

Information – High Occupancy Vehicle Policy Changes for BATA Bridges

Subject:

Staff will seek feedback on a proposal for BATA bridges to modify the high occupancy vehicle (HOV) policy to support deployment of open road tolling for Authority discussion.

Background:

Staff provided an overview of proposed HOV policy changes relating to the open road tolling program at the May 2023 and October 2024 BATA Oversight Committee meetings. All BATA bridges have designated HOV lanes to incentivize carpooling and transit use by providing priority and time savings benefits through the toll plazas. The open road tolling project and removal of the toll booths will increase vehicles' speeds through the toll plazas and require changes in HOV policy to maintain safety and person throughput within the existing plaza areas.

The existing toll schedule at the Bay Area state-owned bridges allows vehicles with three or more occupants (HOV 3+) a discounted toll, except for the Dumbarton and San-Mateo Hayward bridges, where a discounted toll is available to vehicles with two or more occupants (HOV 2+). The HOV 2+ discount for the Dumbarton and San-Mateo bridges originated from a statute specifying that vehicles containing two or more persons could have exclusive or preferential use of HOV lanes on those bridges. That statute has since been repealed. To provide regional consistency on the HOV toll bridge discount, staff proposes offering the HOV discount on all bridges only to HOV3+ vehicles.

However, to improve safety, increase person throughput and utilize the excess capacity in the HOV lanes, staff proposes allowing HOV2 vehicles to use the HOV lanes at the Antioch, Benicia-Martinez, Carquinez, Richmond-San Rafael, Dumbarton, and San Mateo-Hayward Bridges without a toll discount. Especially with the extension of the westbound HOV lane on I-580 from Regatta Boulevard to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge toll plaza as part of the Forward Project, allowing HOV2 into the extended lane is critical to avoid creating congestion due to lack of current HOV3+ volume. HOV 3+ drivers using the HOV lanes would need to declare their occupancy using the switchable FasTrak Flex toll tag to receive the discounted toll. These HOV policy changes are proposed to be effective January 1, 2026.

No change is proposed at the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, where HOV3+ volumes are high and there is no excess capacity. HOV lane access and the toll discount will continue to be limited to HOV3+ vehicles in the dedicated approach lanes with a FasTrak account.

Issues:

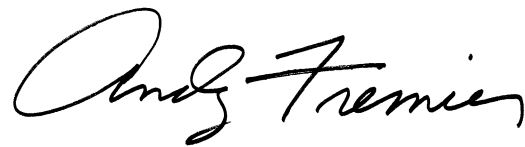
None identified.

Recommendations:

None. Information Only.

Attachments:

- Presentation



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