



Agenda Item

Planning Commission

Item #: 4.1.

2/2/2026

File #: 26-0055

TO: Chair and Members of the Planning Commission

THRU: Hayden Beckman, Planning Manager

FROM: Arlen Beck, Associate Planner

1. SUBJECT

Public Hearing to consider an amendment to the Circulation and Mobility Element of the City of Orange General Plan and finding of CEQA exemption.

2. SUMMARY

The City is proposing an amendment to the City of Orange General Plan Circulation and Mobility Element to reclassify the roadway designation for Santiago Canyon Road (Villa Park Road) between the shared Orange-Villa Park boundary and Cannon Street, and Fairhaven Avenue between the shared Orange-Santa-Ana boundary and Tustin Street (Tustin Avenue) to reflect changing development and traffic patterns.

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. Conduct and close the Public Hearing.
2. Adopt Planning Commission Resolution No. 05-26 recommending the City Council approve General Plan Amendment No. 26-0001 amending the City of Orange General Plan Circulation and Mobility Element to conform to the Orange County Transportation Authority's Countywide Master Plan of Arterial Highways.
3. Find the proposal exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) (Common Sense Exemption).

4. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The City of Orange was formally requested by adjacent agencies to update roadway classifications for two streets located along the City's jurisdictional boundaries:

- Santiago Canyon Road (Villa Park Road) between the shared Orange-Villa Park boundary and Cannon Street; and
- Fairhaven Avenue between the shared Orange-Santa Ana boundary and Tustin Street (Tustin Avenue).

These requests were initiated by the County of Orange and the City of Santa Ana, respectively, following updated traffic studies that evaluated long-term growth trends, traffic volumes, and roadway design objectives.

Both agencies have already adopted the revised roadway classifications within their own General Plans. The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) has also reviewed and conditionally approved the changes as amendments to the Countywide Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH).

To complete the regional planning process and maintain consistency with neighboring jurisdictions and OCTA, the City of Orange must amend its Circulation and Mobility Element to reflect the same roadway lane configuration.

Although the City of Orange, the County of Orange, the City of Santa Ana, and the OCTA are coordinating to achieve the same roadway reclassification objectives, each agency uses slightly different roadway classification terminology. The intent is to achieve equivalency in terms of number of lanes and median type. Therefore, for clarity and consistency, this staff report uses the roadway classification naming conventions established in the Circulation and Mobility Element of the City of Orange General Plan.

5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Santiago Canyon Road (Villa Park Road)

A transportation assessment prepared by Fehr & Peers evaluated Santiago Canyon Road (Villa Park Road) from Wanda Street to Cannon Street, spanning multiple jurisdictions. The study analyzed:

- Traffic operations and level of service;
- Vehicle queueing;
- Safety conditions; and
- User comfort for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The analysis determined that the roadway's existing Major Arterial (6-Lane Divided) designation does not align with current traffic forecasts or the available 100-foot right-of-way. Instead, an Asymmetric Major Arterial (5-Lane Divided) configuration, three westbound lanes and two eastbound lanes, would adequately serve future demand while fitting within existing constraints and meeting General Plan level of service requirements for roadway performance.

This revised designation also allows space for buffered Class II bicycle lanes, improving multimodal safety and comfort.

Fairhaven Avenue

Through their comprehensive General Plan Update, the City of Santa Ana conducted a Transportation Impact Study which included the evaluation of Fairhaven Avenue between Tustin Street (Tustin Avenue) and Yorba Street as a distinct roadway segment for both Existing Year (2020) and Future Year (2045) conditions. The analysis provided:

- Average Daily Traffic volumes
- Roadway Level of Service based on volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratios
- Consistency between observed/forecasted traffic demand and the Circulation Element roadway classification

The Transportation Impact Study determined that Fairhaven Avenue's existing Secondary Arterial (4-Lane Undivided) designation is inconsistent with both observed and forecasted traffic volumes,

supporting its reclassification to a Two-Lane Secondary Arterial (2-Lane Divided) to better align with operational performance and Complete Streets objectives, which supports lower design speeds, and allows for enhanced pedestrian, bicycle, and streetscape features without compromising roadway performance while also meeting General Plan level of service requirements for roadway performance.

Subsequently, OCTA conditionally approved the reclassification from a Secondary Arterial (4-Lane Undivided) to a Two-Lane Secondary Arterial (2-Lane Divided). This change reflects lower than anticipated growth, updated traffic volumes, and surrounding land use context.

The amendment requires the City of Orange to update our General Plan to achieve consistency (number of lanes and median type) in order for the OCTA MPAH Amendment to become final.

6. PROJECT ANALYSIS

Reclassification of Roadways:

The City of Orange's Circulation and Mobility Element (Circulation Element) identifies goals, objectives, policies and implementation programs that affect the transportation system. The Circulation Element contains policies on the development of the transportation facilities necessary to accommodate orderly growth within the City, provides guidance for future planning efforts, and ensures a balanced transportation system. As a part of the Circulation Element, the Circulation & Mobility Plan documents existing transportation facilities and identifies the desired future conditions of these facilities. The Circulation Element defines the different classifications of roadways to accommodate various daily capacity and functions.

The existing Circulation & Mobility Plan includes six roadway classifications. For each roadway classification, the level of service (LOS) is identified to indicate the performance measure for an arterial that meets the City's required daily capacity minimum of LOS D. Finally, the City Master Plan of Streets and Highways illustrates the proposed roadway classification for each major roadway within Orange.

The proposed General Amendment will reclassify two specific roadway segments within the City as follows:

1. Santiago Canyon Road between the shared Orange-Villa Park boundary and Cannon Street to be reclassified from Major Arterial (6-lane divided) to Asymmetric Major Arterial (5-lane divided); and
2. Fairhaven Avenue, between the shared Orange-Santa Ana boundary and Tustin Street from Secondary Arterial (4-Lane Undivided) to Two-Lane Secondary Arterial (2-Lane Divided).

Attachment 2 identifies the two roadway segments to be reclassified. Additionally, this proposed General Plan Amendment will create two more roadway classifications:

1) Asymmetric Major Arterial (5-Lane Divided) and 2) Two-Lane Secondary Arterial (2-Lane Divided). Adding these two classifications will result in a total of eight roadway classifications within the Circulation & Mobility Plan. Attachment 3 contains the proposed changes to the Circulation Element, including an updated City Master Plan of Streets and Highways. The requested reclassifications for both Santiago Canyon Road and Fairhaven Avenue follow adopted reclassifications by neighboring agencies and OCTA.

The County of Orange prepared a traffic analysis for the reclassification of Santiago Canyon Road (named Villa Park Road within County limits) between Hewes and Cannon Street (Attachment 4) from a divided 6-lane to a divided 5-lane roadway. The results of this analysis support the proposed reclassification, and in May 2025, the County of Orange adopted the reclassification of Villa Park Road (Santiago Canyon Road) (Attachment 5). OCTA, in anticipation of the County of Orange's General Plan amendment, adopted this reclassification in OCTA's Master Plan of Arterial Highways in September 2024 (Attachment 6). OCTA's adoption of the reclassification of Santiago Canyon Road requires the City of Orange to update their General Plan to reclassify this road segment in kind.

As part of a recent General Plan update, the City of Santa Ana evaluated various roadway segments, including Fairhaven Avenue, for reclassification. The results of Santa Ana's traffic analysis supports the reclassification of Fairhaven Avenue, between Grand Avenue to Tustin Street, from an undivided 4-lane to a divided 2-lane roadway (Attachment 7). Santa Ana adopted an updated General Plan in April 2022 (Attachment 8), which includes an updated Mobility Element showing the reclassification of Fairhaven Avenue (Attachment 9). OCTA, in response to Santa Ana's request to reclassify Fairhaven Avenue, conditionally approved the adoption of this reclassification in OCTA's Master Plan of Arterial Highways (Attachment 10). OCTA's conditional adoption of the reclassification of Fairhaven Avenue stipulates that the City of Orange must also reclassify this segment of Fairhaven Avenue in kind.

It is important that the City's Master Plan of Streets and Highways is consistent with neighboring jurisdictions, such as the County of Orange and Santa Ana, to ensure the City's circulation system develops in a manner that promotes regional mobility. This amendment will achieve this consistency.

7. AUTHORIZING GUIDELINES

Orange Municipal Code Section 17.08.020 and 17.10.010 authorizes the Planning Commission to review and make advisory recommendations to the City Council on General Plan Amendments.

8. PUBLIC NOTICE

On January 22, 2026, a notice was published in the Orange City News newspaper for a public hearing before the Planning Commission on February 2, 2026.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed project is categorically exempt (Common Sense Exemption) from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) because there is no possibility that the revisions to the roadway designations may have a significant effect on the environment.

10. ADVISORY BOARD ACTION

None.

11. ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 Planning Commission Resolution No. PC 05-26 (including amended City of Orange General Plan Circulation and Mobility Element)
- Attachment 2 Proposed City Master Plan of Streets and Highways Amendment Reclassification

- Attachment 3 Amended City of Orange General Plan Circulation and Mobility Element (redline version)
- Attachment 4 Santiago Canyon Road (Villa Park Road) MPAH Amendment Traffic Study
- Attachment 5 County of Orange Staff Report of May 6, 2025, for the Santiago Canyon Road (Villa Park Road) reclassification
- Attachment 6 MPAH Amendment Staff Report of September 9, 2024, for the Santiago Canyon Road (Villa Park Road) reclassification
- Attachment 7 City of Santa Ana General Plan Update Appendix K Transportation Impact Study for the Fairhaven Avenue reclassification
- Attachment 8 City of Santa Ana Staff Report from April 19, 2022, for the Fairhaven Avenue reclassification
- Attachment 9 Adopted City of Santa Ana General Plan Mobility Element
- Attachment 10 OCTA Staff Report of November 2, 2020, for the Conditional Amendment of the Fairhaven reclassification in the Countywide Master Plan of Arterial Highways