



April 6, 2026

To: Regional Transportation Planning Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

Subject: Amendment to Agreement for Public Outreach Services for the State Route 55 Improvement Project Between Interstate 405 and Interstate 5

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

Overview

On April 26, 2021, the Orange County Transportation Authority approved an agreement with Costin Public Outreach Group to provide public outreach services during the pre-construction and construction phases for the State Route 55 Improvement Project between Interstate 405 and Interstate 5 for an initial five-year term with an option term of up to 36 months. Board of Directors' approval is requested to extend the agreement effective June 1, 2026, through May 31, 2029.

Recommendation

Authorize the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate and execute Amendment No. 5 to Agreement No. C-0-2104 between the Orange County Transportation Authority and Costin Public Outreach Group to exercise the 36-month option term, in the amount of \$440,000, to continue providing public outreach services effective June 1, 2026, and continuing through May 31, 2029. This will increase the maximum obligation of the agreement to a total contract value of \$2,124,990.

Discussion

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), in cooperation with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), is improving State Route 55 (SR-55) between Interstate 405 (I-405) and Interstate 5 (I-5). The SR-55 Improvement Project (Project) is adding one general purpose lane and one high-occupancy vehicle lane in each direction, as well as auxiliary lanes between several interchanges. SR-55 is a major freeway route connecting Orange County to Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. The corridor is also a major route for accessing key business centers, John Wayne Airport, and the beach cities.

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The four-mile Project includes improving five bridges, constructing 18 retaining walls and sound walls, reconfiguring 20 on- and off-ramps, and reconstructing a major drainage channel. The overall project cost is \$505 million. Construction began in 2022 and is expected to be completed in 2027.

On April 26, 2021, the OCTA Board of Directors (Board) approved an agreement with Costin Public Outreach Group (Costin) as the firm to provide public outreach services. The initial term of the agreement is set to expire May 31, 2026.

Since the Project began, the outreach team has developed and implemented more than 45 targeted communication plans tailored to specific major construction activities, utilizing a variety of traditional and digital tactics.

Outreach efforts include the development and distribution of collateral materials through digital platforms, at community events, and during meetings with stakeholders. Throughout construction, the outreach team has maintained direct communication with key stakeholders in person and by email and telephone to provide advance notice of major activities, including retaining wall construction, ramp and freeway closures and detours, utility work, and bridge reconstruction. To reach a broader audience, digital toolkits are provided to partner cities for distribution on their websites and social media platforms, and project flyers are canvassed to impacted residents and business owners.

To date, the Project has generated more than 450 inquiries from commuters, residents, and businesses. The team manages all inquiries by coordinating with the construction management team and responding to questions and concerns related to construction activities, homeless encampments, graffiti, landscape maintenance, claims, and construction-related noise. All inquiries are documented and logged in a database maintained by Costin.

As of March 31, 2026, approximately \$211,000 remains available under the current agreement, which is projected to support outreach services for construction activities through summer 2026. However, based on updated project schedules and recent expenditure trends, these remaining funds are insufficient to support continued outreach through anticipated construction completion in mid-2027, as well as post-construction outreach and contract closeout activities.

An amendment is necessary to exercise the option term through May 31, 2029, to maintain continuity of outreach services through construction completion, including planning and execution of a dedication event. The extended term

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accounts for potential construction delays and up to one year of post-construction outreach.

The requested increase in contract value reflects extended construction durations due to contractor-related scheduling challenges, resulting in higher-than-anticipated outreach costs. Current monthly expenditures average approximately \$35,000, reflecting increased coordination, stakeholder communications, and support for extended closures. These conditions have led to a higher overall level of effort than originally anticipated.

When combined with the \$211,000 remaining on the current contract, the proposed \$440,000 increase will provide sufficient funding to maintain outreach services through the revised construction schedule and closeout. The amendment also includes a contingency to address potential delays and project uncertainties.

Procurement Approach

The procurement was originally handled in accordance with OCTA's Board-approved procedures for professional and technical services. On April 26, 2021, the Board approved the award of the agreement with Costin to provide public outreach services for the pre-construction and construction phases of the Project. The original agreement was awarded on a competitive basis and includes a five-year initial term with an option term of up to 36 months in the amount of \$1,684,990. This agreement has been previously amended as shown in Attachment A.

The proposed Amendment No. 5 will exercise the full option term through May 31, 2029. The budget for this amendment is \$440,000. When combined with the approximately \$211,000 remaining under the current agreement, this funding will support continued public outreach services through anticipated construction completion, post-construction activities, and contract closeout. This amendment will increase the maximum payment obligation to a total contract value of \$2,124,990. In accordance with the current agreement, the option term rates will remain the same as originally negotiated. Exercising the option term will allow Costin to continue providing public outreach consultant services through May 31, 2029.

Fiscal Impact

The Project was approved in OCTA's Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget, Account No. 0017-7519-FF101-TYP and is funded with local funds.

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Summary

Staff recommends the Board of Directors authorize the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate and execute Amendment No. 5 to Agreement No. C-0-2104 between the Orange County Transportation Authority and Costin Public Outreach Group to exercise the option term of the agreement effective June 1, 2026, through May 31, 2029, in the amount of \$440,000 to continue providing public outreach services for the State Route 55 Improvement Project between Interstate 405 and Interstate 5. This amendment will increase the maximum obligation of the agreement to a total contract value of \$2,124,990.

Attachment

- A. Costin Public Outreach Group Agreement No. C-0-2104 Fact Sheet

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