

## **Cooperative Agreement Fact Sheet**

**Background:** In March 2020, the Foothill Eastern Transportation Corridor Agency (F/ETCA) issued the South County Traffic Relief Effort (SCTRE) Report, which recommended the following three projects to relieve congestion in South County:

1. Construction of Los Patrones Parkway Extension (LPPE) from its current terminus at Cow Camp Road to Avenida La Pata, as a non-tolled County primary arterial road;
2. High occupancy vehicle lane improvements on Interstate 5 between Avenida Pico and the San Diego County Line; and
3. Ortega Highway (State Route 74) widening in San Juan Capistrano from two lanes to four lanes.

F/ETCA and OCTA Boards unanimously voted to adopt the SCTRE recommendations. To assure construction of the LPPE, the County has: added the LPPE to the General Plan, assured its inclusion in the Orange County Transportation Authority's (OCTA) Master Plan of Arterial Highways and garnered support for the inclusion of the LPPE in the City of San Clemente's (City) General Plan.

Following the County's efforts, Senate Bills (SB) 760 and 761 were introduced. The bills sought to amend the Streets and Highways Code and the Government Code to prohibit the extension of State Route 241 (SR-241) through the City and preserve areas within the City subject to conservation easements or identified as protected open space.

In an extension of the County's efforts to assure LPPE's viability as a solution to help address South Orange County traffic congestion, Supervisor Lisa Bartlett formed a working group comprised of key stakeholders, including County, City, OCTA, the F/ETCA and Rancho Mission Viejo, LLC (RMV) to create a local solution and obviate the state legislation. The Cooperative Agreement is the result of the working group. Although all members of the working group were incorporated into the initial drafts of the agreement, in the end, F/ETCA and RMV decided not to sign on to any agreement and therefore, do not have any obligations.

Through the Cooperative Agreement, the County, City and OCTA agreed to support the three projects were recommended in the SCTRE traffic report study. To show its support for LPPE, the City agreed to not remove LPPE from its General Plan. Key elements of the Cooperative Agreement include:

- Agreement by the City to withdraw support for SB 760 and 761
- Agreement by the County and OCTA to help preserve previously approved open space and conservation areas in the City by not authorizing, constructing or supporting the construction of transportation projects within these areas
- Agreement by the City and County to support OCTA's ongoing South Orange County Multimodal Study; and
- Commitment by the County to continue to conduct design and environmental review for the completion of LPPE as a non-tolled County primary arterial road. The County will also monitor the traffic performance of LPPE for consistency with County standards. If County standards are not met, advance consideration of potential remedies in collaboration with affected jurisdictions and OCTA would be explored.

The Cooperative Agreement has been approved by the County Board of Supervisors, San Clemente City Council and OCTA Board of Directors. Senator Bates is supportive of the local solution and therefore, will not move forward SB 760 or SB 761.

## **What does the Cooperative Agreement accomplish?**

- Brings together key stakeholders to create a local solution to transportation needs rather than allowing the state set restrictions through legislation.
- Obligates the City of San Clemente to support Los Patrones Parkway Extension, a non-tolled County arterial, by conforming General Plan to allow for the new road.
- Supports major transportation projects in South County which will deliver mobility solutions.
- Protects existing open space and conservation easements in San Clemente by ensuring no transportation projects will be constructed within that space.

## **Is the Cooperative Agreement supported by traffic data?**

Yes. the Foothill Eastern Transportation Corridor Agency (F/ETCA) conducted a thorough traffic study which indicated regional traffic concerns can largely be alleviated by a 3-pronged transportation solution, which is affirmed by this Cooperative Agreement:

- Ortega Widening – a 1.1 mile widening project in San Juan Capistrano to relieve a traffic pinch point
- Los Patrones Parkway Extension - a non-tolled County arterial from Cow Camp to La Pata
- Addition of a HOV lane on the I-5 freeway from Pico to County line.

Based upon the traffic study results, the Foothill/Eastern TCA Board and OCTA Board voted unanimously to support these three projects as the three major transportation projects to relieve traffic in South County.

## **How does the Cooperative Agreement help South County?**

- It provides assurances to South County residences that transportation and mobility solutions are based on traffic data results that will support congestion relief without disrupting built-out communities, previously designated open space, or conservation easements in the city of San Clemente.