



February 3, 2025

To: Regional Transportation Planning Committee
From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer
Subject: Competitive Grant Programs – Update and Recommendations

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Overview

The Orange County Transportation Authority provides competitive grants to local and non-profit jurisdictions beyond those provided through Measure M2 using various federal, state, and local transportation funding programs. The Orange County Transportation Authority also directly applies for federal, state, and local competitive grant programs to support Orange County Transportation Authority-led projects. Staff has prepared an overview and status update for local jurisdiction projects that have received funds, recent grant pursuits and awards for Orange County Transportation Authority projects, and recommendations for changes to grant terms for local jurisdiction projects.

Recommendations

- A. Approve one scope change and extension request from Sally's Fund, Inc. for operating assistance funded through the Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Disabled Grant Program.
- B. Approve \$4.687 million in Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement program funds for the City of Huntington Beach's Magnolia Street Corridor Complete Streets Improvements Project from the contingency list from the Orange County Complete Streets Program.
- C. Authorize staff to request that the Southern California Association of Governments make all necessary amendments to the Federal Transportation Improvement Program to facilitate the recommended actions above.
- D. Authorize the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate and execute any required agreements or amendments to facilitate the recommended actions above.

Background

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) issues periodic calls for projects (call) using non-Measure M2 (M2) federal, state, and local funds to help local jurisdictions and non-profits meet a variety of transportation needs. The calls include the Orange County Complete Streets Program (OCCSP), Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (EMSD) Program, Pavement Management Relief Funding (PMRF) Program, Bicycle Corridor Improvement Program (BCIP), and Arterial Pavement Management (APM) Program. Complete Streets calls including the OCCSP, which replaced the BCIP, occur every two years. Similarly, the EMSD is also a regular call every two to three years. The calls addressing pavement management, PMRF and APM are ad hoc but have typically occurred using one-time state or federal funding at least every three to four years. Each program has a primary focus or goal, as noted in the table below.

OCTA Program	Primary Program Goal	Program Fund Source
OCCSP	Support development of accessible and safe streets that accommodate a variety of transportation modes	Federal Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) and/or Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
EMSD	Support services provided to seniors and individuals with disabilities	Non-Measure M2 local transit funds
PMRF	Support pavement management needs	Federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) Highway Infrastructure Program funds and State Highway Account funds
BCIP	Support the development of Orange County’s bicycle network	Federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ) funds
APM	Support pavement management needs – replaced by PMRF	Federal STBG funds

In addition to these directly issued calls, OCTA also supports local jurisdictions when they are pursuing federal and state earmarks or grants from state and federal sources such as the Active Transportation Program regional component through the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and the California Transportation Commission. There are instances where OCTA may partner with local jurisdictions to seek external funds for which combining multiple projects into a single application increases the chances of being awarded.

OCTA directly competes in federal, state, and local transportation funding opportunities through various discretionary funding programs to support Board of Director’s (Board) approved priority planning, capital, and operating needs. Securing funding through these programs is consistent with the programming policies and helps preserve M2 and more flexible local funding sources, allowing OCTA to advance a greater number of priority projects. Current key projects include the Coastal Rail Infrastructure Resiliency, the transition to Zero-Emission Bus, Olympic Readiness projects, Metrolink Locomotive Replacement, Track and Structures, Metrolink Operations, OC Connect Garden Grove to Santa Ana Rails to Trails, and OC Loop. Identifying priority projects in advance of funding opportunities and securing Board approval positions OCTA to readily pursue new funding opportunities as they are made available. Every discretionary grant award is presented to the Board for formal acceptance.

Discussion

Since 2010, the Board has approved providing \$322.5 million in non-Measure M2 local, state, and federal funds to Orange County local jurisdictions and non-profits through 11 calls. This has supported 260 transportation projects including active transportation, street rehabilitation, mobility options for seniors and individuals with disabilities, and streets and roads enhancement/landscaping activities. As of drafting this report, 171 projects which have received \$89.7 million are considered fully complete and closed out. The specific status of these completed projects are no longer tracked in the report. The table below only reflects the status of active projects and their respective phases of work. Currently, there are 88 active projects tied to \$120.9 million in awarded funds which support a total of 138 phases of work through the OCCSP, EMSD, PMRF, BCIP, and APM funding programs.

A summary of the current awarded project phases is provided in the table below, and additional details on the status of active projects are provided in Attachment A. The proposed project amendments and recommendations are consistent with all current programming requirements; however, staff will continue to closely monitor and seek additional guidance on any implications following the Presidential Executive Orders impacting transportation funding programs. Recognizing the uncertainty with these potential impacts, any changes to these recommendations will be brought back to the Board for consideration.

Phase of Work/ Status	CAP	OPS	PLAN	ENV	DES	ROW	CON	Total Phases
Planned	14	13	2	13	14	6	30	92
Started	5	7	0	1	3	1	29	46
Completed	0	0	0	2	11	1	12	26
Total	19	20	2	16	28	8	71	164
<i>Cancelled</i>	1	1	0	0	1	0	8	11

Notes and abbreviations:

BCIP projects may have more than one phase of work.
 Planned – Indicates that the funds for this phase have not been obligated, or a contract has not yet been executed.
 Started – Indicates that the funds for this phase have been obligated, or a contract has been executed.
 Completed – Indicates that the work related to this phase is complete.
 CAP – Capital
 CON – Construction
 DES - Design
 ENV– Environmental
 OPS – Operations
 PLAN - Plan
 ROW – Right-of-way

Project Amendments

Staff regularly meets with local jurisdictions to review the status of projects funded through OCTA programs. During the most recent project review, amendments were identified and are now presented for Board consideration. Specifically, Board approval is requested for one scope change and extension request by Sally’s Fund, Inc. (Sally’s Fund) for an operating assistance project that is funded through the EMSD Program, approved by the Board on November 22, 2021.

Sally’s Fund is a non-profit organization that provides transportation services to seniors in the City of Laguna Beach, ensuring they have access to essential destinations such as medical appointments, grocery stores, and community events. Their work aligns with the EMSD Program’s goal of improving mobility options for seniors and individuals with disabilities across Orange County. Sally’s Fund has requested a scope change to utilize savings to increase support for administration and outreach and is also requesting a 12-month extension for their EMSD-funded operating assistance project. The project savings will be used for an additional part-time scheduler, marketing, and outreach events. These changes will enhance outreach and services for seniors in the City of Laguna Beach. This amendment is critical to the success of their efforts and will directly benefit the seniors they serve by improving access to transportation, fostering social interactions, and enhancing community connections and support. The 12-month extension is needed to implement this change and use the remainder of the grant funds.

Additional details on the requested amendment are provided in Attachment B.

OCCSP Programming Update

One project from the 2023 OCCSP call contingency list is proposed for programming. This project was originally placed on the contingency list as part of the program's prioritization process and is now identified as part of Wave 4 which would be funded if additional funding becomes available. Additional funding has become available through the delay of another project, the Interstate 5 (I-5) Improvement Project from the San Diego County Line to Avenida Pico, which was approved to receive \$16.5 million in CMAQ funding for the design phase. This funding was programmed by OCTA and must be obligated to a project by September 30, 2026. However, the estimated cost of the design phase has significantly increased, and OCTA requires additional time to address recently enacted VMT mitigation requirements as part of the environmental process.

To ensure the timely use of OCCSP funds, staff is recommending that \$4.687 million of the \$16.5 million be redirected to the Magnolia Street Corridor Complete Streets Improvements Project (Magnolia Street Project) submitted by the City of Huntington Beach (Huntington Beach) as part of the 2023 OCCSP. This project was evaluated through SCAG's project nomination process and received a "highly recommended" ranking. However, due to funding constraints, the Magnolia Street Project was placed on a contingency list. The Magnolia Street Project can now be programmed to use a portion of the \$16.5 million in CMAQ funds. The remainder of the funding, \$11.8 million, will be recommended for a transit project through a separate staff report in March 2025.

The Magnolia Street Project will deliver safety improvements, traffic calming features, and expanded multimodal infrastructure to enhance access for bicyclists and pedestrians. This project advances the OCCSP's objectives to improve multimodal accessibility and safety for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders. This additional funding brings the total funding for complete streets provided through the 2024 OCCSP to \$89.6 million.

Details on the recommendation for the Magnolia Street Project are provided in Attachment B.

Discretionary Funding Update

In August 2024, staff presented updates to the Board on OCTA grant pursuits, highlighting the submission of 13 grant applications in fiscal year 2023-24 and the award of \$128 million for 25 projects. The updated item featured a detailed list of near-term OCTA priority projects targeted for funding through ongoing grant efforts. These efforts included OCTA's focus on advancing priority projects through competitive grant opportunities. From June 30 through December 31, 2024, OCTA submitted four grant applications to support the coastal rail resiliency and countywide active transportation. As a result of these efforts, OCTA has recently

been notified of \$305.7 million in awards supporting six projects. The following six priority projects have received funding awards:

- Coastal Rail Infrastructure Resiliency Project (Coastal Rail Stabilization Priority Projects) – \$100 million through the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program
- Coastal Rail Infrastructure Resiliency Project (Coastal Rail Stabilization Priority Projects) – \$80 million through the SB 1 Trade (Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017) Corridor Enhancement Program
- Coastal Rail Infrastructure Resiliency Project (Coastal Rail Stabilization Priority Projects) – \$125 million through the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program Cycle 7
- Countywide Transit System Operational Deterrence – Visible Intermodal Protection and Response – \$116,600 Transit Security Grant Program
- Zero-Emission Bus Transition Plan – \$200,000 through the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grants
- Countywide Active Transportation Plan – Move OC – \$400,000 through the Sustainable Communities Program – Active Transportation and Safety

Staff will bring forward additional items for Board approval as necessary to formally accept these grant awards and to incorporate the funds into the relevant project budgets. Details of these submittals and awards are also provided in Attachment C.

OCTA staff will continue to monitor grant opportunities and submit applications for Board-approved priority projects (Attachment D) to federal, state, and local discretionary grant programs, and return to the Board to accept grants when awarded and before executing grant agreements.

The Capital Funding Program Report (Attachment E) summarizes the approved funding for projects, including OCTA-issued federal, state, and locally funded calls.

Summary

Status reports on externally funded OCTA grants to local jurisdictions projects and OCTA's pursuit of grants for OCTA priority projects are provided for review. Staff is recommending Board approval for a scope modification and extension request from Sally's Fund. Additionally, staff recommends Board approval to program \$4.687 million for the City of Huntington Beach's Magnolia Street Project. Authorization to submit the changes through Federal Transportation Improvement Program amendments and the SCAG process for final approval as applicable is also requested, as well as authorization to negotiate and execute any necessary agreements or amendments to implement these actions.

Attachments

- A. State and Federal Grant Programs Project Status
- B. Amendment Requests and Programming Updates
- C. Competitive Grants Update
- D. Orange County Transportation Authority Priority Project List
- E. Capital Funding Program Report

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