OCTA

AFFILIATED AGENCIES

Orange County Transit District

Local Transportation Authority

Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies

Consolidated Transportation Service Agency

Congestion Management Agency

Service Authority for Abandoned Vehicles

February 27, 2007

Transportation Corridor Agencies
The Honorable James Thor
Chairman, Foothill/Eastern Transportation Corridor Agency
The Honorable Carmen Cave
Chairwoman, San Joaquin Hills Transportation Corridor Agency
125 Pacifica, Ste. 120,
Irvine, CA 92618

Dear Chairman Thor and Chairwoman Cave,

On behalf of the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Board of Directors, I want to reiterate our support for the Foothill Transportation Corridor South Toll Road extension (Foothill-South).

OCTA's plans rely on the transportation capacity provided by Foothill-South as an important regional facility that helps reduce future congestion on the San Diego Freeway (I-5) in south Orange County. Additionally, it is included in the Southern California Association of Government's (SCAG) Regional Transportation Plan and Regional Transportation Improvement Program.

OCTA has supported the Foothill-South throughout the project development process. For example, OCTA approved changes to the 2004 Regional Transportation Improvement Program that allowed the Transportation Corridor Agencies (TCA) to reduce the ultimate footprint of Foothill-South from 8 lanes to 6 lanes. This involved complex air quality conformity findings that allowed the reduced footprint to move ahead. In addition, the OCTA Board of Directors unanimously approved the Foothill-South extension in the baseline of the county's Long Range Transportation Plan on July 24, 2006.

As you are aware, both OCTA and TCA have conducted traffic forecasts for the south county area. OCTA has recently reviewed potential differences between the two which has been questioned by some stakeholders. Upon detailed analysis, OCTA has concluded that the TCA model is consistent with OCTA modeling guidelines and produces similar congestion trends. In short, construction of the Foothill-South would provide congestion relief to the I-5 in south Orange County. A memo outlining the details of this analysis is attached; however, the following three points summarize the analysis:

- The models are using consistent travel forecasting methodologies
- Both predict similar volumes along study area boundaries
- Both predict similar congestion patterns along the I-5 corridor

OCTA remains strongly supportive of TCA's efforts to complete Orange County's toll road system with the Foothill-South and bring needed congestion relief to the region.

With five shared board members between our agencies, OCTA is fully engaged in our joint efforts to improve transportation in Orange County and the region. We look forward to our continued partnership.

Sincerely,

Carolyn V. Cavecche
Chairman

CVC:ds
Attachment

cc: Orange County Transportation Authority Board of Directors
Foothill-Eastern Transportation Corridor Agency Board of Directors
San Joaquin Hills Transportation Corridor Agency Board of Directors
Arthur T. Leahy, Chief Executive Officer, OCTA
William Woollett Jr., Chief Executive Officer, TCA
Orange County State Legislative Delegation
Orange County Congressional Delegation

OCTA

February 23, 2007

OCTA Analysis of Traffic Forecasts in South Orange County

At the November 2006 South Orange County Major Investment Study Policy Committee (Committee), the committee requested information on the Foothill Transportation Corridor-South Toll Road Extension (Foothill-South) and potential differences in traffic forecasts between the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) and Transportation Corridor Agencies (TCA) models.

This request was hastened by a Los Angeles Times article in October 2006 citing differences in daily traffic volumes on Interstate 5 (I-5) in 2025 (TCA model) and 2030 (OCTA model). Overall, our analysis indicates the TCA model is consistent with OCTA modeling guidelines, produces similar volume results, and produces similar congestion trends. OCTA's analysis of the differences is provided below.

OCTA operates and maintains the regional transportation model known as the Orange County Transportation Analysis Model (OCTAM). Under state law, OCTAM must be consistent with the SCAG's five-county model. OCTAM has additional freeway and street network information in Orange County compared to the SCAG model, providing for a more detailed geographic analysis. As OCTA runs a model with more detail in Orange County than SCAG, many local agencies within Orange County run their own models with extra detail for their areas of interest. As a result, OCTA adopted guidelines and a certification process in 2001 for local traffic models to ensure consistency with OCTAM. This process allows other agencies to develop more detailed "subarea" traffic models to suit local needs. The TCAs developed a subarea model in May 2002, and OCTA approved the model in June 2002, consistent with modeling guidelines. It is important to note that consistency between the models does not necessarily mean that they are identical, rather that they result in similar travel patterns and congestion trends.

In reviewing the current TCA model over the last several weeks, OCTA drew lines across all the facilities entering and exiting the TCA model area, summarized daily traffic for these lines, and determined that the overall Average Daily Traffic (ADT) passing these lines is virtually the same between the two models. Consequently, the two models are producing and attracting practically the same demand at Oso Parkway on the north and at the county line on the south.

OCTA also compared the peak period congestion levels on I-5 south of Alicia Parkway. Contrary to some press reports, the Foothill-South Environmental Impact Report cites some continuing congestion on I-5 with the completion of the project. Specifically, some Year 2025 congestion remains on I-5 between Avenida Pico and El Camino Real, Stonehill Drive and Ortega Highway, and Crown Valley Parkway to La Paz. The OCTA baseline model also shows congestion in year 2030 in these areas as well. While we noted volume differences on I-5 at some locations, these locations are congested in both models, and therefore indicate similar congestion trends.

It is important to note that making a direct comparison between two different models is difficult, if not impossible, due to the nature of travel demand models. However, our analysis indicates the TCA model produces similar volume results and congestion trends as the OCTA model.