BALANCING REGIONAL AND LOCAL NEEDS: THE OCTA MPAH COMPLETE STREETS ASSESSMENT

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Outline

- Background
- Why did OCTA conduct this study?
- Outreach, needs assessment, and goals
- Alternatives development
- Evaluations
- Recommendations
- Lessons Learned
Background

- The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) is the county’s transportation planning agency.
- Administers the Master Plan of Arterial Highways.
- MPAH defines countywide circulation system, with classifications, number of lanes, capacities, etc.
- MPAH implementation is a key regional objective.
- Cities’ roadway funding is tied to MPAH.
- MPAH is regularly amended at City request.
MPAH
Defines countywide facility types and design capacity.
Why did OCTA conduct this study?

- Growing number of complete streets projects nationwide and locally (requiring evaluation and amendments)
- How can OCTA facilitate complete streets implementation and incorporate complete streets principles?
- How can OCTA balance regional throughput needs and local desires for placemaking and multimodal transportation?
- What do local agencies think in regard to changing the MPAH process and/or network?
Outreach, Needs Assessment, & Goals

- Barriers included funding, technical expertise, right-of-way, parking/throughput impacts, conflicts between jurisdictions.

- Funding emphasizes focus on improving congestion and LOS (inconsistent with complete streets objectives).

- Hiring consultants for technical requirements.

- Streamlining and clarifying amendment process and guidelines.
Outreach, Needs Assessment, & Goals

• Translated challenges into project goals (and 17 sub-goals):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Goal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Local jurisdictions and OCTA must process an increasing number of MPAH amendments and keep up with administration required for the growing number of complete streets projects.</td>
<td>Reduced administration and processing time associated with implementing complete streets projects along the MPAH network.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Balancing the regional and local needs for movement and place-making on MPAH facilities.</td>
<td>Balanced regional and local needs for movement and place-making with integrated multimodal and contextual considerations.</td>
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<td>3. Navigating MPAH processes for novice and non-technical staff.</td>
<td>Broad understanding and clarity of the MPAH network and guidance, such that the network and amendment processes are easy to understand by both technical and non-technical/novice staff.</td>
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<td>4. Local jurisdictions need to allocate staff resources and time to complete the technical requirements of the MPAH amendment process.</td>
<td>Reduced burden on local jurisdictions with increased availability of technical resources (such as traffic data, regional modeling, and mapping data) and established protocols for conducting technical evaluations.</td>
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<td>5. Reconciling the level of effort to process MPAH amendments, relative to the scale of the complete streets project.</td>
<td>Balanced level of analysis and documentation effort with the scope and scale of a Complete Streets project and effect to the MPAH network and adjacent jurisdictions.</td>
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<td>6. Avoiding potential funding implications as a result of reconfiguring MPAH roadways.</td>
<td>Minimized changes to funding eligibility that would result from implementation of Complete Streets projects.</td>
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Alternatives Development / Feasibility Evaluation
## Goals Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Evaluation of Alternatives</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1) Streamline Process</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 1: Reduce administration and processing time associated with implementing complete streets projects.</strong></td>
<td>Low-Medium</td>
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<td><strong>GOAL 2: Balance regional and local needs for movement and place-making.</strong></td>
<td>Low-Medium</td>
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<td><strong>GOAL 3: Present MPAH network and guidance in a clear and easy to understandable manner.</strong></td>
<td>Medium</td>
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<td><strong>GOAL 4: Reduce technical burden on local jurisdictions.</strong></td>
<td>Low</td>
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<td><strong>GOAL 5: Reconcile the level of effort with the expected impact of a project.</strong></td>
<td>Low</td>
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<td><strong>GOAL 6: Avoiding potential funding implications as a result of reconfiguring MPAH roadways.</strong></td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OVERALL</strong></td>
<td>Low-Medium</td>
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Recommendations

- Near-term steps:
  - Update guidance document and improve process clarity.
  - Immediately approve (vs. conditionally approve) changes.
- Long-term steps:
  - Confirm and refine reduced/simplified network.
  - Confirm/refine multimodal layered network (for AT, funding, and other purposes).
Lessons Learned

• There is no “one size fits all” solution to balancing regional throughput and local complete streets goals.
• Regional funding priorities could compete with local placemaking.
• Attempts to streamline processes should ensure heavy lifting isn’t reshuffled to another party.