

COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM 10 - Public Comment

From: Patrick Traughber

Sent: Wednesday, December 09, 2020 12:07 PM

To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>; _BoardofDirectors <BoardofDirectors@bart.gov>

Subject: Doing more on Spare the Air days

Hi MTC-ABAG and BART Board Members,

We have had more and more Spare the Air Days recently with air quality dropping to unhealthy levels. These poor air quality days are caused mostly by wood burning and car traffic exhaust. Today, Spare the Air days are mostly meaningless. To have a real impact, I ask that your agencies encourage walking, biking, and transit and discourage driving cars (including electric cars which pollute our air through dust and tire sheddings). Here are some ways you can do this today:

- 1) Reduce the price of BART fares significantly on Spare the Air days. **This is doable today.**
- 2) Increase the price of bridge tolls for all vehicles. **This is doable today.**
- 3) Add more tolls and congestion pricing to non-bridge driving routes. **This is doable within 16 weeks.**
- 4) Get Muni and AC Transit to also reduce their fares. **This is doable today.**
- 5) Do a quick build of a protected bike lane on the Bay Bridge by repurposing a car lane for biking using jersey barriers and the offramp. **This is doable within 12 weeks.**

I know your agencies have been discussing these ideas for years if not decades. You need to act more swiftly. We are losing residents, we are behind on our climate goals, and still today less than 5% of the Bay Area population rides transit every day. One of the main reasons is that your agencies price transit much higher than driving. Charging a \$6 bridge toll for an entire car but \$7+ per person to cross the Bay on BART contributes to why so few people ride BART or care about funding transit. It's no wonder so many people reject BART and reject transit in the Bay Area when driving is relatively so cheap. Why would they choose a slower and more expensive option?

We need you to act with urgency. The public is losing faith in organizations like MTC, ABAG, BATA, and even our large transit agencies like BART, Muni, and AC Transit. Encouraging transit use on Spare the Air days is a good start, and importantly **is a change that you could make today if you decided to.**

I know your agencies are having these discussions. Can you please share if/when you will make these changes?

Thanks,
Patrick