



March 2, 2026

To: Regional Transportation Planning Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Darrell E. Johnson", with the word "For" written in smaller letters above the signature.

Subject: Amendments to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways

Overview

The Orange County Transportation Authority administers the Master Plan of Arterial Highways, including the review and approval of amendments requested by local agencies. The City of Brea has requested amendments to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways that are recommended for approval. In addition, the City of Irvine requested an extension for an amendment originally approved by the Orange County Transportation Authority Board of Directors in April 2023, which is nearing its expiration date. The extension will allow the City of Irvine additional time to complete the required General Plan actions necessary to finalize the amendment. A status update is also provided on the Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendments that are in process.

Recommendations

- A. Conditionally approve the following amendments to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways:
 - Delete Tonner Canyon Road between Brea Canyon Road and the future extension of Valencia Avenue; and
 - Delete Valencia Avenue between Carbon Canyon Road and the future extension of Tonner Canyon Road.
- B. Conditionally approve a 24-month extension of the City of Irvine amendment for Red Hill Avenue between MacArthur Boulevard and Main Street to allow additional time for the City of Irvine to complete the required General Plan updates.
- C. Direct the Executive Director of Planning to file a Notice of Exemption pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act in support of the Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendments in the City of Brea.
- D. Receive and file a status report on the active Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendments.

Background

The Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) coordinates roadway system planning across Orange County jurisdictions. The MPAH was first adopted by the County of Orange in 1956, and the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) assumed administration responsibilities in 1995.

OCTA is responsible for maintaining the integrity and continuity of the MPAH system as it evolves to fulfill transportation circulation needs by reviewing changes proposed by local jurisdictions. The reviews consider potential transportation-related concerns and ensures interagency collaboration to avoid unintended impacts in neighboring jurisdictions or regional transportation systems. The City of Brea (Brea) has requested two MPAH amendments to Toner Canyon and Valencia Avenue, which are further described below and in Attachment A. The City of Irvine (Irvine) has requested to extend a previously approved amendment for reclassifying Red Hill Avenue between MacArthur Boulevard and Main Street from a major (six-lane, divided) arterial to a primary (four-lane, divided) arterial. The requested 24-month extension will allow additional time for Irvine to complete the required General Plan updates.

Discussion**Brea**

Brea has requested that the MPAH be amended to delete Tonner Canyon Road (from Brea Canyon Road to the future Valencia Avenue extension) and Valencia Avenue (from Carbon Canyon Road to the future Tonner Canyon Road extension). A map of Brea's amendment request is provided in Attachment B.

Forecasted 2050 conditions were evaluated using the Orange County Transportation Analysis Model version 5.1. If constructed, the segments are forecasted to carry approximately 2,000 daily vehicle trips. OCTA's modeling results indicated that removal of these segments would not result in significant impacts on the surrounding MPAH network or on State Route 57.

Note, the same amendment request was previously approved by the Board of Directors (Board) in 2021 but lapsed in July of 2024. Prior to the 2021 action, these segments were in right-of-way reserve status, a temporary MPAH classification used when future roadway feasibility is uncertain. In this case, uncertainty stemmed primarily from potential land-use changes in the surrounding area associated with the nearby landfill. The right-of-way reserve designation allowed the facilities to remain shown on the MPAH while being excluded from traffic modeling during that planning period.

The subsequent extension of landfill operations clarified long-term land-use conditions in the area and no longer supported retaining these facilities on the MPAH. However, due to challenges associated with housing element updates, the Board-approved condition of a three-year window to receive an updated General Plan reflecting the amendment lapsed in July 2024. Staff notified Brea of the submittal deadline; however, the General Plan update was significantly delayed. Brea is now anticipating completing its General Plan update in spring 2026.

The three-year window is intended to ensure timely processing of amendments while allowing sufficient time for local update procedures. To date, this is the only instance of an MPAH amendment that lapsed and was later resubmitted for Board consideration.

The findings summarized above utilize the latest available data to reaffirm that the proposed amendments are not expected to adversely impact the integrity of the MPAH network and, therefore, they are again recommended for approval.

Irvine

On April 10, 2023, the Board conditionally approved Irvine's request to reclassify Red Hill Avenue, between Main Street and MacArthur Boulevard, from a six-lane major arterial to a four-lane primary arterial. The request was supported by the traffic analysis and included agreed-upon mitigation measures to address related traffic considerations, which required a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the cities of Irvine and Santa Ana, and OCTA. Following Board approval, it took more time than anticipated for the two cities to work through the necessary legal and city council processes, resulting in the MOU being fully executed in December 2025. Due to the long MOU process, Irvine does not have enough time to complete their General Plan update before the Board-approved three-year window lapses.

The Irvine City Council is expected to approve the General Plan update by the end of 2026. With Board approval, extending the amendment deadline by 24 months would provide Irvine with adequate time to complete the General Plan update and finalize the MPAH amendment. Considering that the timeframe established for completing the General Plan update is set at the Board's discretion, along with the desire not to lose progress made on the MOU and that the data originally used to justify the amendment is reasonably current, staff is recommending Board approval of a 24-month extension.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Amendments to the MPAH will be reflected on the MPAH map once OCTA receives documentation confirming all affected General Plans are consistent with the proposed amendments and are compliant with CEQA. If such

documentation is not provided within three years of the Board’s approval, the request will expire.

If the proposed amendment is modified during the local agency’s General Plan process, the revised amendment must be returned to the Board for reconsideration and action.

Amendments to the MPAH are exempt from CEQA review. Accordingly, if the Board approves the recommendations, OCTA will file a CEQA Notice of Exemption in support of the proposed MPAH amendment in Brea.

MPAH Status Update

There are currently 15 active amendments proposed for the MPAH. Several of the active amendments are awaiting local agencies’ actions to amend their respective General Plans. Others are either under review, in the cooperative study process, or pending resolution of issues with other agencies as listed in Attachment C.

Summary

Brea has requested to amend the MPAH. Based on the analysis of the requested changes, the MPAH guidance has been satisfied, and staff recommends Board approval. Irvine is seeking a 24-month extension of a previously approved MPAH amendment to allow adequate time to complete the necessary General Plan update. A summary of pending MPAH amendments is also provided.

Attachments

- A. Letter from Mr. Michael Ho, P.E., Public Works Director, City of Brea, to Ms. Ivy Hang, Senior Transportation Analyst, Orange County Transportation Authority, Dated December 1, 2025, RE: MPAH Amendment Request for Tonner Canyon Road and Valencia Avenue
- B. City of Brea MPAH Amendment Map
- C. Status Report on Active Master Plan of Arterial Highways Amendments

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