



**August 28, 2025**

**To:** Regional Transportation Planning Committee

**From:** Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

**Subject:** Cooperative Agreement with the California Department of Transportation for the Preparation of the Project Report and Environmental Document for the State Route 57 Northbound Project from Lambert Road to the Orange County/Los Angeles County Line

### **Overview**

The Orange County Transportation Authority proposes to enter into a cooperative agreement with the California Department of Transportation to provide environmental phase services for preparation of the project report and environmental document for the State Route 57 Northbound Project from Lambert Road to the Orange County/Los Angeles County Line.

### **Recommendations**

- A. Authorize the use of \$3,250,000 in Measure M2 funds for the State Route 57 Northbound Project from Lambert Road to the Orange County/Los Angeles County Line.
- B. Authorize the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate and execute Cooperative Agreement No. C-5-4294 between the Orange County Transportation Authority and the California Department of Transportation, for preparation of the project report and environmental document for the State Route 57 Northbound Project from Lambert Road to the Orange County/Los Angeles County Line.

### **Discussion**

The State Route 57 (SR-57) Northbound Project from Lambert Road to the Orange County/Los Angeles County Line (Project) is part of Project G in the Measure M2 (M2) freeway program. The Next 10 Delivery Plan, adopted by the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Board of Directors (Board) on November 12, 2024, identifies the Project as one of the M2 freeway projects to

advance into a project ready state with completed environmental clearance. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is scheduled to approve the Project Study Report - Project Development Support for the Project in September 2025, after which the Project will be ready to proceed into the environmental phase.

The Project will improve the operational efficiency of truck traffic along northbound (NB) SR-57 between Lambert Road and the Orange County/Los Angeles County Line by adding a truck climbing lane in the NB direction. The NB mainline currently experiences operational deficiencies due to steep and sustained climbing grades combined with heavy truck traffic. The improved operational efficiency will better accommodate regional goods movement on the state highway system and, where feasible, improve multimodal efficiency by utilizing advanced technologies to manage transportation demands. A cooperative agreement between OCTA and Caltrans is required to document the obligations, roles, and responsibilities of each party and Caltrans' commitment to cost and schedule.

Project environmental clearance work is planned to begin in late 2025 and be completed by late 2028. Both state and federal environmental approval is required, so the Project will be eligible for use of federal funding. Pursuant to Chapter 3 of Title 23, United States Codes 23 U.S.C. 326 and 23 U.S.C. 327, Caltrans is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) lead agency for the Project. Caltrans is responsible for NEPA compliance, will determine the type of NEPA documentation, and will cause that documentation to be prepared in accordance with NEPA requirements. As the implementing agency for the environmental phase, Caltrans will be responsible for preparation of the project report and environmental document for the Project. Caltrans is required to review and approve the project build alternatives, traffic modeling, exceptions to design standards, and supporting studies and technical analysis.

This environmental phase of this project is proposed to be funded through a combination of state and local funds. The Board previously approved the use of \$6,500,000 State Transportation Improvement Program/Regional Improvement Program (STIP/RIP) funds.

Use of state funds for M2 freeway projects is consistent with OCTA Board-approved Capital Programming Policies (CPP), which prioritize all state and federal funds to fulfill commitments to M2 projects. The use of these STIP/RIP funds for the Project allows OCTA to preserve M2 freeway funds for future M2 freeway projects. In addition, by utilizing state funds and allowing Caltrans to draw the funds directly, OCTA can fund Caltrans' direct effort as the

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implementing agency at a lower overhead rate than would be required if using only local M2 funds.

To fully fund this phase of the Project, OCTA staff is requesting Board authorization of \$2,650,000 in M2 funds for Caltrans to perform the environmental work. Separately, OCTA will lead the public outreach activities, including hosting public meetings. The total cost of OCTA's public outreach activities is \$600,000. Therefore, the total amount of M2 funds needed for this phase of the Project is \$3,250,000. The use of M2 funds for the Project is consistent with the Board-approved CPP as this is Project G. Attachment A provides the updated Capital Funding Plan, which provides summarized funding information for all of OCTA's state highway projects.

**Fiscal Impact**

The environmental phase of the Project is included in OCTA's Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 Budget and subsequent FY budgets, Capital Programs Division, Account No. 0017-7519-FG105-11J, and will be funded with a combination of STIP/RIP and local M2 funds. Caltrans will withdraw \$6,500,000 directly from the state for the Project that will not flow through OCTA.

**Summary**

Staff requests Board of Directors' approval for the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate and execute Cooperative Agreement No. C-5-4294 between the Orange County Transportation Authority and the California Department of Transportation to perform environmental phase services for preparation of the project report and environmental document for the State Route 57 Northbound Project from Lambert Road to the Orange County/Los Angeles County Line.

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Transportation for the Preparation of the Project Report and  
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County Line**

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***Attachment***

- A. Capital Funding Program Report

**Prepared by:**



Niall Barrett, P.E.  
Program Manager  
(714) 560-5879

**Approved by:**



James G. Beil, P.E.  
Executive Director, Capital Programs  
(714) 560-5646