

## **Meeting of July 9, 2018**

### **New 91 Express Lanes Account Plans Bring Simplicity, Cost Savings to Customers**

The OCTA board approved changes to the 91 Express Lanes account plans to help meet new state requirements for the types of transponders used on tolling facilities, while simplifying the plans and passing along cost savings to customers.

The new transponders don't require batteries, so they are available in sticker form, as well as a hard-case with a switch to signal carpooling. Beginning early next year, sticker transponders will be issued to every vehicle listed on customers' accounts at no cost. Because of this, 91 Express Lanes account plans that charge a fee per transponder will switch to a per account fee structure.

Changes will be made to the Convenience, Express Club and Standard plans. At this time, there will be no changes to the Special Access Plan:

- Convenience Plan – Customers currently pay a one-time fee of \$75 per transponder. This will change to a one-time fee of \$100 per account, regardless of the number of transponders on the account. Current customers will be grandfathered into this new plan without incurring any costs.
- Standard Plan – Current customers must use at least \$7 in tolls per transponder per month on the 91 Express Lanes or they are charged the difference between \$7 and the toll usage amount. Customers will now be charged a \$2 monthly account fee, regardless of the number of transponders on the account. Customers will also receive a \$1 per trip discount on all tolled trips on the 91 Express Lanes after 30 trips, with a maximum discount of \$50 per account. Current customers who have not had to pay any monthly minimum fees during the past six months will be transitioned to the Convenience Plan at no cost.
- Express Club – This plan will be eliminated, and current customers will be asked to select between the Convenience or Standard plans.

The transponder changes go into effect Jan. 1 and customers will be notified about the new transponders and account structures.

### **Board Approves Updated OC Streetcar Project Funding Plan**

The Orange County Transportation Authority's board of directors approved an updated funding plan for the OC Streetcar project, bringing the total project cost to \$407.76 million.

The new funding plan brings the project one step closer to receiving a \$148.96 million full-funding grant agreement from the Federal Transit Administration. The agreement is expected to be finalized in the coming months.

Since the approval of the original funding plan in May 2017, the project has experienced delays that, along with higher construction bid prices, have impacted the project's cost estimate. In Southern California and around the nation, a strong economy and increased construction activity, rising material costs, skilled labor shortages and inflation have led to increasing prices in major infrastructure projects.

To accommodate for the increase, the board approved the use of additional Measure M funds, Orange County's half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements, also known as OC Go. Overall, approximately 40 percent of the project will be funded through Measure M and the remaining 60 percent will be funded with federal and state dollars.

OC Streetcar construction is expected to kick off later this year, with testing and operations scheduled to begin in 2021.