by many geographic-related factors, such as distance from bordering counties, commuting patterns, access to or awareness of local public transportation (such as the Laguna Beach and San Clemente trolleys and the developing Santa Ana streetcar), area specific transportation concerns (such as the landslides in San Clemente), and socio-economic differences that impact transportation behavior and needs. While focus groups are not designed to quantifiably document differences in opinion that emerge as a result of geographic factors, the findings will help inform future quantitative research that will be able to do so. Future quantitative research will also allow us to document differences by race, gender, age, years of residency and other demographic and behavioral differences that emerge in these focus groups.

Research Design and Plan

FM3 managed all aspects of the research plan and design, including the following:

- Design of screening questionnaires used to recruit participants
- Management of the recruitment process
- Drafting of moderator's guide and participant workbooks
- Management of and coordination with focus group venues
- Management of participant incentives and observer and participant meals
- Moderating of focus groups
- Debrief of focus groups after each night of groups and in follow-up calls
- Audio and video recordings of the groups and verbatim transcripts
- Report of findings, including a PowerPoint presentation, detailed report, and this executive summary.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Awareness of OCTA

- **Most participants recognize the name "OCTA," but their familiarity is modest.** Just a few in each group were able to volunteer OCTA as responsible for transportation in Orange County, and most associate OCTA primarily (or only) with buses.

Impressions of the Orange County Transportation System

- **Traffic is at the forefront of many participants' concerns, and the participants voiced throughout the groups that traffic has gotten worse or remains "bad."**

- **Participants believe growth—including increased population, new apartment buildings, and new businesses—has led to persistent congestion despite expanded lanes and other County efforts to mitigate traffic.** While they recognize that efforts have been made to reduce congestion—including freeway lane expansions—most feel that any improvement is, at best, short-lived as the area's growing population and changing commuting patterns quickly fill in those new lanes. Moreover, some participants do not recognize even momentary improvements and believe some money is misspent or wasted.

- **While some say remote work has reduced congestion, others feel it has led to traffic all day rather than just at typical peak times.**

- **Despite concerns about traffic, the participants generally have a fair to positive impression of the Orange County transportation system overall. However, reviews are more positive among residents living south of the 55 than north of it** (16 of the 20 giving an "excellent" or "good" review in the south compared to three in the north). Residents south of the 55 were more likely to consider transportation beyond public transit in assessing the system, while those north of the 55 were more likely to mention issues with bus services and public transit generally as behind their reviews.

- **The participants view Orange County's transportation system positively in comparison to neighboring counties—particularly Los Angeles County.** Many believe Orange County's roads are in better condition, the freeways are "wider," and there is less traffic—noting that everything slows down as soon as you enter Los Angeles County. A few participants mentioned that public transportation is better in Los Angeles County, and some participants consider the San Diego system to be "tied" with Orange County.

- **When the participants hear "public transportation," their thinking is primarily focused on buses—with nearly all participants voicing concern with the convenience, efficiency, and for some, reliability and safety of buses.**

- **Some participants, primarily those living south of the 55, have experience with local shuttles and trolleys and view them very favorably.**

- **While those aware of local trolleys and street cars view them positively, there is confusion about the terminology "streetcar," "trolley," and "light rail"—with some using the terms "streetcar" and "trolley" interchangeably.** This highlights the importance of better defining the forms of transportation OCTA wishes

to market or communicate about rather than relying on residents to know what OCTA means when it talks about light rail, street cars, or trolleys specifically.

- **Several participants volunteered their opposition to toll roads and express lanes because they believe they cause more congestion for those who cannot afford to pay for these dedicated lanes or do not qualify.** While the focus group moderator clearly explained at multiple times in the groups that OCTA is not responsible for all toll roads in Orange County, the discussion reveals that opinions of these toll roads influence opinions of OCTA, how county transportation funds are spent, and the system generally.

Transportation Funding

- **The participants have little awareness of how transportation in Orange County is funded.** They speculate that it is paid for by taxes—local, state, federal, or just in general; a bond measure; fines and special fees, business taxes, and DMV registration. Just one participant volunteered Measure M specifically, while several participants recalled signs saying "your tax dollars at work."

- **Most participants believe there is a need for continued funding and at least "some" need for additional transportation funds to reduce congestion in Orange County—saying without it, the system will decline and get worse.** However, several in the North of 55 English-speaking group oppose continued funding because they believe traffic has gotten worse despite the funding, which they attribute to money being misspent. And several across the groups say there is "some" need rather than a "great" need for more funding because of concerns about how existing funds have been spent and accountability.

- **Throughout the discussion, some participants in the North of 55 Spanish-speaking group spoke out that they feel their areas do not receive the same level of funding or attention as other areas.** As a result, they gave weaker ratings to the transportation system and offered less support for continued or additional funding.

- **The participants generally prefer local funding** where there is more control over how it is used and a guaranteed source of revenue rather than state and federal funding which is less predictable and has strings attached. Yet some worry that local funding means increased local taxes.

Long-range Transportation Planning

- **Upgrading, expanding, and improving freeways and public transit are the top long-range transportation planning priorities overall.** Many participants would like to see investments in both freeways and public transit—often seeing the latter as an aspirational solution and the former as a more immediate, practical one.

- **Those who prioritize freeway and highway transportation improvements—particularly reducing bottlenecks and adding lanes—generally do so because they use those freeways often.** However, a few participants were skeptical that adding lanes on freeways/highways will reduce traffic and think it will just lead to more cars on the roads.

- **Some participants who consider investments in public transportation to be a top priority would like to see expanded hours and more frequent bus service, while others would like to see a large-scale rail system connecting all areas of the County.**

- **As mentioned, Orange County gets high marks from the participants for the quality of the roads—especially in comparison to other areas. As a result, it is not surprising that the funding area including local roads is a second-tier priority behind freeway/highway improvements and public transportation**. Some spoke about the importance of maintaining roads and filling potholes as well as improving light synchronization.

- **Nearly all the participants believe some funding should be allocated to protection from extreme weather, but they place it far below public transit, freeways, and local roads as a priority.** While they recognize that earthquakes, extreme heat, fires, and, particularly, storms can degrade the quality of roads, lead to potholes, or cause dangerous flooding and landslide conditions, they feel that the low likelihood of these conditions having a major impact makes allocating funding in this area a lower priority. Even participants in San Clemente, where landslides have impacted train tracks, believe the situation is a "one-off" and most funds are better allocated elsewhere.

- **Adding bike lanes and other active transportation projects are the lowest priorities for nearly all participants.** Many participants feel there are adequate bike lanes, while others believe bike lanes take away from car lanes and contribute to more congestion. Some also spoke about the dangers of e-bikes being in the bike lanes—and the risks they pose for cyclists, pedestrians, and drivers alike.

- **While freeways and public transit are the clear top priorities, many feel the County needs a combination of priorities,** believing funds should also be allocated to improving local roads, and to a lesser extent, protecting transportation infrastructure from extreme weather and improving bike and pedestrian transportation.

- **When asked to evaluate 19 individual items, those related to freeway and public transit topped the list,** including: fixing freeway bottlenecks, adding regular lanes to freeways, developing a light rail transit network, improving the frequency of local bus services and extending hours of operation, adding dedicated truck lanes on highways and freeways, improving freeway conditions to destinations outside of Orange County, and expanding hours for Metrolink rail services. Two of the top items related to local roads: widening street intersections to better accommodate increased traffic flow and filling potholes and street maintenance.

- **Among the lowest priorities (and among the most often named as their single lowest priority) are adding dedicated express lanes to local freeways or converting existing freeway lanes to dedicated express toll lanes**—reflecting the opposition to these "pay" lanes heard from many throughout the groups.

- **Adding charging stations for electric cars in public parking lots and other areas is also among the most named as the lowest priority,** with the participants feeling owners of electric cars should charge their cars at home and not take up space where others need to park**.** Items related to bike and pedestrian improvements as well as environmental protections were low priorities as well.

- **By 21 to 9, participants prioritize improving freeways and local roads over investments in public transit and bike lanes when asked to make a choice.[1] However, most would like to see improvements in both areas.** Only those in the South of 55 Central Subregion group prioritize public/active transit.

Measure M

- **There is little awareness of Measure M.** Those who said it is familiar once they hear about Measure M erroneously believe it is something they voted on recently, and they may be confusing it with other measures assigned the letter "M."

- **Many recall signs saying "your tax dollars at work" once others mention them. And while a few noted seeing these signs along with "an M,"** others may be confusing it with signs with similar language, such as for SB 1.

- **The participants' transportation priorities are reflected in the Measure M language:** with a focus on freeway and highway congestion, public transit improvements, fixing potholes, and synchronizing lights. Therefore, it is not surprising that, on its face, nearly all the participants had a positive response to the Measure M ballot language—**37 of the 40 participants believe the passage of Measure M is a "good thing."**

- **Many qualify their support of the Measure M—calling it a "somewhat good" thing—because they believe Measure M sounds good "on paper" or "in theory," but do not believe the improvements promised have been realized—nor believe they will be in the time left on the 30-year measure.**

- **Those with more modest impressions of Measure M after learning more about it feel that the County has not kept up with growth and the demands on the system—with some feeling money has been misspent and there has been a lack of accountability, while others feel planning may have been poor or that that improvements just have not been able to keep pace.** They believe more should have been accomplished and the improvements more noticeable given that the County is more than half-way through the 30-year period established by Measure M.

- **Statements on behalf of Measure M resonated more in the South of 55 focus groups than in the North of 55 groups.** Nearly all the participants in the South of 55 groups found statements focused on accountability, local control, and preparing for future needs to be convincing reasons to support measure M. Meanwhile, just four in the North of 55 English-speaking group found the accountability statement convincing and two each for the local control and future needs statements (a vote was not taken in the Spanish-speaking group).

- Participants were provided three statements and asked how convincing they find each one to have a more positive opinion about Measure M:

[1] The question was not asked in the North of 55 English-speaking group.

- Those who found the ***Accountability*** statement convincing felt it addressed the concerns about transparency and accountability. Again, however, some felt it was more aspirational than applied, saying they are not certain if the promises in this statement have been borne out in reality.
- Those who found the ***Local*** statement convincing agree that local jurisdictions know their needs better than state or federal governments.
- Those who found the ***Future Needs*** statement convincing agree that it is important to update and "reevaluate" transportation plans within Measure M to prepare for the future. However, some still voiced reservations that these technological advances are actually being employed—reflecting the overlay of skepticism the influences their responses.

Appendix B: Quantitative Survey Executive Summary

Orange County Transportation Survey Executive Summary

Submitted by FM3 Research

Contact:
Richard Bernard, Ph.D.
Partner

FM3 RESEARCH | OPINION RESEARCH & STRATEGY

March 12, 2026

320-1239

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In 1990, Orange County voters approved Measure M, a 20-year, half-cent sales tax dedicated to funding transportation improvements, including public transit, freeways and highways, local roads, and active transportation projects, as well as protection against weather-related impacts. In 2006, Measure M funding was renewed for an additional 30 years (2011 until 2041). As part of Measure M, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) periodically conducts a Comprehensive Review of the Measure M program to determine whether policies, projects, and future objectives need adjustment. One aspect of this review is to assess support for Measure M transportation investments and evaluate whether OCTA's Measure M goals remain in alignment with the priorities of Orange County residents. This research study is an important component of that effort.

Methodology

From January 8 through 15, 2026, Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) conducted a dual-mode survey (online and via landline and cellular phones) of 1,025 Orange County residents ages 18 and older.[1]

The survey was commissioned by OCTA[2] to determine residents' satisfaction with the transportation system overall and across specific service areas, as well as to identify transportation priorities. In addition, the survey measured changes in public opinion compared to previous OCTA studies conducted in 2005, 2006, 2011, 2015, 2018, 2021, and 2024.[3] New questions were also added to the current study to explore awareness and perceptions of OCTA and Measure M, as well as attitudes toward continuing Measure M funding.

The margin of error for the survey sample as a whole is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points at the 95th confidence interval. This means 95 times out of 100, the survey results would fall within 3.1 percentage points of the results that would have been obtained if every adult resident in Orange County had been interviewed. The margin of error for smaller subgroups is larger.

Please note that the sum of two parts may not add up to the whole because of rounding error. For example, if 34.3% of residents give an "excellent" review and 21.3 give a "good" review, the total for positive reviews would equal 56%, not the 55% one would expect from adding up the two parts.

[1] For the balance of this executive summary, survey respondents will be referred to as residents or respondents.
[2] FM3 worked closely with OCTA to design the questionnaire.
[3] Previous studies were conducted by True North Research.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The survey results clearly show that residents believe it is important to continue the existing local funding for the Orange County Transportation system "now and into the future." Support for continuing Measure M funding grows when they are told its role in maintaining and improving the overall transportation system in Orange County.

Residents' transportation improvement priorities align with those of Measure M program goals. *Three out of four or more respondents support nearly every improvement tested – although with varying levels of priority. Fewer than 20% believe no funding should be spent in any area and between half and as much as 95% rated each improvement area a "medium" or "high" priority. The relative priority ranking of each specific improvement has changed little over the studies conducted since 2015.*

These findings come despite generally lukewarm ratings toward specific aspects of the transportation system in Orange County. *The modest reviews (a low proportion giving an "excellent" rating and a high number rating each item as "fair") most likely reflect some dissatisfaction. However,* ***low numbers of respondents give any one aspect of the transportation system a "poor" review.***

While nearly all respondents recognize OCTA's name when asked, the survey suggests awareness with OCTA and the role it plays is more modest. Furthermore, less than half of respondents had heard of Measure M – *even after being told that it is the County's half-cent transportation sales tax to help improve freeways, local streets, and transit services.* ***A low number of respondents said they could name a specific Measure M improvement.***

In essence, support for continued local transportation funding and Measure M specifically most likely reflects residents' perception of need based on their interaction with the transportation system – even if they don't know exactly what local funding has improved and who oversees the funding and projects.

Greater awareness of OCTA and Measure M may not bring with it more support for the transportation improvements it seeks to address. However, FM3 research has shown that more awareness of funding bodies and oversight agencies helps improve trust and the perception of transparency, effectiveness, and efficiency – all aspects of OCTA that the survey revealed respondents either could not rate or viewed less favorably.

Part 1: Quality of Life

- **Orange County residents have a positive impression of the quality of life in the County.** Three out of four (73%) respondents call the quality of life "excellent" (22%) or "good" (51%). Just 7% believe the quality of life is "poor," with the remaining 20% seeing it as "fair" (often reflecting an average or below average rating). Overall positive reviews of the quality of life in Orange County are down slightly from past years (79% to 85% in surveys from 2011 to 2024), and the proportion calling the quality of life "excellent," at 22%, is down six points from 28% in 2024 and from a high of 35% in 2015. FM3 research for other jurisdictions in Orange County and throughout California suggests that such decline may reflect concerns about cost of living (particularly housing as well as the cost of good, utilities, etc.), and perceptions of traffic, crime, and the local economy

(availability of jobs and stability of local businesses) typically top among them as well as national factors (inflation and societal concerns) that are beyond a local or regional jurisdiction's influence or control.

Part 2: Transportation Conditions and Services

Rating of Transportation Systems and Services

- **Ratings of the overall transportation system are lukewarm.** Four in 10 (40%) rate *the overall transportation system including bus, rail, freeways, highways, local roads, public transportation, sidewalks, bike lanes, trails, and all the ways that people get around the County* as "excellent" (7%) or "good" (33%). While just 2 in 10 consider the transportation system "poor" (14%) or "very poor" (7%), 36% consider it "fair" – a rating which generally indicates an average or below average impression. Although positive ratings outweigh negative ratings by 2 to 1, a large proportion of residents have a more modest, or "fair," view.

- **Large proportions of residents are unfamiliar with carpooling programs and public transit services in Orange County.** When asked about specific aspects of the transportation system, respondents were most unfamiliar with the following:

  - *Vanpool programs* (69% not sure)
  - *ACCESS Paratransit services for people with disabilities* (62% not sure)
  - *Rideshare and carpool matching programs* (53% not sure)
  - *Metrolink rail service* (43% not sure)
  - *Bus service* (39% not sure)

  Twenty-nine percent (29%) of respondents were unable to rate *the overall quality and condition of the 91 Express Lanes* and 25% were unable to rate the 405 Express Lanes. Bikeway planning is also unfamiliar to 25% of respondents.

  The high proportion unable to give a rating most likely reflects the usage rate of each of these services. Half of respondents have used the 91 or 405 Express Lanes in the last year, while 24% have used Metrolink, 14% a regular bus, and 2% used ACCESS paratransit service. When asked about their primary mode of transportation, 89% said they typically drive alone.

  There is little change in the familiarity compared to 2024 other than regarding *Metrolink rail service* where 36% were unable to give a rating in 2024 compared to 43% currently.

- **The results show that two-thirds or more of respondents familiar enough to give a review have a positive or fair (or average) impression of each transportation service studied. However, less than half of respondents consider any one area to be "excellent" or "good."**[4]

[4] The exception is for *the overall quality and condition of the 405 Express Lanes,* where 50% of those familiar have a positive impression (excellent or good rating).

- **Specifically, the services receiving the most positive reviews among those able to give a rating (with positive reviews outweighing negative ones in most cases by 2 to 1 or more) mainly focus on freeway and street conditions**:

  - *The overall quality and condition of the 405 Express Lanes* (50% excellent/good, 19% poor/very poor)
  - *The overall quality and condition of the 91 Express Lanes* (47%, 23%)
  - *ACCESS Paratransit services for people with disabilities* (46%, 28%)
  - *The overall quality and condition of freeways* (45%, 19%)
  - *The overall quality and condition of city streets* (43%, 23%)
  - *The overall transportation system including bus, rail, freeways, highways, local roads, public transportation, sidewalks, bike lanes, trails, and all ways that people get around the County* (41%, 22%)

- **Respondents able to give a review are slightly less positive about public transit, carpool services, and bikeway and road and freeway "planning," with near equal proportions giving a positive or negative assessment in most cases**:

  - *Rideshare and carpool matching programs* (39% excellent/good, 26% poor/very poor)
  - *Bikeway planning* (37%, 29%)
  - *Bus service* (36%, 33%)
  - *Metrolink rail service* (36%, 31%)
  - *Road and freeway planning* (35%, 28%)
  - *Vanpool programs* (32%, 32%)

- **There is little change in the proportion of respondents (of those able to give a review) with a positive impression of each transportation area compared to 2024. However, positive ratings are down notably in every area compared to 2015 and 2011** (the two prior studies where the question was asked).

Transportation Priorities

- **The survey shows that residents' priorities continue to align with Measure M program goals. Majorities feel all 25 service areas tested should receive funding – although with varying degrees of priority.**

- **The top priorities are focused on roadways, as well as extreme weather and pollution impacts. Notably, none of the top priorities address public transit other than services for seniors and those with disabilities. Instead, they reflect areas where most residents interact with the transportation system: roads.** Specifically, the top priorities include the following:

  - *Fix potholes and repair roadways* (95% high or medium priority, 76% high priority)
  - *Coordinate traffic signals on major roadways to improve traffic flow* (88%, 64%)
  - *Close gaps, improve intersections, and reduce traffic congestion on major roads throughout the county* (85%, 54%)

- *Take steps to protect the transportation system from flooding, mudslides, sink holes, and other extreme weather events* (82%, 48%)
- *Clean up polluted runoff from roads to reduce water pollution and protect local beaches* (81%, 48%)
- *Provide transit services to seniors and people with disabilities at a discounted rate* (79%, 50%)

- **Second-tier priorities – called high or medium priorities by 6 in 10 to 7 in 10 – include those increasing accessibility and safety of public transit, as well as freeway transportation.** These services include:

  - *Improve safety and security at transit stops and stations* (72% medium or high priority, 43% high priority)
  - *Modify streets so they can safely accommodate all forms of transportation including cars, transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists* (69%, 37%)
  - *Preserve and restore open space land to offset the impacts of freeway improvement projects* (68%, 39%)
  - *Add local bus and shuttle services in communities that aren't well served by regional transit services* (65%, 31%)
  - *Construct roads over or under rail tracks where needed to improve traffic flow* (63%, 29%)
  - *Widen the freeways* (62%, 30%)
  - *Provide free assistance and tow truck service to motorists who break down on freeways* (61%, 32%)
  - *Make it easier to get to METROLINK stations using shuttles, light rail, and other transit services* (61%, 31%)
  - *Improve ACCESS paratransit service for people with disabilities* (60%, 31%)

- **The lowest ranked priorities include those focused on specific forms of mass transit, particularly increasing these services – as well as creating more express lanes.** Yet apart from items focused on bike lanes, streetcars, and vanpools, these items are still priorities to nearly half or more residents. These findings align with FM3 focus group research on behalf of OCTA that found a value in providing public transit but a prioritization of road and freeway-related improvements.

- Specifically, the lowest ranked items based on the proportion calling them a medium or high priority include the following:

  - *Make it easier for transit riders to get to their final destination by offering shuttles, e-bikes, e-scooters, and rideshare services at transit stations* (57% medium/high priority, 28% high priority)
  - *Expand the Metrolink rail services* (56%, 31%)
  - *Add more local community shuttles or trolleys* (56%, 27%)
  - *Increase the frequency and hours of bus service* (55%, 26%)
  - *Add more bus routes* (54%, 23%)
  - *Maintain existing Metrolink service at the current level* (53%, 22%)
  - *Build express lanes on additional freeways to help relieve traffic congestion* (48%, 25%)
  - *Add more bike lanes* (45%, 19%)
  - *Add more local light rail streetcars* (41%, 22%)
  - *Expand vanpool programs* (28%, 9%)

- **The ranking of each transportation improvement as a priority has stayed consistent over the surveys conducted in the last 10 years.** While some items tested in each survey varied, generally, items ranked at the top in the current study were also at the top in all prior surveys since 2015 – showing that residents' priorities remain stable.

Part 3: OCTA and Measure M

Awareness and Opinions of OCTA

- **Nearly all respondents (94%) had heard of OCTA before the survey** – up from a range of 83% to 89% in past years. This question indicates a strong level of recognition – meaning residents recognize the name "OCTA" when asked. Recognition is often stronger than "recall" – with "recall" meaning to be able to volunteer a name when asked a question such as, "What is the name of the organization responsible for…?"

- **Favorable ratings of OCTA outnumber unfavorable reviews by 3 to 1 among those familiar.** When those who had heard of OCTA were asked their impression of the agency, 30% were unable to give an opinion – highlighting that recognition does not always equal familiarity. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the remaining respondents have a favorable view and 18% have an unfavorable one.

- **After hearing/reading a brief paragraph about OCTA being responsible for planning, funding, and developing Orange County's transportation system, favorable reviews outnumber unfavorable ones by 2 to 1 among those familiar (53% to 25%).** Some of the increase in unfavorable reviews may reflect that the paragraph reminded some respondents of aspects of the transportation system with which they are less satisfied. For example, many residents have concerns about express lanes and mentioning OCTA owning and operating the 91 and 405 Express Lanes may have contributed to the increase in unfavorable reviews.

  From 2011 to 2024, the surveys showed a trend toward more positive reviews after hearing additional information, with favorable ratings rising from 42% in 2011 to 59% in 2024. These ratings fell slightly to 53% currently. This change may reflect the ever-increasing scrutiny placed on government agencies, as well as changes in the information paragraph language[5].

- **Respondents are more likely to agree with positive statements about OCTA than to disagree. However, between 2 in 10 and 4 in 10 are not familiar enough to give an opinion**. The proportion that agree with each statement is down at least slightly from 2024 in each area.

  - Nearly 6 in 10 (58%) agree that *OCTA helps our local and regional economies function by improving our transportation system*. Just 21% disagree, with another 21% unable to give an opinion.

[5] The current survey included mention of Metrolink, which past surveys did not. It also described OCTA as *operating the countywide bus and paratransit system* rather than in previous surveys where it mentioned *planning, funding, managing, and developing . . . bus and transit services*. These language changes may contribute to the difference in results.

- By 2 to 1, respondents agree that *OCTA is a public agency I trust* (51% to 24%), with 25% unable to give an opinion.

- Also, by 2 to 1, respondents agree that *OCTA is actively seeking solutions to our transportation issues*, with 46% agreeing and 22% disagreeing (32% are unable to give an opinion).

- Respondents are nearly divided in their opinion of whether *OCTA makes good use of public funds,* with 35% agreeing and 26% disagreeing. A high proportion of respondents – 40% – are unsure.

- Four in 10 (41%) respondents are also unable to give an opinion regarding whether *OCTA listens to the general public*. Those providing a review are nearly divided: 32% to 27%.

Awareness of and Opinions of Measure M

- **Nearly half of respondents (46%) have heard of Measure M when told it is *Orange County's half-cent transportation sales tax program approved by voters in 2006 that helps improve freeways, local streets, and transit services throughout the county.*** However, awareness is modest, with only 16% having heard "a lot", while 31% have heard "a little." Half (50%) of respondents had not heard of Measure M (with 4% unsure if they had). Past surveys offered less information about Measure M, describing it as *also known as OC Go, Orange County's voter-approved half-cent transportation sales tax.* Awareness is up significantly from past years, most likely reflecting the additional information helping to spur recall. The proportion aware of Measure M in years prior ranged from 26% to 33%.

- **Most residents are not aware of specific transportation improvements funded by Measure M.** For the first time this year, respondents were asked if they are aware of specific transportation improvements in Orange County – such as freeway improvements, pothole repairs, or transit enhancements – that have been made possible by Measure M. **Four in 10 (39%) said they are aware of specific Measure transportation improvements, while 6 in 10 (61%) are not.** It is important to note that respondents who said they are familiar were not asked to name the specific improvement. Therefore, it is possible that they could erroneously consider an improvement to be related to Measure M.

- **Eight in 10 residents consider it at least "somewhat" important to continue this local transportation funding.** Six in 10 (60%) consider it "extremely" (29%) or "very" (31%) important *to continue this existing local funding for the overall Orange County transportation system now and into the future.* Another 20% consider it "somewhat" important, for a total of 80% considering continuing local transportation to be important. This question was asked for the first time this year.

- **After hearing how Measure M funds are used, the proportion considering continuing these local funds now and into the future increases** – further showing the value of educating residents about Measure M's role in maintaining and improving the transportation system. Sixty-five percent (65%) say it is "extremely" or "very" important to continue Measure M funding, and, in all, 85% of respondents consider this funding at least

"somewhat important." Therefore, hearing about Measure M specifically increases the already high level of support for continuing local funding for the Orange County transportation system.

Part 4: Travel Behavior

- **Nearly 9 in 10 respondents volunteered that they primarily drive alone when traveling in Orange County. No more than 5% name any other form of transportation as their primary means.** Five percent (5%) most often use the local bus, 2% Metrolink rail, and 1% each carpool with one other person; bike; or use a motorcycle, moped, motorized scooter, or e-bike.

- **Reflecting the reliance on a motor vehicle to drive around Orange County, the results show that no more than 7% use any form of mass transit at least monthly.**

  - One in four have used Metrolink rail in the past year, although just 5% report doing so at least once per month.

  - Smaller numbers have used a regular bus (14%) or OC Bus Rapid (6%) in the last year, with 7% and 3%, respectively, doing so at least once a month. However, Latino residents are more likely to have used a regular bus in the past year (24%) than white or Asian and Pacific Islander (API) residents (9%).

  - One in 10 (11%) respondents have used a community shuttle or trolley in the past 12 months, with 3% doing so at least once a month.

  - ACCESS Paratransit was used in the last 12 months by 2% of respondents – reflecting the limited audience it is designed to serve.

- **Half of respondents have used either the 91 (52%) or 405 (51%) Express Lanes in the last year, with 1 in 4 (24% and 27%, respectively), doing so at least once per month.**

Part 5: Employment and Commuting Behavior

- **Sixty-five percent (65%) of those surveyed are employed full-time (56%) or part-time (9%).** Another 5% are students, 2% are homemakers, and 20% are retired. Four percent (4%) are between jobs, while 2% are disabled and unable to work.

- **Among those employed, 16% work exclusively from home and 61% commute exclusively to a workplace outside of home, while 23% do a mix of both.** There is little difference in results among those who work full- and part-time.

- **Among those who work full time, 42% work from home five or more days a week**, while 27% do so three to four days and another 27% work one to two days. A lower number of those working part-time work from home five or more days a week (24%), while a higher proportion do so three to four days a week (42%). This is most likely because they work part time.

Appendix C: Community Survey Summary

Measure M Ten-Year Review

Orange County Transportation Authority

Measure M Ten-Year Review - Survey Analysis

Survey Results

The qualitative community survey was open to the public from May 6, 2025, through July 6, 2025, and generated 2,585 across English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korea, and Mandarin languages. The following summarizes key findings from the survey, highlighting the community perspectives of Measure M's performance and transportation priorities across Orange County.

Table 1: Survey Respondent Profile

Q1: Which of the following best describes you? (Select all that apply)*	
Resident of Orange County	90%
Commuter who travels through Orange County	17%
Business owner in Orange County	5%
Transportation advocate or nonprofit representative	4%
Local government staff	3%
OCTA Committee Member	2%
Other	4%
Elected Official	1%

Table 2: Measure M Familiarity

Q2: Prior to taking this survey, how familiar were you with M2?	
Not familiar at all	54%
Somewhat familiar	18%
Heard of it, but don't know the details	17%
Very Familiar	11%

Table 3: Measure M Transportation Investments Awareness

Q3: Prior to taking this survey, which of the following M2 transportation investments were you aware of? (Select all that apply)	
Freeway improvements on I-5, I-405, I-605, SR-22, SR-55, SR-57 and SR-91 to relieve congestion	40%

I was not aware of any transportation investments being made	38%
Fix potholes and resurface streets	22%
OC Streetcar (a form of light transit that will be in operation early next year)	21%
Provide transit services, at reduced rates, for seniors and persons with disabilities	17%
Expand Metrolink rail, station parking capacity, and connections to local communities	16%
Motorist and towing services for vehicles stuck on freeways	11%
Reduce air and water pollution, and protect local beaches by cleaning up oil runoff from roadways	10%
Synchronize traffic lights at 2,000 intersections across the county	8%
Purchase land for preservation and fund habitat restoration projects	5%
Other	1%

Table 4: Public Opinion on M2's Transportation Improvements

Q4: M2 has delivered the projects, programs and services mentioned in the previous question. Based on this, do you believe M2 has helped improve transportation in Orange County?	
Yes, but there is still room for improvement	33%
I'm not sure	32%
Yes, significantly	26%
No	9%

Table 5: Transportation Improvement Prioritization

Q5: Using the list below, which transportation improvements do you think should be prioritized in Orange County? (Select up to five)	
Freeway improvements to reduce congestion	45%
Fix potholes and repair roadways	40%
Expand Metrolink service	31%
Expand bus service including bus rapid transit (fewer stops)	29%
Improve connections to transit hubs using shuttles, light rail, or other transit services	26%
Add more bike lanes and sidewalks	22%
Increase traffic signal synchronization to improve traffic flow	22%
Construct roads over or under rail tracks where needed to improve traffic flow	18%
Increase services and programs for seniors	18%
Expand light rail services like the OC Streetcar	16%
Provide free motorist services to broken-down vehicles on the freeway	16%
Expand environmental cleanup programs	13%
Improve paratransit services for persons with disabilities	12%
Other	3%

Question 6 invited open-ended feedback from survey respondents. The top 5 most frequently mentioned themes and comments are summarized below:

Q6 Do you have any other comments, suggestions, or concerns related to transportation in Orange County or M2? (Open-ended)

- Rail Expansion/improvement (Metrolink, Streetcar, LOSSAN): 26 mentions

- More/faster bus service and frequency (including weeknights/weekends): 20
- Bus stop & rider amenities (shelter, shade, benches, lighting, restrooms, signage): 18
- Bike/ped and micromobility (protected lanes, walkability, trails): 13
- Opposition to freeway widening/additional toll roads: 8

Demographics

Several optional questions were asked to gather information about survey participants, including their income, age, and other characteristics. These responses help OCTA better understand who participated in the survey.

Figure 1: Age Range

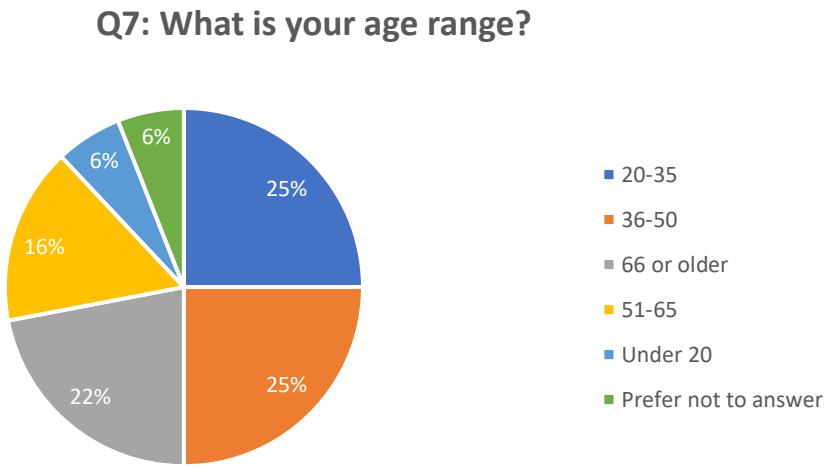


Figure 2: Orange County Residency

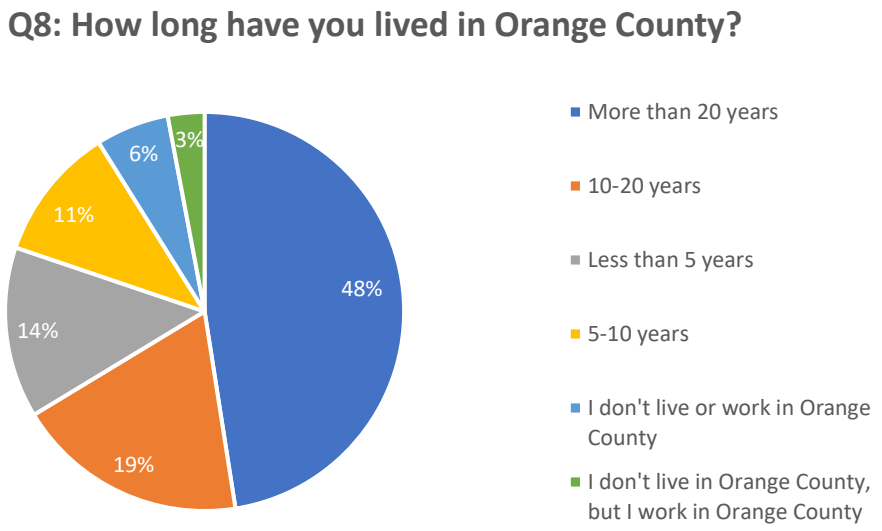


Figure 3: Annual Household Income

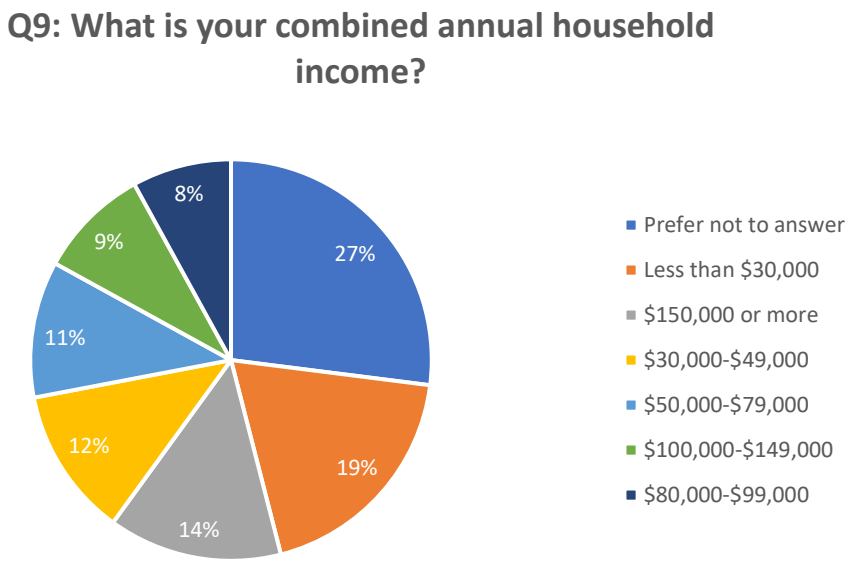


Figure 4: Ethnicity

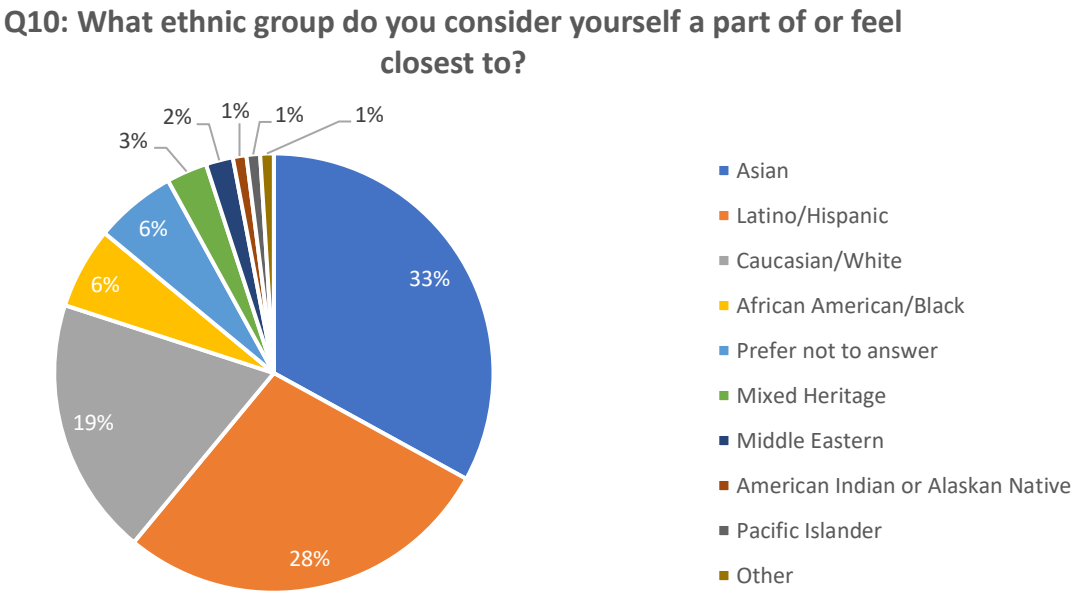


Figure 5: Total Zip Codes

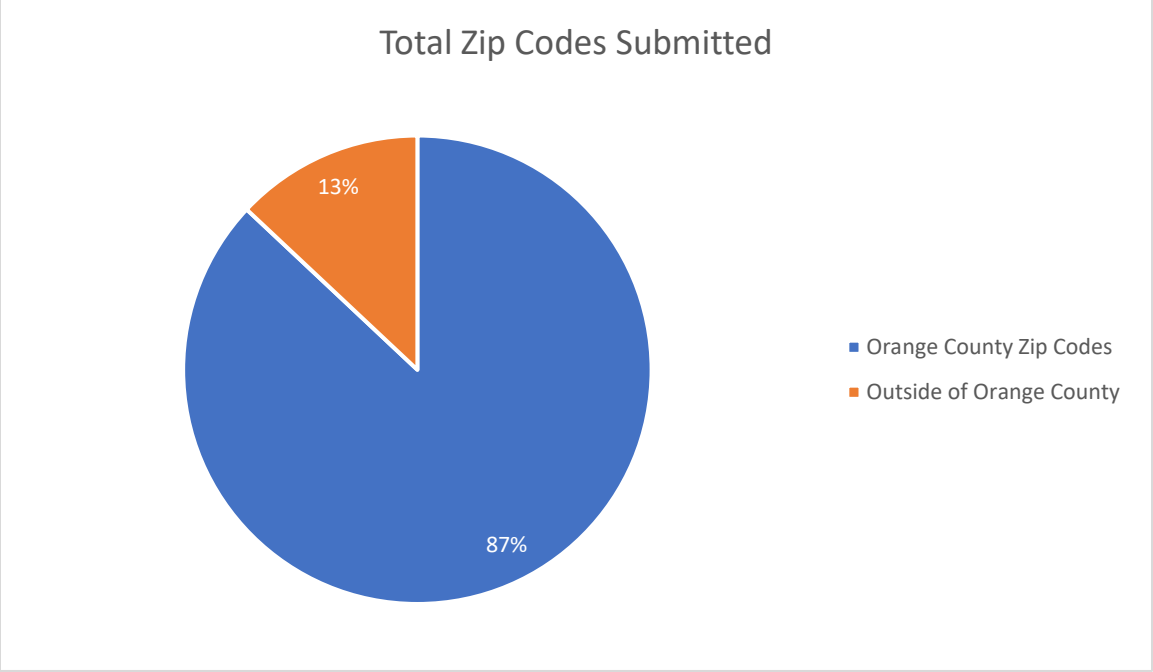
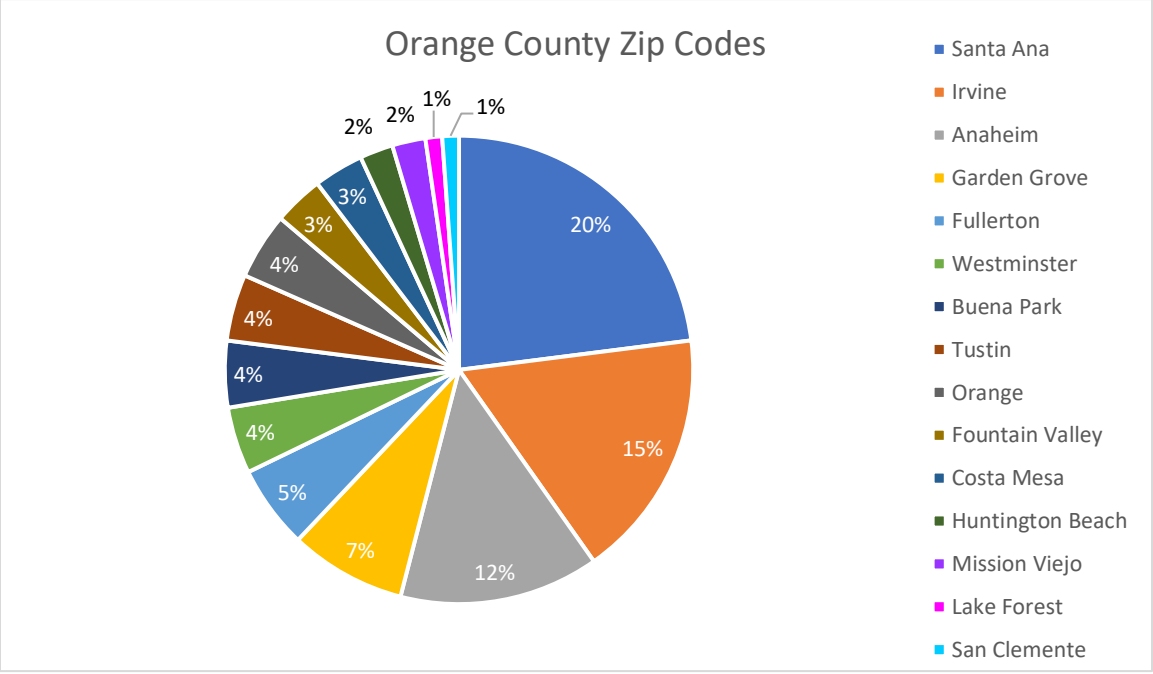


Figure 6: Orange County Zip Codes (Top 15)



Appendix D: Sample Letter to State and Federal Offices

OCTA

AFFILIATED AGENCIES

Orange County Transit District

Local Transportation Authority

Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies

Consolidated Transportation Service Agency

Congestion Management Agency

June 6, 2025

The Honorable Bob Archuleta
California State Senate
12501 Imperial Hwy. Ste. 110
Norwalk, CA 90650

Dear Senator Archuleta,

Nearly 20 years have passed since Orange County voters approved Measure M2, a 30-year, half-cent sales tax dedicated to funding critical transportation improvements across the county. Since its passage in 2006, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) has delivered significant progress on the voter-approved Transportation Investment Plan. Key achievements include:

- Completion of 15 out of 30 planned freeway improvement projects
- $1.2 billion invested to restore and improve local streets
- Synchronization of more than 3,700 traffic signals to reduce congestion
- $81.5 million in funding for community-based shuttles
- Completion of seven rail grade separation projects to improve safety and mobility
- $144 million allocated to transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities
- Preservation of 1,300 acres of open space through environmental mitigation efforts
- Removal of more than 81.5 million gallons of trash from local waterways

As required by the ordinance's taxpayer safeguards, OCTA is conducting a comprehensive Ten-Year Review of the Measure M2 program to evaluate its performance, transparency, and impact.

We are seeking feedback from our state and federal delegation on Measure M2's implementation, as your insight is valuable in shaping this review. We welcome your feedback through any channel convenient to you.

We invite you to participate in the following ways:

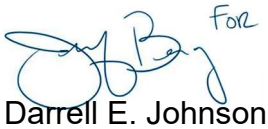
- Submit feedback or observations on Measure M2's progress and outcomes through a brief online survey by Monday, June 30, 2025: https://www.octa.net/M2ReviewSurvey

- Submit feedback via letter or email by August 31, 2025. OCTA staff is also happy to meet with your office to discuss the M2 Ten-Year Review in more detail.

Additional information on the OCTA Measure M2 Ten-Year Review effort is available here.

Your perspective is important to this process. Thank you for your continued partnership and interest in Orange County's transportation future. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Kristin Jacinto, Executive Director of Government Relations, at (714) 560-5754 or kjacinto@octa.net.

Sincerely,



Darrell E. Johnson
Chief Executive Officer

DEJ:aec