



October 6, 2025

To: Regional Transportation Planning Committee
From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer
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 cities of Dana Point and Laguna Niguel have requested amendments to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways that are recommended for approval. A status update is also provided on Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendments that are in process.

Recommendations

- A. Conditionally approve the following amendments to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways:
 - City of Dana Point - Modify ten MPAH arterials within City of Dana Point city limits as discussed herein.
 - City of Laguna Niguel - Reclassify La Paz Road from a primary (four-lane, divided) to a divided collector (two-lane, divided) arterial between Aliso Creek Road and Crown Valley Parkway.
- B. Direct the Executive Director of Planning to file a Notice of Exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act for the Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendments in the City of Dana Point.
- C. Direct the Executive Director of Planning to file a Notice of Exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act in support of the Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendment in the City of Laguna Niguel.
- 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 ensure interagency collaboration to avoid unintended impacts in neighboring jurisdictions or regional transportation systems. The requested amendments by the City of Dana Point (Dana Point) and City of Laguna Niguel (Laguna Niguel) are provided in Attachment A and Attachment B, respectively. Details on the requested amendments are presented below, along with a status report of MPAH amendments that are in process.

Discussion

Dana Point

Between 2006 and 2023, Dana Point coordinated with OCTA on a series of agreements permitting lane reductions on MPAH facilities to accommodate active transportation improvements while preserving the planned MPAH classifications. As part of these agreements, the City committed to monitoring traffic conditions along Street of the Golden Lantern, Crown Valley Parkway, Niguel Road, and Coast Highway, with a requirement to restore the original lane configurations should conditions fall below Level of Service (LOS) C.

Dana Point has now requested amendments to the MPAH primarily to align MPAH classifications with the current configurations. This will more permanently accommodate the implemented active transportation facilities. The proposed changes are summarized in the table below and illustrated in Attachment C.

Segment	MPAH Classification (Number of Lanes)	Requested Classification (Number of Lanes)	Current Configuration
Del Prado Avenue			
Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) (West) to Golden Lantern	Secondary Arterial (4)	Divided Collector (2)	2-lane, divided
Golden Lantern to PCH (East)/Copper Lantern	Secondary Arterial (4)	Divided Collector (2)	3-lane, divided

Segment	MPAH Classification (Number of Lanes)	Requested Classification (Number of Lanes)	Current Configuration
Crown Valley Parkway			
PCH to Camino Del Avion	Major Arterial (6)	Primary Arterial (4)	4-lane, divided
Niguel Road			
PCH to Camino Del Avion	Major Arterial (6)	Primary Arterial (4)	4-lane, divided
Selva Road			
PCH to Chula Vista Avenue	Undivided Collector (2)	Divided Collector (2)	2-lane, divided
Golden Lantern			
PCH to Selva Road	Major Arterial (6)	Primary Arterial (4)	4-lane, divided
Selva Road to Stonehill Drive	Major Arterial (6)	Primary Arterial (4)	5-lane, divided
Stonehill Drive to Camino Del Avion	Major Arterial (6)	Primary Arterial (4)	4-lane, divided
Coast Highway			
Doheny Park Road to Palisades Drive	Primary Arterial (4)	Divided Collector (2)	2-lane, divided
Pacific Coast Highway			
Crown Valley Parkway to Del Prado Avenue (West)	Major Arterial (6)	Primary Arterial (4)	4-lane, divided
Del Prado Avenue (West) to Del Prado Avenue (East)/Copper Lantern	Secondary Arterial (4)	Primary Arterial (4)	4-lane, divided
Coast Highway Connector			
San Juan Creek Trail to Coast Highway/Doheny Park Road	Primary Arterial (4)	Collector (1)	1-lane, undivided
Dana Point Harbor Drive			
Golden Lantern Street to Western Terminus	Primary Arterial (4)	<i>Remove from MPAH</i>	2-lane, divided
Camino De Estrella			
Camino Capistrano to Calle Hermosa	Primary Arterial (4)	Divided Collector (2)	4-lane, divided

Analysis of 2025 and 2050 conditions was conducted using the Orange County Transportation Analysis Model version 5.1. Most of the proposed roadway reclassifications are forecasted to operate at LOS C or better under the 2050 buildout conditions. While several segments on PCH are forecasted to operate

at LOS D, these conditions are not expected to significantly degrade in the future and traffic volumes are not expected to affect neighboring jurisdictions. Based on these findings, the proposed amendments are not expected to adversely impact the integrity of the MPAH network and are recommended for approval.

Laguna Niguel

In December 2023, OCTA and Laguna Niguel entered into an agreement to reconfigure La Paz Road between Rancho Niguel Road and Kings Road in response to earth movement and a local emergency declaration. This agreement allowed Laguna Niguel to convert the southbound lanes to accommodate two-way traffic (one lane in each direction), effectively operating as a two-lane divided collector.

Laguna Niguel has since received grant funding and initiated the preliminary design phase for the repairs. As part of this effort, Laguna Niguel proposes amending the MPAH classification for La Paz Road between Aliso Creek Road and Crown Valley Parkway (encompassing the segment in the agreement) from a four-lane primary arterial to a two-lane divided collector. The requested amendment aligns with Laguna Niguel's goals to enhance safety, improve circulation, and support multimodal transportation, including the future implementation of a bikeway. A map of the proposed change is provided in Attachment D.

Forecasted conditions for 2050 indicate that the proposed amendment will result in La Paz Road operating at LOS C with projected volumes ranging from 13,000 to 15,000 daily vehicles. Therefore, the proposed reclassification will have a minimal effect on traffic operations. Based on these findings, the proposed amendment is not expected to adversely impact the integrity of the MPAH network and is recommended for approval.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Amendments to the MPAH will be reflected on the MPAH map once OCTA receives documentation confirming that all affected general plans are consistent with the proposed amendment and are compliant with CEQA. If such documentation is not provided within three years of the Board of Directors' (Board) 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 two CEQA Notice of Exemptions (one for Dana Point's amendments and a separate one for Laguna Niguel's amendment) in support of the proposed MPAH amendments.

MPAH Status Update

There are currently 26 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 E.

Summary

The cities of Dana Point and Laguna Niguel have requested amendments to the MPAH. Based upon information provided by both cities, the requirements of the MPAH have been satisfied. Therefore, staff recommends Board approval of the requested amendments. A summary of pending MPAH amendments is also provided.

Attachments

- A. Letter from Mr. Matthew Sinacori, P.E., Director of Public Works & Engineering, City of Dana Point, to Ms. Ivy Hang, Senior Transportation Analyst, Orange County Transportation Authority, Dated August 29, 2025, re: Request for Amendment to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) in Dana Point
- B. Letter from Ms. Jacki Scott, Public Works Director/City Engineer, City of Laguna Niguel, to Mr. Kia Mortazavi, Executive Director, Planning, Orange County Transportation Authority, Dated March 6, 2025, re: Master Plan of Arterial Highways Amendment Request – La Paz Road
- C. City of Dana Point MPAH Amendments Map
- D. City of Laguna Niguel MPAH Amendment Map
- E. Status Report on Active Master Plan of Arterial Highways Amendments

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