




May 6, 2024

To: Regional Transportation Planning Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer 

Subject: Acceptance of Grant Awards from the California Department of Toxic Substances Control and the California Transportation Commission

Overview

The Orange County Transportation Authority has been awarded \$12.35 million in two state grants for projects that support inter-county transit, active transportation, sustainability, and resiliency goals. Recommendations to accept these grants are presented for the Board of Directors' review and approval.

Recommendations

- A. Authorize the Chief Executive Officer, or designee, to accept the award of \$350,000 in Equitable Community Revitalization Grant funding for the OC Connect Garden Grove Santa Ana Rails to Trails Environmental Assessment and to negotiate and execute grant-related agreements and documents with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control.
- B. Adopt Orange County Transportation Authority Resolution No. 2024-025 and authorize the Chief Executive Officer, or designee, to accept the award of \$12 million in Local Transportation Climate Adaptation Program funding for the Coastal Rail Infrastructure Corridor Resiliency Project and to negotiate and execute required grant-related agreements and documents with the California Transportation Commission.
- C. Authorize the use of \$3 million in Measure M2 funds to match the Local Transportation Climate Adaptation Program funding for the Coastal Rail Infrastructure Corridor Resiliency Project.
- D. Authorize staff to make all necessary amendments to the Federal Transportation Improvement Program, as well as execute any necessary agreements to facilitate the recommendations above.

Background

Equitable Community Revitalization Grant

On September 20, 2023, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) released a notice of funding opportunity for the Equitable Community Revitalization Grant (ECRG), which made available approximately \$85 million to conduct environmental assessment, investigation, and cleanup.

On October 11, 2023, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) submitted an application to the ECRG program requesting \$350,000 for the OC Connect Garden Grove Santa Ana Rails to Trails Assessment in the Community-Wide Assessments category. The grant application requested funding to support collecting information about environmental conditions along the former Pacific Electric corridor from Euclid Street in the City of Garden Grove and Raitt Street in the City of Santa Ana, where there was once a railroad. This work is necessary to support the reclamation of the corridor for an active transportation trail and to ensure that any adverse impacts to the area from the prior railroad operations are identified and documented so that they can be addressed as appropriate for the reclamation effort.

Local Transportation Climate Adaptation Program

On May 18, 2023, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) released a notice of funding opportunity for the Local Transportation Climate Adaptation Program (LTCAP). The \$148 million made available through this notice is intended to fund improvements that would help adapt local transportation infrastructure to various conditions which are the direct result of or could be impacted by climate change. The LTCAP is partially funded through the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation Program.

On July 31, 2023, OCTA submitted an application requesting \$12 million to help support environmental activities for the Coastal Rail Corridor Infrastructure Resiliency Project (Project). The funds will support the Project approval and environmental documentation for several of the most at-risk locations along the seven-mile coastal stretch of the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor (LOSSAN) within Orange County. This is the first step required to maintain and protect the rail corridor in-place.

Discussion

ECRG

On February 29, 2024, the DTSC notified OCTA that the OC Connect Santa Ana Garden Grove Rails to Trails Environmental Assessment was selected for ECRG funding. This grant will fund environmental assessment and planning activities to prepare for repurposing the abandoned railroad right-of-way in the cities of Garden Grove and Santa Ana. The Project will support the OC Connect Garden Grove Santa Ana Rails to Trails corridor, which will add at least three miles of a bicycle and pedestrian multi-use trail with safety crossing features at several intersections between Euclid Street in the City of Garden Grove and Raitt Street in the City of Santa Ana. An overview of the Project is included in Attachment A.

The award of \$350,000 will support the environmental assessment in its entirety along the former Pacific Electric right-of-way from Euclid Street in the City of Garden Grove and Raitt Street in the City of Santa Ana. This program does not have a match requirement.

Local Transportation Climate Adaptation Program

On November 3, 2023, the CTC notified OCTA that the Coastal Rail Corridor Infrastructure Resiliency Project was selected for LTCAP funding. This grant will fund the project approval and environmental documentation, which is the first step in project delivery process. This is typically the phase in which the proposed project alternative(s) is provided to the public for input and ultimately an alternative is selected to proceed to the design phase. The proposed resiliency projects are intended to stabilize and protect in place the coastal section of the LOSSAN corridor in Orange County to address immediate needs as well as protecting the integrity of the rail line for up to 30 years. The primary goals are to reduce the instances of emergency repairs and provide reliable rail service, thus ensuring the resilience of passenger and freight rail service. An overview of the areas of immediate concern assessed for this project is included in Attachment B.

The award will partially fund the required environmental work and requires a 20 percent match. Staff is currently pursuing match funding through other state and federal funding opportunities. Should those pursuits not prove successful, staff recommends the use of up to \$3 million of Measure M2 (M2) Project R funds.

In order to accept the LTCAP funds, OCTA is required to adopt a resolution certifying the ability to deliver the project. Resolution No. 2024-025 is included as Attachment C.

Summary

Staff is recommending Board approval to accept and enter into grant agreements for an ECRG award from the DTCS for \$350,000 to conduct environmental assessment activities for the OC Connect Garden Grove Santa Ana Rails to Trails corridor in preparation for cleanup and eventually trail construction, and for an LTCAP award from the CTC for \$12 million preparing the required environmental documents to help maintain and protect the rail corridor in place. Approval of required matching funds of up to \$3 million in M2 funding is also requested.

Attachments

- A. OC Connect Garden Grove - Santa Ana Rails to Trails
- B. Costal Rail Infrastructure Resiliency Project
- C. Resolution No. 2024-025 of the Orange County Transportation Authority
Local Transportation Climate Adaptation Program Authorization
- D. Competitive Grant Awards - June 2022 to April 2024
- E. Capital Funding Program Report

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