



August 13, 2026

To: Environmental Cleanup Allocation Committee

From: Orange County Transportation Authority Staff

Subject: Comprehensive Transportation Funding Programs – Project X
Tier 1 2026 Call for Projects Programming Recommendations

Overview

The Orange County Transportation Authority's Environmental Cleanup Program provides Measure M2 funding for water quality improvement projects to address transportation-generated pollution. The 2026 Tier 1 Grant Program call for projects was issued on March 9, 2026. Evaluations of grant applications are now complete, and a list of projects is presented for review and endorsement of the recommended funding allocations.

Recommendations

- A. Concur with the application review committee's recommendation and recommend approval to the Board of Directors to allocate \$3,870,044 in Tier 1 Environmental Cleanup Program funding for eight projects.
- B. Recommend Board of Directors approval of an exception to the limitation within the Comprehensive Transportation Funding Programs guidelines that only agencies that have been deemed eligible for Measure M2 by the Board of Directors may receive funding to allow the City of Huntington Beach to receive a funding award through the Tier 1 Environmental Cleanup Program, despite their eligibility status.

Background

In May 2010, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Board of Directors (Board) approved a two-tiered approach for the Measure M2 (M2) Project X Environmental Cleanup Program (ECP). The Tier 1 Grant Program is designed to mitigate the more visible forms of pollutants, such as litter and debris, which collect on roadways and in catch basins prior to being deposited in waterways and the ocean. The Tier 2 Grant Program consists of funding for regional, potentially multijurisdictional, capital-intensive

projects which address non-visible forms of pollution such as heavy metals, organic chemicals, sediment, and other transportation-related pollutants.

ECP funds are available for Orange County local jurisdictions to purchase and install equipment and other related best management practices that supplement, not supplant, current water quality programs. Proposed projects must demonstrate a direct nexus to the reduction of transportation-related pollution, as developed and defined by OCTA's Environmental Cleanup Allocation Committee (ECAC).

Since 2011, the Board has approved funding for 241 Tier 1 projects through 15 calls for projects (call), totaling approximately \$43.4 million.

On March 9, 2026, the Board approved issuance of the 2026 ECP Tier 1 call. Based on the cash flow assumption available at that time, the anticipated funding level for this program was approximately \$3.5 million, with additional funding subject to availability. The deadline to submit projects for consideration for the 2026 call was May 7, 2026.

Discussion

OCTA received nine applications from nine local jurisdictions requesting a total of \$4.3 million in ECP Tier 1 funding. Applications were reviewed and evaluated by an application review committee consisting of OCTA staff and two members of the ECAC. Project applications were evaluated based on Board-approved Tier 1 selection criteria, which included the following:

- Effectiveness at removing trash and debris;
- Cost/benefit analyses;
- Pollution-reducing benefits;
- Project readiness;
- Adequacy of proposed operations and maintenance plans; and
- Submission of clear and detailed work plans with specific implementation timing documented.

During the evaluation process, one project application was withdrawn, reducing the total requested funding for this call to \$3.87 million. Based upon evaluation of the remaining eight applications against these key criteria, the application review committee is recommending that the eight Tier 1 projects be funded, totaling \$3.87 million. The recommended projects were determined to be of good quality, demonstrate an excellent return on investment toward environmental cleanup, and generally align with the average scores of previously awarded

projects. Additional details on the recommended ECP projects are provided in Attachment A.

The ECP Tier 1 projects recommended for funding primarily consist of various catch basin debris screen devices including connector pipe screens (CPS), automatic retractable screens (ARS), full trash capture (FTC) units, grated inlet trash screens (GITS), brush inlet screens (BIS), Biofiltration basins, as well as one in-line trash trap system.

More detailed project descriptions are outlined in Attachment B, and a brief overview of these project types is provided below.

- Catch basin debris screen devices: These devices prevent debris from entering the storm drain system through catch basins and primarily consist of CPS, ARS, FTC, GITS, and BIS type devices.
- Bioretention basins are landscaped depressions or shallow basins used to slow and treat stormwater runoff. Stormwater is directed to the basin and then percolates through the system where it is treated by a number of physical, chemical, and biological processes. The cleaned water is then able to infiltrate native soils or can be directed to nearby stormwater drains or receiving waters.
- An in-line trash trap unit is a precast concrete structure designed to treat pollutants present in stormwater and urban runoff through the capturing of trash, solids, and other debris in disposable mesh nets from incoming flows. The design of the trash trap unit effectively uses the energy of water flow to drive pollutants into nets in order to capture and separate trash, debris, and sediment, including all particles larger than one millimeter. Oil absorbing material can also be placed inside or outside the nets to absorb oil sheen and grease.

As part of the Tier 1 program, local jurisdictions are required to contribute a minimum cash match of 20 percent of total project costs. All recommended projects either meet or exceed this requirement.

Next Steps

With the ECAC's endorsement of the application review committee's recommendations, OCTA staff will seek approval of the programming recommendations by the Regional Transportation Planning Committee and Board in October 2026.

Upon final Board approval, each funded jurisdiction will be required to execute a letter amendment (to their existing M2 Master Funding Agreement) prior to project implementation, unless pre-award authority is requested allowing the jurisdiction to begin immediately after Board approval. Once this process is complete, OCTA will initiate project monitoring and Board reporting through the CTFP semi-annual review and M2 quarterly reporting processes.

Exception to Comprehensive Transportation Funding Program (CTFP) Guidelines:

The ECP Tier 1 program is one of several competitive funding programs through the Measure M2 program that are guided by the CTFP guidelines. The guidelines outline the general requirements for the individual programs as well as overarching requirements that apply to all competitive funding programs.

One of the projects recommended for funding was submitted by the City of Huntington Beach (City) and requires an exception to the CTFP guidelines. The CTFP guidelines state that local jurisdictions must fulfill the annual eligibility process and be deemed eligible by the OCTA Board to apply for and receive funding through any of the competitive CTFP programs. On May 12, 2025, the Board found the City ineligible to receive M2 Net Revenues for a period of five years; however, as part of that action, the Board specifically permitted the City to apply for competitive CTFP grants while the City takes steps to restore its eligibility. Accordingly, staff is requesting an exception to the guidelines to allow the City to receive a Tier 1 funding award. Any awarded funds would be withheld and would not be disbursed to the City until after the Board takes a future separate action to reestablish the City's eligibility to receive M2 Net Revenues. The City would start and potentially complete the project at risk as funds would only be available in the future if the City is found eligible again.

Summary

The M2 Project X ECP Tier 1 application review committee recently completed its review of the 2026 applications. The ECAC is requested to endorse the application review committee's proposal to fund eight ECP Tier 1 projects in the amount of \$3.87 million and advance the recommendation to the OCTA Board for approval. Also, an exception to the CTFP guidelines is required to award funding to one of the projects.

Attachments

- A. 2026 Project X Tier 1 Call for Projects – Programming Recommendations
- B. 2026 Project X Tier 1 Call for Projects – Project Summaries