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TCA Ends Effort to Extend 241 Toll Road, Unanimously Supports Three-Project Solution to South Orange County Traffic Relief

Public input shapes path forward and TCA, OCTA and Caltrans will advance projects

Irvine, CA (March 12, 2020) – The Foothill/Eastern Transportation Corridor Agency (F/ETCA) Board of Directors approved a report today, which in cooperation with the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), outlines three near-term projects that address South Orange County traffic relief.

These mobility improvement projects provide the necessary transportation benefits to fulfill the intent of the South County Traffic Relief Effort (SCTRE) Project. This formally concludes the SCTRE and completes the Transportation Corridor Agencies' (TCA) effort to extend the 241 Toll Road.

The Board action advances an untolled extension of Los Patrones Parkway (Alternative 22 Untolled) for further consideration, which would provide significant traffic relief with minimal environmental and community impacts.

Based on current traffic modeling and traffic projections, extending Los Patrones Parkway as an untolled county major thoroughfare accomplishes TCA's efforts to complete the southern extension of the 241 Toll Road. As planned, the 241 Toll Road will transition into the untolled regional roadway network, similar to the 261 Toll Road and Jamboree Road.

"After a robust four-year public engagement effort, we are happy we have a solution that represents both the community's input and technical analysis. The Los Patrones Parkway Extension will result in significant regional mobility improvements," said Christina Shea, F/ETCA Chairwoman and Irvine Mayor. "Our approval means that all other alternatives, including all routes that connect directly to Interstate 5, are removed from consideration; and this concludes TCA's effort to extend the 241 Toll Road."

Caltrans received approximately 1,650 comments on the SCTRE Scoping Document through the February 10, 2020, deadline. The three projects are a result of the study's technical analysis, significant public input and a collaborative effort between TCA, OCTA and Caltrans.

The three near-term transportation improvement projects moving forward are:

- **Alternative 22 Untolled** – Extending Los Patrones Parkway untolled from its current terminus at Cow Camp Road to Avenida La Pata.
- **High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane Extension to the County Line**: Constructing one HOV lane in each direction on I-5 between Avenida Pico and the San Diego County line, as envisioned in OCTA's 2008 South County Major Investment Study (SOCMIS) and its 2018 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

- **Ortega Highway Widening:** Completing the less than one-mile widening of Ortega Highway (SR 74) between Calle Entradero in San Juan Capistrano to the city/county border, as envisioned in OCTA's 2008 SOCMIS and its 2018 LRTP.

"This is a victory for all South County residents. My goal has always been to increase regional mobility and safety for the region; an untolled Los Patrones Parkway extension does exactly that," said Lisa Bartlett, Fifth District Orange County Supervisor, TCA Director and OCTA Director. "It has been three years since I developed this alternative with OC Public Works and I am thrilled to see it finally moving forward. I am proud of the work done by my team at the County, OCTA and TCA to make this alternative a reality."

The agencies recognize that additional multimodal transportation improvements will be necessary in the future to accommodate population and employment growth as well as changes in development and travel patterns. OCTA will continue to lead the South County Multimodal Study that began last year, with Caltrans and local stakeholders, to examine the transportation needs of the region over the next 20-plus years and can incorporate projects into future Long-Range Transportation Plans.

"After 15 months of hard work, as a Director on OCTA and TCA, I am very pleased with these regional traffic relief solutions, which provide the mobility we need without significant community or environmental impacts," said Joe Muller, TCA Director, OCTA Director and Dana Point Councilman. "It is important for elected officials to listen to the public and consider the impact to local communities. It takes leadership to help local, state and regional agencies align with the public interest to provide improved mobility for the drivers in Orange County."

In addition to voting to advance an untolled Los Patrones Parkway extension, the F/ETCA Board directed its staff to work with the County and to create a project development plan that will come back to the Board. The F/ETCA Board also voted to support the OCTA and Caltrans efforts to advance the I-5 HOV extension project and the Ortega Highway widening project in San Juan Capistrano.

"Planning, funding and delivering an effective, balanced and sustainable transportation system is fundamental for Orange County to continue thriving as a desirable place to live, work and visit for generations to come," said OCTA Chairman Steve Jones, also the Mayor of Garden Grove. "All of the agencies are jointly committed to playing their respective roles in ensuring this effort is successful."

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The Transportation Corridor Agencies (TCA) are two joint powers authorities formed by the California legislature in 1986 to plan, finance, construct and operate Orange County's public toll road system. Fifty-one miles of the system are complete, including the 73, 133, 241 and 261 Toll Roads. TCA continues to meet the region's growing need for congestion-free transportation alternatives.

OCTA: The Orange County Transportation Authority is the county transportation planning commission, responsible funding and implementing transit and capital projects for a balanced and sustainable transportation system that reflects the diverse travel needs of the county's 34 cities and 3.2 million residents. With the mission of keeping Orange County moving, this includes freeways and express lanes, bus and rail transit, rideshare, commuter rail and active transportation.