



November 2, 2020

To: Regional Planning and Highways 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 City of Santa Ana has requested multiple amendments to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways. These amendments are subject to approval by the Board of Directors and are recommended to be contingent on an executed memorandum of understanding to address potential impacts. A status update on the active Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendments is also provided.

Recommendations

- A. Authorize the Chief Executive Officer, or his designee, to negotiate and execute a final memorandum of understanding specifying roles and responsibilities for implementation of proposed actions related to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendment request. Participating agencies include the cities of Fountain Valley, Santa Ana, Tustin, and the Orange County Transportation Authority.
- B. Conditionally approve the following amendment to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways to:
 - 1. Reclassify the following streets from a secondary (four-lane, undivided) arterial to a divided collector (two-lane divided):
 - i. Cambridge Street between Fairhaven Avenue and State Route 22.
 - ii. Santa Clara Avenue between Grand Avenue and Tustin Avenue.
 - iii. Broadway Street between 1st Street and 17th Street.
 - iv. Penn Way between Interstate 5 southbound on/off-ramps and Washington Avenue.

- v. Santiago Avenue between Washington Avenue and 6th Street.
 - vi. Standard Avenue between 6th Street and Warner Avenue.
 - vii. Civic Center Drive between Fairview Street and Bristol Street.
 - viii. Hazard Avenue between Euclid Street and Harbor Boulevard.
 - ix. Raitt Street between Segerstrom Avenue and Santa Ana Boulevard.
 - x. McFadden Avenue between Harbor Boulevard and Grand Avenue.
 - xi. Flower Street between Warner Avenue and First Street.
 - xii. Halladay Avenue between Warner Avenue and Dyer Road.
 - xiii. Chestnut Avenue between Standard Avenue and Grand Avenue.
- 2. Reclassify Civic Center Drive between French Street and Santiago Street, from a secondary (four-lane, undivided) arterial to a collector (two-lane, undivided) arterial.
 - 3. Reclassify 1st Street between Bristol Street and Tustin Avenue, from a major (six-lane, divided) to a primary (four-lane, divided) arterial.
 - 4. Reclassify Chestnut Avenue between Grand Avenue the eastern city limit, from a primary (four-lane, divided) to a divided collector (two-lane, divided) arterial.
 - 5. Remove the following facilities from the Master Plan of Arterial Highways:
 - i. Flower Street between 17th Street and its northern terminus.
 - ii. Logan Street between Stafford Street and Santa Ana Boulevard.
 - iii. Stafford Street between proposed Logan Street and Santiago Street.

The proposed amendment will become final contingent upon the Orange County Transportation Authority (1) fully executing a final memorandum of understanding with the cities of Fountain Valley, Santa Ana, and Tustin, and (2) receiving documentation that the City of Santa Ana has complied with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act and have amended their general plan.

If the original proposed Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendment is modified as a result of the California Environmental Quality Act and/or general plan amendment process, the modified Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendment shall be returned to the Orange County Transportation Authority Board of Directors for consideration and action.

- C. Conditionally approve the amendment to the Master Plan for Arterial Highways for Fairhaven Avenue between Grand Avenue to Tustin Avenue from a secondary (four-lane, undivided) arterial to a divided collector (two-lane, divided) arterial. The proposed amendment will become final contingent upon the Orange County Transportation Authority receiving documentation that the cities of Santa Ana and Orange have complied with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act and have amended their respective general plans.

If the cities of Santa Ana and Orange do not update their respective general plans within three years to reflect the Master Plan of Arterial Highway amendment, the contingent amendment will expire, but can be returned to the Orange County Transportation Authority Board of Directors for reconsideration and action.

If the original proposed Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendment is modified as a result of the California Environmental Quality Act and/or general plan amendment process, the modified Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendment shall be returned to the Orange County Transportation Authority Board of Directors for consideration and action.

- D. Direct the Executive Director of Planning, or his designee, to file a Notice of Exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act in support of the Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendment.
- E. Receive and file a status report on the active Master Plan of Arterial Highways amendments.

Background

In January 2020, the City of Santa Ana (City) initiated the Circulation Element Update in combination with the overall General Plan Update. The proposed Circulation Element Update is the culmination of community outreach efforts undertaken by the City since 2011, input from neighboring local agencies, and various planning documents. The goal of these efforts is to provide active transportation options for residents through complete street improvements and vision zero policies. The City is requesting amendments to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) to reclassify 17 segments in order to accommodate complete street projects and remove three segments from the MPAH (Attachment A). Complete streets refer to street features that accommodate all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit users, and drivers. The 17 segments represent those arterials which require MPAH reclassifications in order to accommodate complete street improvements and are depicted in Attachment B.

Amendment to the MPAH require a review of the potential circulation implications of the change. The City utilized the General Plan Update Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR)-Traffic Impact Study (TIS) for the MPAH amendment process. The TIS reviews existing and future traffic conditions of the current general plan and of the proposed land use and circulation element updates. Additional analysis was completed that focused on the identification of the impacts and mitigations associated with the changes to the MPAH, as opposed to the overall General Plan Update evaluated by the PEIR. The City plans to adopt the General Plan Update and PEIR in late fall 2020. The proposed MPAH amendments are recommended for conditional approval by the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Board of Directors (Board) contingent on compliance with the MPAH Guidance, and additional terms identified in the Recommendations.

Discussion

The 17 segments proposed for reclassification would result in a reduction of approximately 30 existing lane miles. Deletions and downgrades on the MPAH may be allowed if the increased traffic volumes in the affected agencies do not result in the unmitigated peak-hour intersection impacts (Guidance for Administration of the MPAH, Section 4.0 MPAH Amendment Policies). If impacts to the MPAH system are identified as a result of the proposed amendment, approval of an amendment may be subject to the execution of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between OCTA and affected agencies, which specify roles and responsibilities for implementation of any identified mitigations. The TIS analyzed 105 intersections with 18 identified that could be impacted due to the MPAH amendment request (Attachment C). Of the 18 impacted intersections, four are located outside the City in the following jurisdictions: City of Fountain Valley (1), City of Orange (1), and the City of Tustin (2).

The City proposed a draft mitigation program to ensure that mitigations for impacted intersections, if needed in the future, would be implemented. The program would fully mitigate impacts at eight intersections (including the four intersections outside of the City) and partially mitigate impacts at two intersections. Feasible mitigations could not be developed at the remaining eight impacted intersections, all located within the City, due to right-of-way needs for proposed complete streets projects. The TIS also identified potential significant impacts to an additional five intersections due to the City's proposed Land Use Element Update. These impacts are not associated with the change to the MPAH; therefore, they are excluded from the MPAH amendment process.

Furthermore, potential impacts to high-quality transit corridors were identified. OCTA provides high-frequency (15-minute service intervals) fixed-route bus service during peak commute hours on two segments that are part of the MPAH amendment - McFadden Avenue (Route 66) and 1st Street (Route 64).

The City's proposal would remove existing and planned travel lanes to incorporate complete streets infrastructure. OCTA and City staff agreed that additional mitigation measures on these corridors are necessary to maintain or improve transit service performance.

An MOU was prepared to define the roles and responsibilities of the parties the mitigations for the proposed MPAH amendment (Attachment D). Currently, the City and the affected agencies are in agreement on a draft mitigation program. For the impacts located at the cities of Fountain Valley and Tustin, the City has agreed to pay, at minimum, their fair share cost of the mitigation measures. The proposed reclassification on Fairhaven Avenue, between Grand Avenue and Tustin Avenue, is shared with the City of Orange. For this reclassification on Fairhaven Avenue to become final, both the cities of Orange and Santa Ana will need to update their circulation elements. The reclassification results in an impact at the Tustin Avenue and Fairhaven Avenue intersection (City of Orange). The existing intersection can accommodate the proposed reclassification to a divided collector (two-lane, divided) arterial, and therefore, the City of Orange has requested not be a party to the MOU. Lastly, the City has also agreed to fund a cooperative study, led by OCTA. The study will identify feasible transit improvements for impacts on high-quality transit corridors. Roles and responsibilities for funding and implementation would be identified and coordinated with OCTA as well. The affected agencies have reviewed the TIS, addressed remaining questions with the City, and all have provided letters of support for the City's amendment request (attachments E, F, and G).

The City also shared the TIS with immediately adjacent agencies - the cities of Costa Mesa, Garden Grove, Irvine, Westminster, the County of Orange, and the California Department of Transportation. Except for the City of Garden Grove (Garden Grove), all immediately adjacent agencies have indicated their support for the City's amendment request (attachments H, I, J, K, and L). Garden Grove is the owner of the Willowick Golf Course property, which is near the proposed Hazard Avenue reclassification. Garden Grove would like to preserve existing vehicular access in the vicinity of the Willowick property while the City and Garden Grove solidify a vision for the property. Currently, the property remains classified as open space in the City's proposed Land Use Element Update. Moreover, the TIS did not identify any impacts in the vicinity of Hazard Avenue, and it is projected to operate at a segment link level of service "A" in the future year with reclassification. Therefore, there are no technical MPAH-related issues with the proposed reclassification to Hazard Avenue.

Further, the City has discussed the matter with City of Garden Grove, and there is an understanding that the parties will work to address this issue as the long-term vision for the property develops.

Based on the support from the affected agencies and technical analysis of the proposed reclassifications, staff recommends conditional approval of the MPAH amendments, authorization to negotiate and execute the final MOU, and a cooperative agreement for a transit cooperative study. If approved by the Board, the proposed amendments will not become final until OCTA receives: (1) a fully signed and executed MOU among OCTA and the cities of Fountain Valley, Santa Ana, and Tustin; and (2) documentation that the City has amended their general plan and have complied with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Additionally, the City of Orange must also provide documentation that their general plan has been amended in compliance with CEQA before finalizing the reclassification of Fairhaven Avenue on the MPAH.

CEQA

Amendments to the MPAH are exempt from the CEQA review. As such, if the Board approves the recommendations, OCTA will file a Notice of Exemption from CEQA in support of the proposed amendment to the MPAH.

MPAH Status Update

As indicated in the status report in Attachment M, there are currently 22 active amendments proposed for the MPAH.

The City's General Plan Update also includes the conditionally-approved MPAH amendment in 2016 to support planned bikeways and accommodate the development of the OC Streetcar on Fourth Street from French Street to Grand Avenue, and on three segments of Santa Ana Boulevard: (1) Flower Street to Ross Street, (2) French Street to Santiago Street, and (3) Raitt Street to Flower Street. As indicated in Attachment A, the adoption of the General Plan Update will finalize the amendment on these four facilities.

In June 2020, OCTA received appropriate documentation to finalize and update the MPAH map to reflect conditionally-approved amendments within several other jurisdictions:

- Huntington Beach – Graham Street and Talbert Street (shared with the County of Orange), Delaware Street, 6th Street;
- Yorba Linda – Esperanza Road (shared with the County of Orange), Fairmont Boulevard Connector; and
- Westminster – Garden Grove Boulevard, Edwards Street, Trask Avenue, and Hoover Street.

Many of the other remaining amendments are awaiting local action to amend their respective general plans. Others are either under review, pending resolution of issues with other agencies, or awaiting refinement of development plans.

Summary

The City of Santa Ana has requested amendments to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways to reflect the City of Santa Ana's General Plan Update. The technical analysis indicates that -- with the recommended mitigations -- implementation of the amendments would not adversely impact the integrity of the Master Plan of Arterial Highways. Therefore, staff recommends Board of Directors' conditional approval of the requested amendments.

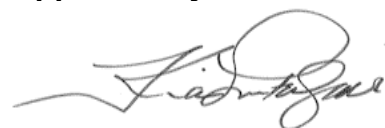
Attachments

- A. Letter from Mr. Nabil Saba, P.E., Acting Executive Director, Public Works Agency, City of Santa Ana, to Mr. Charles Larwood, Manager of Transportation Planning, Orange County Transportation Authority, Dated January 21, 2020, re: Request for Amendment to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways in Santa Ana
- B. City of Santa Ana Proposed MPAH Amendments Maps
- C. City of Santa Ana General Plan Update, Amendment to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways, Intersection Impacts
- D. Draft Memorandum of Understanding No. C-X-XXXX Between Orange County Transportation Authority and Cities of Santa Ana, Fountain Valley, Tustin for Amendment of the Master Plan of Arterial Highways
- E. Letter from Ms. Hye Jin Lee, MS, PE, Director of Public Works, City of Fountain Valley, to Mr. Nabil Saba, P.E., Executive Director, Public Works Agency, City of Santa Ana, Dated September 8, 2020, re: City of Santa Ana Proposed Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) Reclassifications
- F. Letter from Mr. Christopher S. Cash, Public Works Director, City of Orange, to Mr. Nabil Saba, P.E., Executive Director, Public Works Agency, City of Santa Ana, Dated September 17, 2020, re: City of Santa Ana Proposed Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) Reclassifications
- G. Letter from Ms. Krys Saldivar, Public Works Manager - Traffic/Transportation, City of Tustin, to Mr. Nabil Saba, P.E., Executive Director, Public Works Agency, City of Santa Ana, Dated October 6, 2020, re: City of Santa Ana Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) Reclassifications Letter of Support

- H. Letter from Mr. Raja Sethuraman, Public Services Director, City of Costa Mesa, to Mr. Nabil Saba, P.E., Executive Director, Public Works Agency, City of Santa Ana, Dated September 3, 2020, re: City of Santa Ana Proposed Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) Reclassifications
- I. Letter from Mr. Mark A. Steuer, Director of Public Works and Transportation, City of Irvine, to Mr. Nabil Saba, P.E., Executive Director, Public Works Agency, City of Santa Ana, Dated September 15, 2020, re: City of Santa Ana Proposed Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) Reclassifications
- J. Letter from Mr. Marwan Youssef, Ph.D., P.E., Public Works Director/ City Engineer, City of Westminster, to Mr. Nabil Saba, P.E., Executive Director, Public Works Agency, City of Santa Ana, September 9, 2020, re: City of Santa Ana Proposed Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) Reclassifications
- K. Letter from Ms. Nardy Khan, PE/PMP, Deputy Director, Infrastructure Programs, Orange County Public Works, to Mr. Nabil Saba, P.E., Executive Director, Public Works Agency, City of Santa Ana, Dated September 3, 2020, re: City of Santa Ana Proposed Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) Reclassifications
- L. Letter from Mr. Scott Shelley, Branch Chief, Regional-IGR-Transit Planning, California Department of Transportation District 12, to Mr. Verny Carvajal, Principal Planner, City of Santa Ana, Dated August 17, 2020
- M. Status Report on Active Master Plan of Arterial Highways Amendments

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