



August 5, 2024

To: Regional Transportation Planning Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Darrell Johnson", is written over the "From:" line.

Subject: Competitive Grant Programs – Update and Recommendations

Overview

The Orange County Transportation Authority provides competitive grants to local and non-profit agencies beyond those provided through Measure M2 using various local, state, and federal transportation funding programs. Additionally, the Orange County Transportation Authority applies for regional, state, and federal competitive grant programs to support Orange County Transportation Authority-sponsored projects. Staff has prepared an overview and status update for local agency projects which have received funds, recent grant pursuits and awards for Orange County Transportation Authority projects, and recommendations for changes to grant terms for local agency projects.

Recommendations

- A. Approve delay requests from the cities of San Clemente and Santa Ana for Bicycle Corridor Improvement Program projects, contingent on final approval by the Southern California Association of Governments.
- B. Authorize staff to request that the Southern California Association of Governments make all necessary amendments to the Federal Transportation Improvement Program and for staff to execute any required agreements or amendments to facilitate the recommendations above.

Background

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) issues periodic calls for projects (call) using non-Measure M2 (M2) local, state, and federal funds to help local agencies meet a variety of transportation needs. More recent 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. The BCIP, OCCSP, and EMSD are regular calls which occur on a periodic cycle of two to three years. The calls addressing pavement management 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 multimodal, accessible, and safe streets	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-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 CMAQ funds
APM	Support pavement management needs	Federal STBG funds

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

OCTA directly competes in local, state, and federal transportation funding opportunities through various discretionary funding programs to support planning, capital, and operating needs. Funding received through these programs helps preserve M2 and more flexible local funding sources, allowing OCTA to advance a greater number of priority projects. OCTA staff focuses efforts on developing applications for competitive funding on projects that have been reviewed through the Board of Directors’ (Board)-approved planning documents and are a priority for OCTA. Current key projects include 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. By identifying these priority projects in advance, it positions OCTA to readily pursue new funding opportunities as they are made available. This was the case for federal

funding pursued through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act in 2021 and the Inflation Reduction Act in 2022. Potential project application opportunities are reviewed internally for consistency with OCTA policies before approaching external agencies for letters of support or submitting grant applications. Every discretionary grant award is presented to the Board for approval and grant acceptance.

Discussion

Since 2010, the Board has approved providing \$175.6 million in non-M2 local, state, and federal funds to Orange County local agencies and non-profits through ten calls which has supported 219 unique transportation projects. These projects support various transportation needs including active transportation, street rehabilitation, mobility options for seniors and individuals with disabilities, and street and road enhancement/landscaping activities. As of drafting this report, 143 projects which have received \$63.7 million are considered complete and the specific status of those projects is no longer included in the report. Currently there are 76 active projects, a total 118 phases of work, supported by \$111.9 million programmed through the OCCSP, EMSD, PMRF, BCIP, and APM local agency 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.

Phase of Work/ Status	CAP	OPS	PLAN	ENV	DES	ROW	CON	Total Phases
Planned	0	0	2	8	10	4	22	46
Started	5	7	0	2	3	1	32	50
Completed	0	0	0	1	11	1	9	22
Total	5	7	2	11	24	6	63	118
<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

OPS – Operations

CON – Construction

PLAN – Plan

DES – Design

ROW – Right-of-way

ENV– Environmental

In addition to providing grants directly to local agencies, staff also shares information on non-OCTA administered grant programs with local agencies through the Technical Advisory Committee. OCTA works in partnership with local agencies to nominate individual local agency-led projects for funding programs. OCTA supports local agencies in securing funding through the development of transportation planning documents and studies. These plans are utilized by local agencies when applying for funding to help their project nominations better compete for funding. A separate list of local agency-led projects that are part of the ATP regional program and have been nominated by OCTA for funding programs or have received a federal earmark with OCTA support is included as Attachment B. However, this list is not a comprehensive list of local agency projects that have been supported by OCTA through letters of support, application review support, or other support activities.

Specific Funding Program Updates

The PMRF program is the only externally funded call that requires a specific program update in this report cycle. The PMRF was originally funded using federal CRRSAA Highway Infrastructure Program funds. On October 11, 2021, the Board awarded \$10.931 million to Orange County local agencies for 35 projects through the PMRF Program. However, since that action several projects were cancelled by the local agencies due to several factors including the H.R. 3746 “The Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023” rescinding unobligated funds, the California Transportation Commission granting authority to Caltrans to fund projects with other state funds, and reaching the May 30, 2024, deadline to obligate the replacement funding.

As a result of the federal rescission and unmet funding deadlines, several cities were no longer in a position to use the grants leaving 27 projects totaling \$9.068 in the program. Of the remaining 27 projects, one has been completed. A complete list of all active PMRF projects and their status following the obligation deadline is included as part of Attachment A. It should be noted that \$1.4 million in PMRF funds that were not used by local agencies were successfully redirected to OCTA’s Cyprus Shore Mile Post 206.8 coastal rail tie back wall project.

Project Amendments

For this review period, Board approval is requested for two-time extension requests by the City of Brea (Brea) and the City of Santa Ana (Santa Ana). Brea has requested a time extension for the ROW phase and construction phase of the OC Loop Gap Closure Project to complete additional required National Environmental Policy Act studies. This project includes a 1.3-mile Class I bikeway along the existing railroad ROW between North Palm Street and the Brea Canyon Channel in Brea.

Santa Ana has requested a time extension for the construction phase of the Warner Avenue Protected Bike Lanes Project to coordinate the project schedule with the related M2-funded Warner Avenue Improvements between Oak Street and Grand Avenue Project. The Warner Avenue Protected Bike Lanes Project includes a 0.7-mile Class IV bikeway on Warner Avenue from Oak Street to Grand Avenue in Santa Ana. Following Board consideration, staff will recommend these updates through the Federal Transportation Improvement Program to SCAG, who will have the final approval, consistent with SCAG's project selection process for CMAQ-funded projects. Staff will report back on whether the extensions were approved by SCAG in the next report cycle.

Details on requested amendments are provided in Attachment C.

Discretionary Funding Update

In April 2024, staff presented an overview of the discretionary funding programs and OCTA grant procedures to seek competitive local, state, and federal grant funds. The overview included a comprehensive list of near-term OCTA priority projects that need funding and have been the focus of grant pursuits.

In fiscal year 2023-24, OCTA submitted 13 grant applications to support the Coastal Rail Resiliency, Transportation Center Surveillance Protection, Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response, Harbor Boulevard Connected Bus, and active transportation projects. Additionally, in the same time period, OCTA has been notified of \$128 million in awards supporting 25 projects. This more than doubled the \$95 million of OCTA-committed funding to these projects. Additionally, the hydrogen bus pilot project was included in a California statewide United States Department of Energy application, which was awarded federal funding; however, OCTA's share of the grant has not yet been determined. Details of these submittals and awards are also provided in Attachment D.

OCTA staff will continue to monitor grant opportunities and submit applications to regional, state, and federal discretionary grant programs, and return to the Board to accept grants when awarded and before executing grant agreements. A list of priority projects, which have been and will continue to be submitted for consideration of discretionary grant program funds, is provided in Attachment E.

The Capital Funding Program Report, provided in Attachment F, summarizes the approved funding for projects, including OCTA-issued local, state, and federally funded calls.

Summary

Status reports on externally funded OCTA grants to local agency projects and OCTA's pursuit of grants for OCTA priority projects are provided. Staff is requesting Board approval for extension requests submitted by Brea and Santa Ana. Authorization to submit the changes through Federal Transportation Improvement Program amendments and the SCAG process for final approval as applicable is also requested.

Attachments

- A. State and Federal Grant Programs Project Status
- B. Active Transportation Program - Regional Component - Cycles 1-6
- C. Project Amendment Requests
- D. Competitive Grants Update
- E. OCTA Priority Project List
- F. Capital Funding Program Report

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