



DATE: February 26, 2025

TO: Orange County Planning Commission

FROM: OC Development Services/Planning

SUBJECT: General Plan Amendment TGPA 24-03 – Transportation Element

PROPOSAL: Recommend the Board of Supervisors adopt proposed General Plan Amendment TGPA 24-03 to update the Transportation Element to reflect changing development and traffic patterns.

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION / ZONING DISTRICT: Not Applicable

LOCATION: Unincorporated Areas of Orange County

APPLICANT: OC Development Services

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RECOMMENDED ACTION:

OC Development Services/Planning recommends the Planning Commission:

- a. Receive staff report and public testimony.
- b. Adopt Planning Commission Resolution No. 2025-03 (Attachment 1) recommending that the Board of Supervisors:
 - (1) Find that the proposed project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Common Sense Exemption, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 (b) (3).
 - (2) Revise the County of Orange Transportation Element contained in the proposed General Plan Amendment TGPA 24-03 to:
 - (a) Reclassify the existing classification of Major Arterial (divided six-lane) to Asymmetric Primary Arterial (divided five-lane) for Villa

Park Road/Santiago Canyon Road between Hewes Street and Cannon Street.

- (b) Include the definition of Asymmetric Lanes in the Transportation Element.

BACKGROUND:

Staff received authorization from the Planning Commission on December 11, 2024, to initiate General Plan Amendment TGA 24-03 to update the County of Orange (County) Transportation Element including the Circulation Plan to reflect future traffic demand for Villa Park Road/Santiago Canyon Road between Hewes Street and Cannon Street. Orange County Public Works (OCPW) initiated a Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) (Attachment 2), amendment request with the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) after evaluation of a Transportation Assessment (TA) (Fehr and Peers, March 2024 – Attachment 3). The TA compares the existing MPAH roadway designations for Villa Park Road/Santiago Canyon Road against proposed modifications to the roadway designations to conform the designations to reduced growth projections through the year 2045. The MPAH depicts a Countywide roadway network intended to ensure coordinated transportation system development among local jurisdictions in Orange County.

PROPOSED PROJECT:

Currently, Villa Park Road/Santiago Canyon Road between Hewes Street and Cannon Street is a four-lane Primary Arterial. The MPAH designates the roadway as a six-lane Major Arterial. The TA (Fehr and Peers, March 2024 – Attachment 3) was performed to evaluate the impacts of proposed reclassification of the roadway designation on the operation and safety of the roadway.

The proposed reclassification of the roadway segment is meant to support the County's effort to improve traffic conditions and conform to changing traffic patterns and growth estimates. The future forecasts along Villa Park Road/Santiago Canyon Road indicate that more capacity is needed between Hewes Street and Cannon Street to effectively serve the future demand. However, the current Major Arterial designation does not fit within the existing right of way. The TA concluded that the roadway designation of a five lane Asymmetric Primary Arterial (three westbound lanes and two eastbound lanes) on Villa Park Road/Santiago Canyon Road between Hewes Street and Cannon Street will be sufficient to serve future traffic demand on the roadway, would be the best use of the available right-of-way to increase capacity, meet operational goals of the County, and limit impacts to adjacent properties. (Fehr and Peers, March 2024 – Attachment 3). The five lane Asymmetric Primary Arterial roadway can fit within the existing 100 feet right-of-way.

Therefore, based on the TA, OCPW proposes to make amendments to the County's Transportation Element (Attachment 4) including the Circulation Plan (Attachment 5) to reflect the changing development and traffic patterns. Staff is requesting the Planning Commission recommend approval to the Board of Supervisors to update the County's Transportation Element including the Circulation Plan to implement the following revisions:

1. Reclassify the existing classification of Major Arterial (divided six-lane) to Asymmetric Primary Arterial (divided five-lane) for Villa Park Road/Santiago Canyon Road between Hewes Street and Cannon Street. The reclassification would provide three westbound lanes and two eastbound lanes and provide adequate right-of-way to accommodate a Class II bicycle lanes with three-foot painted buffers to improve traffic conditions on Villa Park Road/Santiago Canyon Road.
2. Include the definition of Asymmetric Lanes in the Transportation Element (See Attachment 4).
 - a. Asymmetric Lanes: Capacity augmentation may be needed that creates more lanes in one direction than the other (asymmetric lanes) along some Smart Streets, Principal, Major and/or Primary arterials.

These requested amendments to the County's Transportation Element including the Circulation Plan, reflect the future traffic demand in the County and are therefore, recommended for approval. The request to reclassify the roadway was conditionally approved by OCTA's Regional Transportation Planning Committee and Board, on August 29, 2024, and September 9, 2024, respectively (Attachment 6). OCTA's conditional approval action remains conditional until OCTA receives documentation that the County has amended their General Plan and complies with the requirements of CEQA.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The proposed General Plan Amendment TGPA 24-03 is exempt (Common Sense Exemption) from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) since there is no possibility that the revisions to the roadway designation may have a significant effect on the environment.

Submitted by:

Concurred by:

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Attachment 1 Draft Planning Commission Resolution No. 2025-03 to Adopt General Plan Amendment TGA 24-03

Attachment 2 Orange County Master Plan of Arterial Highways, 2024

Attachment 3 Fehr and Peers. Transportation Assessment of Proposed Amendment to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways for Villa Park Road, March 2024

Attachment 4 Draft Orange County Transportation Element - Redline

Attachment 5 Draft of Proposed Update to the County of Orange Circulation Plan

Attachment 6 Orange County Transportation Authority Staff Report Board Approval regarding Amendments to MPAH (September 9, 2024)