



**June 1, 2026**

**To:** Regional Transportation Planning Committee

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

**Subject:** Regional Planning Update

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**Overview**

Regular updates on regional planning matters are provided to highlight current transportation planning issues impacting the Orange County Transportation Authority and the Southern California region. Two regional planning efforts have had significant activity and have direct implications for the Orange County Transportation Authority: development of the Southern California Association of Governments' next Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, Connect SoCal 2050, and recent California High-Speed Rail Authority planning activity affecting the Los Angeles to Anaheim project section.

**Recommendation**

Receive and file as an information item.

**Background**

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) regularly coordinates with regional, state, and local partner agencies on major planning activities that affect Orange County project delivery, future corridor operations, and other long-range planning and policy direction. This coordination occurs at many levels including through the OCTA Board of Directors (Board), executives, and technical staff. Some examples of regional planning forums include ongoing engagement with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA), California Department of Transportation, local jurisdictions, and other partners. Attachment A provides an overview of planning activities that are currently being monitored.

Since the last update, there have been significant developments in the following planning activities:

- SCAG Connect SoCal 2050 development
- California High-Speed Rail/Los Angeles to Anaheim project section

A discussion of each is provided below.

### ***Discussion***

#### **SCAG Connect SoCal 2050**

SCAG's Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) is the state and federally required long-range transportation plan for the SCAG region. It is updated on a four-year cycle to identify major transportation investments, forecast future travel demand, and demonstrate how the region will work toward state greenhouse gas reduction targets through coordinated transportation, housing, and growth strategies. For OCTA, the RTP/SCS is important because it helps frame future regional policy assumptions and planning and programming efforts for Orange County projects, including projects being identified through OCTA's 2026 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

SCAG formally launched Connect SoCal 2050 on April 9, 2026. Early discussion has included the draft policy development framework, preliminary regional growth forecasts, and future study work. SCAG also has initiated its Local Data Exchange process with local jurisdictions and has begun one-on-one coordination meetings to support future land-use and planning assumptions. In May 2026, SCAG's Regional Council approved the creation of a special Connect SoCal 2050 subcommittee to guide policy development, with a July 2026 kickoff targeted. SCAG has also relaunched Regional Planning Working Group meetings as a monthly forum for Connect SoCal 2050 information sharing and coordination with technical staff.

SCAG has reported preliminary forecasts showing approximately a one percent population decline by 2050, slower household growth than assumed in prior plans, and a relatively flat job outlook. These assumptions are still early, but they are notable because they can influence the way future transportation needs, growth patterns, and project priorities are framed across the SCAG region.

At this stage, staff's immediate objective is to prepare Orange County project inputs through development of the 2026 LRTP and ensure these projects are positioned appropriately in the regional plan. Staff will also monitor policy frameworks that could affect future project delivery or priorities in the RTP/SCS. OCTA is currently engaging with SCAG on development of assumptions and policy context that will later affect regional priorities and strategies.

This engagement is occurring through the SCAG Regional Planning Working Group, staff-to-staff communication as Connect SoCal 2050 advances, and monitoring of discussions at SCAG's policy committees. Staff expects additional SCAG policy development activity this summer, as well as the initial project input window in late summer and early fall. Staff will return with future updates as key policy choices or Board-relevant decision points emerge.

### CHSRA

The CHSRA's recent Southern California planning activities continue to have direct implications for Orange County rail operations, corridor ownership, and long-range transportation planning. Two current efforts are relevant to OCTA: the Draft 2026 Business Plan, which outlines the statewide implementation and phasing strategy for the high-speed rail program, and the Los Angeles to Anaheim project section draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS), which evaluates the proposed alignment, infrastructure, and operating concept for the segment connecting Los Angeles Union Station to the City of Anaheim. Both affect a shared passenger and freight rail corridor that includes OCTA-owned right-of-way (ROW), existing and planned Metrolink and Amtrak service, and key Orange County stations and facilities.

OCTA's interest in these efforts is to protect Orange County's corridor, service, and ownership interests as planning advances. Key considerations include preserving existing and planned passenger and freight operations, protecting OCTA-owned ROW, maintaining flexibility for future corridor improvements, and ensuring that any future Southern California high-speed rail concept is clearly defined and coordinated with affected regional agencies.

On April 29, 2026, OCTA submitted comments on the Draft 2026 Business Plan (Attachment B). In that letter, OCTA acknowledged CHSRA's effort to advance implementation planning but requested greater clarity regarding how Southern California service would transition from interim or blended operations to full high-speed rail service. OCTA also requested clearer information regarding service assumptions in shared corridors, the role of future shared-use agreements, and consistency with prior commitments regarding the City of Anaheim's connectivity.

Those comments build on OCTA's February 3, 2026, letter on the Los Angeles to Anaheim project section draft EIR/EIS (Attachment C). In that letter, OCTA stated that the proposed Shared Passenger Track Alternative A would not provide true high-speed rail service to the City of Anaheim and would not align with the intent of the enabling legislation. OCTA also raised concerns regarding use of OCTA-owned ROW without clearly defined agreements, insufficient analysis of impacts to Metrolink and Amtrak service, unresolved station and access impacts in the cities of Anaheim, Buena Park, and Fullerton,

whether freight-related impacts in north Orange County were sufficiently analyzed, and the need for OCTA to be appropriately recognized and engaged as a responsible and cooperating agency.

Staff will continue monitoring California high-speed rail activities and coordinating with the CHSRA, Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA), Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency, local agencies, and other partners to help ensure Orange County's operational, corridor, and multimodal integration interests remain part of the ongoing project development process.

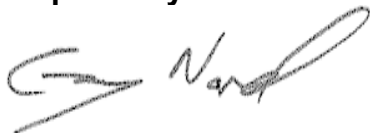
### ***Summary***

SCAG's Connect SoCal 2050 update has moved into an early development phase, with policy framing, preliminary growth assumptions, local jurisdiction data exchange, and technical coordination now underway, while California High-Speed Rail planning in Southern California remains active through the Draft 2026 Business Plan and the Los Angeles to Anaheim project section draft EIR/EIS. For OCTA, these efforts influence regional planning assumptions, project positioning, corridor operations, and long-range transportation priorities affecting Orange County. Staff's near-term focus is to prepare Orange County project inputs through development of the 2026 LRTP, monitor SCAG policy frameworks and assumptions that could affect future project delivery or regional positioning, and continue emphasizing OCTA's interests in protecting OCTA-owned ROW, preserving existing and planned passenger and freight rail service, maintaining flexibility for future corridor improvements, and ensuring continued coordination regarding City of Anaheim connectivity and shared corridor operations. Staff will continue coordinating with SCAG, CHSRA, SCRRA, LOSSAN, local agencies, and other partners, and will return with future updates as key policy developments, project input opportunities, or Board-relevant decision points emerge.

**Attachments**

- A. Regional Planning Activities, June 2026
- B. Letter from Dan Phu, Director of Transportation Planning and Analysis, Orange County Transportation Authority, to California High-Speed Rail Authority, Dated April 29, 2026, re: California High-Speed Rail Authority 2026 Draft Business Plan
- C. Letter from Rose Casey, Executive Director, Planning, Orange County Transportation Authority, to LaDonna DiCamillo, Southern California Regional Director, California High-Speed Rail Authority, Dated February 3, 2026, re: Los Angeles to Anaheim Section Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement

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