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Darrell Johnson
Chief Executive Officer

August 8, 2016

Honorable Charles Margines
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Dear Judge Margines:

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) is pleased to respond to the findings and recommendations of the May 9, 2016, report issued by the Orange County Grand Jury entitled, "Light Rail: Is Orange County on the Right Track?"

OCTA takes very seriously its responsibility to Orange County taxpayers to develop and deliver transportation solutions that enhance the quality of life and keep Orange County moving. Similarly, we appreciate the Orange County Grand Jury's responsibilities that include the examination of all aspects of county government, including special districts, to ensure the county is being governed honestly and efficiently, and public funds are being handled appropriately. OCTA believes that any thoughtful review of how to handle the public's business can only provide for better outcomes.

While a rail transit project such as the OC Streetcar has been discussed for many years in Orange County, in the past few years progress has been made in working with local agencies and stakeholders to advance this project. The Grand Jury report was very thorough and highlights the difficulties faced by OCTA in implementing the project, as well as the need to stay "on the right track." Many of the report's recommendations on the OC Streetcar Project have or will be addressed over time through planned improvements as outlined in the enclosed response.

Throughout the Grand Jury's report as well as within the Grand Jury's Findings and Recommendation, there is reference to "Light Rail" as a system in Orange County. Light Rail is also used at times to describe the OC Streetcar project which is not correct. As pointed out several times during discussions with the Grand Jury, there are differences between a streetcar and light rail. One major difference is that a light rail system is typically located on separate rights-of-way where streetcars typically occupy travel lanes in local streets and run with local traffic.

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Additionally, the Board has not taken a position on the expansion of the OC Streetcar project beyond what has been defined today within the cities of Santa Ana and Garden Grove. A countywide Transit Master Plan study is under way that will look at bus, rail, and other demand responsive transit modes that could serve areas of Orange County in the future. A countywide bus, rail, and demand responsive transit vision may emerge from that effort, contingent on Board review and direction in 2017. It is also important to note that OCTA must work in cooperation with local agencies for any dedicated transit facilities on local streets.

Thank you again for the opportunity to respond to this report. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (714) 560-5343.

Sincerely,



Darrell Johnson
Chief Executive Officer

DJ:ds
Enclosure

Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA)

**Responses to Findings and Recommendations to the
May 9, 2016 report issued by the Orange County Grand Jury**

“Light Rail: Is Orange County on the Right Track?”

FINDINGS

Finding 1 -- The lack of development of second-generation light rail in Orange County can be closely linked to the reality of different transit priorities for the thirty-four diverse cities in the county.

OCTA partially disagrees with this finding. OCTA acknowledges that local control is closely held and protected by local jurisdictions throughout Orange County. Successful capital projects generally enjoy the strong support of the communities they are built in. However, the reference to light rail is confusing as the OC Streetcar is not light rail nor are there further plans or funding identified beyond the approved Santa Ana-Garden Grove OC Streetcar project.

Finding 2 -- Orange County would benefit from the examples of Los Angeles and San Diego Counties with their history of promoting centrally organized and run light rail systems. As a result, these counties were well-positioned to plan for and develop second generation light rail systems expansion in the 1980's.

OCTA agrees with this finding. Although there are differences between light rail and street car systems, there are many lessons to be learned from the successful construction and operation of light rail in Los Angeles and San Diego counties. Both systems are thought of as having a positive impact on the communities they serve. The same can be said of other systems throughout the United States. OCTA has developed positive working relationships with these peer agencies who have implemented successful streetcar projects for lessons learned and best practices that will be of benefit to the development of the OC Streetcar Project.

Finding 3 -- Approval of OCTA as implementer and owner/operator of the OC Streetcar Project, and as subsequent grantee for the Federal New Starts Program, has created the basis for enabling further light rail development in Orange County to include public outreach and marketing/promotion efforts.

OCTA agrees with this finding. OCTA has a well-respected, long-standing reputation within the United States Department of Transportation as having demonstrated the capacity to successfully manage and deliver capital projects on schedule and under budget. Based upon this experience, in August 2014, the OCTA Board of Directors (Board) assumed lead agency for implementation of the OC Streetcar Project.

Through the OCTA Board, OCTA has and will continue to lead this effort working in concert with local agencies and other stakeholders. At every stage of this effort, the public has been engaged and that practice will continue.

Finding 4 -- Creation by OCTA of a draft light rail Master Plan for Orange County that includes both intra- and inter-county transit connectivity options would be of considerable value to the public.

OCTA partially disagrees with this finding. OCTA recognizes that a countywide transit plan is imperative. Orange County's current plan relies on the Metrolink commuter rail system as the primary backbone transit connector between Los Angeles and Orange Counties, augmented by express bus and vanpool services that meet longer-distance travel needs. In May of 2016, the Board approved a study effort called the Transit Master Plan that will take a high-level look at long term transit needs throughout Orange County as well as important connections to transit investments by other transit agencies. This plan will identify a series of corridors suitable for additional transit investment. Potential future considerations could range from bus rapid transit, the integration of Transportation Network Companies, to rail transit alternatives. This planned countywide Transit Master Plan will allow OCTA to update its long-term vision for intra- and inter-county transit service.

Finding 5 -- The long project times associated with light rail system establishment require not only careful planning and coordination by OCTA, but also consistent efforts to inform the public by those Orange County cities involved in development or possible development of light rail projects.

OCTA agrees with this finding. Large capital projects can take years to develop. Successful projects and programs that provide a public service must include public input in all phases of project delivery. OCTA has already launched a public awareness campaign for the OC Streetcar aimed at engaging and

involving the public as the project progresses. These efforts include city involvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1 -- OCTA should initiate another "Go Local" effort in FY 16/17 encouraging more Orange County cities to advocate for light rail or other transit connections to assist Metrolink ridership. (F.1., F.3.)

This recommendation has not been implemented. Measure M's Projects V (Community Based Transit/Circulators) and S (Transit Extensions to Metrolink) offer opportunities for local agencies to engage in transit projects and programs. In June 2016, The OCTA Board approved a slate of 17 projects (valued at \$26.7 million) submitted by local agencies with implementation of projects beginning in fiscal year (FY) 2016-17. The OC Streetcar project is partially funded with Project S funds. Pending completion of the Harbor Corridor Transit Study and the countywide Transit Master Plan, OCTA may consider additional "Go Local" funding opportunities in the future. In terms of timing, the Transit Master Plan is an 18-month effort so any further consideration of this matter is not expected until early 2018.

Recommendation 2 -- OCTA should organize and lead focus groups during FY 16/17 to gauge public reaction to transportation options for Orange County that will be affected by the changes in working and population centers forecast for the next 20 years. (F.1., F.3.)

This recommendation will be implemented. OCTA will be conducting focus groups in August 2016 and will use them to gauge public opinion on future transportation options.

Recommendation 3 -- OCTA should use multi-lingual (English, Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese) Web and printed marketing materials to highlight Metrolink Transportation Center and light rail connectivity efforts in Orange County. (F.1., F.3.)

This recommendation has been implemented. OCTA uses multi-lingual marketing materials to support projects and programs. The languages currently used are English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Demographic studies OCTA relied upon did not find a large enough number of Koreans in the region to justify the cost of translation; however, if we identified an area where translation to the Korean language would make sense, we would do so.

Recommendation 4 -- OCTA should create a draft phased light rail Master Plan during FY 16/17 that links the County's high density urban areas and connects with Metrolink and Los Angeles County's Metro light rail system. (F.4.)

This recommendation requires further analysis. In May of 2016, the Board approved a study effort that will take a high-level look at long term transit needs throughout Orange County as well as important connections to transit investments by other local transit agencies. This plan will identify a series of corridors suitable for additional transit investment. Potential considerations could range from bus rapid transit, the integration of Transportation Network Companies, to rail transit alternatives. This planned countywide Transit Master Plan will allow OCTA to update its long-term vision for intra- and inter-county transit service. Any future extensions of rail transit phases in Orange County will be included in the Transit Master Plan and be fully vetted by the OCTA Board and the public. The Transit Master Plan is an 18-month effort that is not expected to conclude until late 2017.

In terms of funding for projects such as these, it is important to note that future projects that may be included in the constrained plan (funded portion) of OCTA's Long Range Transportation Plan must include viable funding sources. At this time there are no funds identified for an expansion of the OC Streetcar or other rail transit projects.

Recommendation 5 -- OCTA should publish this Master Plan on its Website once it is created and provide a Website progress update every six months. (F.4.).

This recommendation will be implemented. Upon OCTA Board approvals related to the Orange County Transit Master Plan, OCTA will develop an overall study schedule that will include public awareness efforts, including website content. Content on OCTA's website is ideally updated to reflect current status of projects on an ongoing basis.

Recommendation 6 -- Santa Ana and Garden Grove should create links on their Websites within six months of receipt of this report that show their efforts to complete the OC Streetcar Project and then update these Websites every three months. (F.5.)

This recommendation is the responsibility of the cities of Santa Ana and Garden Grove. This is per the table on page 26 of the Grand Jury's report. It is OCTA's practice to collaborate with cities on projects of mutual interest to maximize public awareness.

Recommendation 7 -- Anaheim should maintain its link on the city's Website that shows efforts to successfully complete the ARC project and then update that Website every three months. (F.5.)

This recommendation is the responsibility of the City of Anaheim. This is per the table on page 26 of the Grand Jury's report. It is OCTA's practice to collaborate with cities on projects of mutual interest to maximize public awareness.

Recommendation 8: Fullerton should create a link on the city's Website that describes the Fullerton City Council's policy decision process concerning the best transit option to support the College Connector Plan, and then update this Website every three months. (F.5.)

This recommendation is the responsibility of the City of Fullerton. This is per the table on page 26 of the Grand Jury's report. It is OCTA's practice to collaborate with cities on projects of mutual interest to maximize public awareness.