

Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Project Updates

Subject:

A status report on the Richmond-San Rafael (RSR) Bridge (1) Pilot Projects and (2) RSR Forward.

Background:

The 5.5-mile long RSR Bridge has served the needs of North Bay and East Bay travelers for over 65 years. MTC and BATA have been collaborating with partner agencies including Caltrans, Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM), and Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) on a series of projects and programs that work collectively to manage the bridge and improve mobility in the corridor. A highlight of new developments and progress on these initiatives is shown below.

1. Pilot Projects: Phase I Study Report

In 2014, BATA took responsibility for funding and implementing the Interstate 580 (I-580) RSR Bridge Access Improvement Project, a pilot undertaken in partnership with Caltrans.

The pilot consists of the following improvements:

- Peak Period Use Lane (Bridge Lower Deck) – Opened to the public in April 2018 and has significantly reduced traffic congestion in the eastbound direction, reducing travel time by half. The lane was created by converting the shoulder on the lower deck.
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Path (Bridge Upper Deck) – Opened to the public in November 2019, creating a new route across the Bay and a vital link in the 500-mile San Francisco Bay Trail that has resulted 50-75 cycle trips/day on weekdays and 100-300 cycle trips/day on weekends. The two-way multi-use path was created by converting the shoulder on the upper deck and installing a moveable concrete barrier system to separate the path from vehicle traffic while allowing for maintenance.

Caltrans has employed UC Berkeley PATH to conduct a study of the pilot. Phase I of the pilot study has been completed and published on the Caltrans Division of Research, Innovation and System Information (DRISI) website (link below). The lead researcher from PATH will present the Phase 1 evaluation results at your November meeting. Phase II of the pilot is ongoing and will include the Sir Francisco Drake Blvd. Overpass Bike Path in Marin County that opened in August 2020. The Phase II report is expected to be completed in Summer 2024.

Phase 1 Report link: https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/research-innovation-system-information/documents/final-reports/ca22-3141_final_reportv3-ally.pdf

2. RSR Forward: Ongoing Implementation

MTC's RSR Forward initiative offers a suite of near-term strategies to improve travel options across the bridge corridor. RSR Forward will implement Open Road Tolling to provide safety and operational improvements on the westbound I-580 bridge approach. The project will replace the existing toll plaza with Open Road Tolling and reinstate the previous westbound High Occupancy Vehicle lane along I-580 to encourage carpooling and transit ridership. The project is expected to be in operation in 2026. As part of RSR Forward, staff is undertaking a design alternative assessment at the Richmond Parkway Interchange to evaluate ways to improve traffic accessing westbound I-580.

RSR Forward also implements a variety of infrastructure improvements and programs to support biking across the bridge corridor through incentives on e-bike purchases and bike trips across the bridge, guided group rides, and local quick-build bike access improvement projects. Implemented programs and projects include: RSR Rides, which launched February 2020 and relaunched in Fall 2021 after it was on hold due to COVID; the Francisco Blvd East / Grange Ave. Quick Build bike path improvements, which opened in December 2020; and Richmond Bike Share, which launched in June 2021. The RSR Bridge E-Bike Commute Program, and Richmond's Harbor Way South and Hoffman Blvd Quick Build are other programs under development.

Issues:

BATA has received three letters from organizations concerned about the impacts of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Path on traffic and advocating converting the upper deck shoulder to a peak period traffic lane that allows bicycle and pedestrian use at other times. While this may seem like a relatively straightforward modification, it poses several challenges most notably, by adding new peak period capacity, the new travel lane conflicts with the State's climate goals, Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI). These policies aim to combat climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled, promoting multi-modal networks, and improving public health through active transportation.

Next Steps:

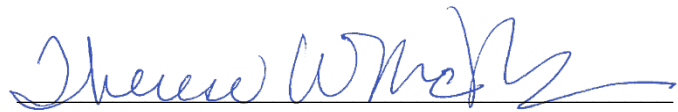
Staff will return to this Committee when the Phase II evaluation report is complete in Summer 2024 to summarize results, report on RSR Forward implementation and discuss next steps.

Recommendations:

Information.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: RSR Bridge Project Updates - Presentation



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