

## Orange County Transportation Authority Guidance for Administering the Federal Transportation Improvement Program

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) has implemented procedures for the development of the Orange County Transportation Improvement Program. These procedures include additional requirements beyond those listed in the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) 2027 Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) guidelines for programming local, regional, and state agencies' projects in the FTIP in Orange County.

OCTA conducts FTIP workshops with the local agencies periodically to keep local agencies informed of the FTIP process and guidelines. These workshops provide an overview of the SCAG and OCTA FTIP guidelines and procedures, a tutorial on the OCFundtracker database, where FTIP projects are managed and amended, and provides an opportunity for local agencies to ask questions related to their FTIP projects. Tutorial videos, schedules, and more FTIP information can be found on OCTA's FTIP website.

Below is a list of the additional requirements for Orange County local agencies as outlined in the OCTA FTIP guidelines.

- All projects that are listed in the FTIP require some form of approval by the OCTA Board of Directors (Board), agency board or council, or funding agency to be included in the FTIP.
- Due to the timing and limited opportunities for FTIP amendments and modifications, OCTA staff may add OCTA projects into the FTIP prior to Board approval but will not seek funding until the Board has approved the project. Further, Board approval is expected to be sought within a reasonable amount of time of the project being listed in the FTIP.
- Local agencies are required to carry over, complete, or delete their FTIP projects in the OCFundtracker database during the biennial FTIP cycle.
- All agencies, except for the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), are required to provide a resolution from their governing board affirming their commitment to delivering and securing sufficient funding for the projects submitted in the FTIP. A new resolution is required for each FTIP cycle.
- Backup documentation that confirms approval of funding must be provided for all funds in the FTIP.
- If a project is determined to offset vehicle miles traveled (VMT) or is a transportation control measure (TCM), then OCTA will work with the local agency to determine the most appropriate time to add the project into the FTIP.<sup>1</sup>
- If a project is a TCM, then funding for the right-of-way or construction phases may be programmed in the last two years of the FTIP quadrennial in order to provide more flexibility for the local agency. These funds can be advanced through Local Advance Construction or the Expedited Project Selection Procedure (EPSP).<sup>2</sup>
- OCTA may program funds, at its discretion, to take advantage of processes, such as local advance construction and EPSP, if needed.<sup>2</sup>

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- OCTA staff has developed a review, checklist, and sign-off procedure to follow for every FTIP modification and amendment.

<sup>1</sup> The implementation of SB 743 (Chapter 386, Statutes of 2013) related to State Highway System projects throughout California has focused attention on VMT mitigation. With the implementation of SB 743, Caltrans is looking to focus attention on VMT mitigation by minimizing induced traffic and providing safe access and mobility through multimodal investments, operational improvements, and work with local partners. Projects which reduce or mitigate VMT impacts may be used as environmental mitigation for projects that will increase VMT. However, a project or program shown as already funded within an approved programming document like the FTIP implies that a project would not provide any additional benefits to offset the VMT impact. Thus, the project cannot be used as VMT mitigation.

OCTA will be strategic in adding projects that are considered TCMs. TCMs are specific transportation projects and programs committed to helping improve air quality. TCMs are required by the Federal Clean Air Act in ozone nonattainment areas that are classified as “serious, severe, or extreme” and under certain conditions [Section 182(c)] provide multiple benefits, including reductions of emissions and improvements to mobility and accessibility, and can help support better urban form.

Southern California has among the worst air quality in the nation and must implement all reasonably available measures to support attainment of federal and state air quality standards. If a TCM project cannot be delivered or is significantly delayed, the County Transportation Commission and SCAG must identify a replacement project, which must be approved through a lengthy process.

There are significant considerations in terms of adding a new project to the FTIP and OCTA will take these factors into consideration when determining the appropriate time to add a new project to the FTIP, particularly if the project may be used to offset VMT or a project that is a TCM project.

<sup>2</sup> Due to financial constraints within the FTIP and per FTIP guidelines, staff may program funding in the last two years of the FTIP quadrennial with the ability to advance the funding through processes such as local advance construction and EPSP, if needed. The local advance construction procedure allows agencies to program local dollars if they anticipate federal revenue will be received for reimbursement, which moves the project forward with limited federal funds. The EPSP allows for the advancement of projects for implementation purposes within the active period of the approved FTIP without the need for immediate processing amendments. This is not a new addition to the 2027 FTIP guidelines, but staff wants to acknowledge that it may utilize these processes to advance funding in the FTIP ahead of the Board-approved fiscal year if needed to expedite project delivery.