




**May 9, 2024**

**To:** Transit Committee

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

**Subject:** 2024 OC Transit Vision Master Plan Progress Update

### **Overview**

The Orange County Transportation Authority is undertaking an integrated countywide transit plan. The 2024 OC Transit Vision Master Plan analyzes long-term transit needs throughout the County, identifies priorities for future transportation planning studies during the next 30 years, and positions the Orange County Transportation Authority for future local, state, and federal funding programs. Extensive public engagement will help inform the development and evaluation of the final recommendations expected in fall 2024. This report outlines a series of proposed countywide transit strategies that include 12 transit opportunity corridors and multimodal transportation improvements.

### **Recommendations**

- A. Direct staff to continue with the implementation of phase two of the public outreach plan to gather feedback on the 2024 OC Transit Vision draft transit opportunity corridors and countywide transit strategies.
- B. Return to the Board of Directors in September 2024 with an update on recommendations.

### **Background**

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) provides transit services throughout Orange County (OC), with more than 50 OC Bus routes, paratransit service, and one OC Flex zone. Prior to the original OC Transit Vision Master Plan, which was completed in 2018 (2018 Plan), OCTA developed long-range transit plans as part of the Long-Range Transportation Plan. The OC Transit Vision Master Plan provides transit-specific recommendations for short-term, mid-term, and long-term investments. Since the completion of the 2018 Plan, the following studies and projects have been completed:

- OC Flex Pilot Project Launch – 2018
- Beach Boulevard Bravo! Launch – 2019
- Central Harbor Boulevard Corridor Study – 2019
- Bristol Street Corridor Study – 2021
- Freeway Bus Rapid Transit Network Study – 2021
- Making Better Connections Study – 2022
- Main Street Bravo! Launch – 2022

Another project from the 2018 Plan, the OC Streetcar - Bus Interface Plan Update is anticipated to be completed by 2025, prior to the launch of the OC Streetcar.

The 2024 OC Transit Vision Master Plan (2024 Plan) is a 30-year plan that builds upon the 2018 Plan, accounts for changes in travel patterns, and analyzes long-term transit needs throughout OC. Potential long-term transit needs may include transit opportunity corridors (TOC) with investments in infrastructure that reduce transit travel time such as dedicated transit lanes, more frequent service, larger vehicles, and supportive technology such as transit signal priority (TSP). Other countywide transit strategies may include mobility hubs, first-last mile options, and vital connections to local and regional transportation networks. The 2024 Plan recommends priorities for future transportation planning studies during the next 30 years. The 2024 Plan will also help to position OCTA for upcoming funding programs at the state and federal level.

OCTA recently completed a major fixed-route bus restructuring study, known as the Making Better Connections Study, to better address shifts in travel patterns. The 2024 Plan builds upon the service levels that are being implemented as part of the Making Better Connections Study. As part of the 2024 Plan, a supporting effort to analyze local conditions and address long-term impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on transit ridership and travel patterns was developed through the State of OC Transit report.

The goals of the 2024 Plan include the following principles:

- Enhance: Make it more desirable to use transit
- Connect: Connect OC's people and places with effective transit
- Simplify: Make transit easier to use and more convenient
- Collaborate: Make OC a more attractive place to live, work, and visit by providing transit service that supports community priorities
- Sustain: Create a system that is resilient over the long term

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## ***Discussion***

### **Draft Transit Opportunity Corridors**

Based on an initial analysis of 24 potential TOCs throughout OC, 12 corridors have been identified as candidates for further consideration. The evaluation criteria used to screen the top 12 corridors were based on overall travel demand, existing bus ridership, transit mode share (i.e., split between automobile travel versus transit usage), equity (i.e., provide essential transportation service for the disadvantaged community), transit propensity, and key destinations. OCTA will be underway with public outreach beginning in May 2024 to seek feedback on the 12 potential TOCs which include:

- Beach Boulevard
- Bolsa Avenue and First Street
- Bristol Street and State College Boulevard to South Coast Plaza
- Bristol Street and State College Boulevard to John Wayne Airport
- Edinger Avenue
- Garden Grove Boulevard and Chapman Avenue
- Harbor Boulevard
- Katella Avenue
- La Palma Avenue and Lincoln Avenue
- Main Street
- Warner Avenue
- Westminster Boulevard and 17<sup>th</sup> Street

As part of the Public Involvement Plan, OCTA will solicit input from the public and stakeholders to identify their top five corridors and propose any corridors not included in the draft list. The consultant, in coordination with OCTA, will prepare basic operating plans, model runs, and performance measures for each of the corridors. The top ten TOCs will be ranked based on established goals, objectives, performance measures, and public input received. A map of the draft TOCs is included in Attachment A.

### **Countywide Transit Strategies**

In addition to the TOCs, the 2024 Plan includes transit recommendations that build upon existing countywide transportation plans. The Project Development Team (PDT) is currently evaluating multimodal transportation options with draft recommendations expected by summer 2024. The following existing studies and plans are being reviewed to identify opportunities to improve countywide transit access:

- South Orange County Multimodal Transportation Study
  - Strategies include high-frequency transit, Project V circulators, mobility hubs, microtransit, expanded bicycle network, Transportation Demand Management strategies, which are shown in Attachment B
- Metrolink Southern California Optimized Rail Expansion (SCORE) Program
  - Long-term plan to increase passenger rail frequencies
  - Consider long-term plan to increase OC Bus service to connect with future rail trips
- Transit-Oriented Development Opportunities
  - Fullerton Park-and-Ride, OC Vibe, OC River Walk, Doheny Village
- Mobility Hubs Strategy Study
  - Potential hubs identified to improve connectivity and convenience
- Monitor high-growth areas for potential new or increased OC Bus service
  - Disneyland Forward Plan, City of Irvine, City of Rancho Mission Viejo

### Public Engagement

Community input is a key factor when developing the proposed strategies and options that will help shape the OC Transit Vision. The primary goals are to inform target audiences about transit options, key issues and challenges, and to gather input. In fall 2023, an engagement strategy was executed to increase awareness of the 2024 Plan and encourage active participation in a community webinar and survey, which included questions related to transit travel patterns, frequency, and improvements. In addition, one-on-one stakeholder interviews were conducted to collect feedback about the future of transit in OC.

The following engagement was completed over a six-week period. All materials were created in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. A complete Phase 1 Public Engagement and Survey Analysis Report is included in Attachment C.

- Collected 1,416 surveys
- Hosted two Community Leaders Roundtables, one webinar, and seven stakeholder interviews
- Presented facilitated discussions at OCTA's Citizens Advisory Committee, Diverse Community Leaders group, Bus Customer Roundtable, and Teen Council
- Engaged more than 1,400 community members across 12 events throughout OC
- Reached more than 88,000 readers through Spanish and Vietnamese newspapers
- Sent five email notices in multiple languages to more than 1,500 interested community stakeholders

- Advertised the webinar and survey 11 times through Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly known as Twitter) posts

The next phase of community input is scheduled to begin by May 2024 and will seek input on the proposed TOCs. To ensure the study receives input from a broad range of stakeholders and the general public, the engagement program will continue to use the traditional and non-traditional outreach methods that were executed during the first phase of outreach.

OCTA will continue to seek input from the general public and stakeholders, including OCTA's public committees and diverse communities through various tactics that include social media, an online survey, e-blasts, newspaper ads, pop-up events, a webinar, participation in community events, and three roundtables with community-based organizations, local jurisdictions, and elected officials.

#### **Next Steps**

With the Board of Directors' (Board) direction, Phase 2 of the public outreach plan will be fully underway to seek feedback on the draft TOCs and countywide transit strategies. Staff anticipates providing outreach findings and final recommendations to the Transit Committee and Board in early fall 2024. The final 2024 Plan is scheduled to be completed by late 2024.

#### **Summary**

OCTA is conducting the 2024 Plan to direct priorities for future transportation planning studies over the next 30 years and position OCTA for upcoming funding programs at the state and federal level. As part of a series of countywide transit strategies, staff has developed a draft list of 12 transit opportunity corridors based on travel demand, equity, transit propensity, key destinations, and input from the public. Staff will engage the public to gather feedback on the draft corridors and return to the Board in fall 2024 to present all final project recommendations.

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***Attachments***

- A. Draft Transit Opportunity Corridors
- B. South Orange County Multimodal Transportation Study: Strategies
- C. OC Transit Vision Master Plan Public Engagement and Survey Analysis Report Phase 1

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