

November 8, 2023

Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee

Agenda Item 5a: Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Updates

Letters of Support		Letters in Opposition
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adam Singer• Alex Donoghue• Aliados Health• Amy Whitehurst Morrison• Andrew Crawford• Andrew Lie• Andrew Seigner• Ben Burbridge• Ben Thoas• Bill Brier• Blisseth Sy• Brett Morrison• Brian Koss• Caitlin Trahan• Catherine Cole• Chas Blackford• Cheryl Longinotti• Christina Galitsky• Christine Bartlett• Craig Glax• Darren Davis• David Larson• David Walton• Dorothy McQuown• Drew Levitt• Erk Schmidt• Everett• Isaal Sunleaf• Jacob Beaudin• James Kinney• Jan Heinemann• Janet Furman• Jason Mehrens• Jason Watkins• Jeff Candrian• Jim Zahradka• Joe Swan• Karen Canady• Kary McElroy• Kester Allen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lori Chudacoff• Louis Nordrum• Lucas Lux• Marissa Axel• Mark Birnbaum• Mark Taylor• Matthew Barger• Megan Arnold• Michael Barnes• Michael Fretz• Mike Ghaffary• Mike Hrast• Nelson Branco• Noah Swartz• Odin Palen• Parker Day• Peter Bauer• Peter Mueller• Philip Mooneu• Rita Redberg• Rob Hawks• Ruth Malone and Terry Sayre• Sean Camden• Susan George• Susann Nordrum• Ted Joseph• Tim Gilbert• Travel Ruthenburg• Tyler Comann	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• D. Waldt• Jack Hunt• Kareem Barzegar• Kevin Hout• Matt Hochstetler• Patricia Tostenson• Roberta Hoffman• Thomas Martell

From: Adam Singer [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 4:55 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Comment for 11-8 Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee Meeting Item 5a

External Email

My name is Adam Singer, I am a middle school teacher in San Rafael and an El Cerrito Resident. I have been a Richmond-San Rafael bridge commuter for 22 years and have been a 4-day-a-week ebike commuter for 2 years now. I was so very excited to see a bike/pedestrian lane added to the bridge and was so excited to start ebike commuting.

Even before the lane opened, I saw Marin politicians like Damon Connolly campaign to end the pilot project before it began to appease frustrated car commuters. This uncertainty REALLY deterred me from investing the significant money needed to purchase an ebike, needed to make the 28-mile round-trip commute doable on a daily basis. I ultimately waited 2 years to see if the uncertainty about the bike lane's future cleared up before investing such a large amount of money, but finally decided the benefit was worth the risk to spend thousands of dollars to buy an eBike. As a veteran teacher, I am privileged to be able to take that financial risk, and realize not everyone can. It is a decision I have never regretted, and have loved my ebike commute ever since. The bike lane has transformed my life and turned me into a bike commuting evangelist.

Some of my colleagues have followed suit and also now ebike-commute across the bridge too. But many other of my East Bay colleagues are interested in ebike commuting but are hesitant to purchase an ebike because of the drum beat to close the bike lane, especially during commute hours.

I know how bad the car commute can be. And I know how much relief the 3rd eastbound lane for the afternoon commute has been. But as we all know, 580 in San Rafael only has 2 lanes, so opening up a 3rd westbound lane would not improve the daily commute, only in the event of a mid-span car breakdown.

In the 2 years I have bike commuted I have seen bike commuting continue to grow. I have seen its growth hampered by uncertainty of the future of the bike lane, lack of investment by Marin and San Rafael to improve access on the Marin side (as compared to the amazing work Richmond has done), and the constant drumbeat of bike lane closure in the news.

Many of my poorer students who live in the Canal neighborhood speak of riding their bikes to the top of the bridge as a treasured family excursion. The lane has been a gift to so many - commuters and recreationalists alike.

We, as a region, need to continue to transform our major transportation pathways, prioritizing giving access to bikes and pedestrians. Please do not move our bridge backwards!

Thank you for your consideration.
Adam Singer
El Cerrito Resident
San Rafael Middle School Teacher
eBike Commuter

-----Original Message-----

From: Alex Donoghue [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 10:38 PM

To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>

Subject: 11/8/23 Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee meeting comment, item 5a Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Updates

External Email

Hello,

I'm writing to express my support for the bike/pedestrian path on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. I use the path on a regular basis to visit my sister who lives in Fairfax, I live in Richmond. It's great to be able to hop on my bike and ride over the bridge rather than drive a car.

I've also ridden the bridge with my partner and daughter to go camping in China Camp. There are bike paths most of the way there and my daughter really loved the trip.

Cheers,

Alex

From: amy whitehurst morrison [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 11:43 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Hi! My name is Amy Morrison and I'm writing in support of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Pathway. My family uses it every few months to go on a cycling adventure (we live in West Oakland). It's invigorating to be able to ride across the water like that and we always stop to look at the view. We finish our trek at the Marin County Mart and it's pretty rad to not worry about parking.

My husband also uses the bridge to cycle to San Francisco 2 or 3 days a week. It gets him an excellent mind/body workout and allows him to really appreciate why we choose to live in the bay. We choose to just have one car, so his bike is his transportation to and from work. He often uses the ferry, BART is unavailable with a bike during rush hour, so the bridge is essential to his commute.

Living in West Oakland is challenging sometimes, but it's pretty awesome that there is access like the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Pathway to make it easy to get to some of the beauty that's just across the bay WHILE moving our bodies and truly experiencing our environment. What a gift!

I support staff's recommendation not to initiate a project at this time and I truly appreciate the time folks have taken to look into this. I understand that transportation in the bay is an ongoing challenge, that traffic is congested, that our subway system is old and underfunded and the we really have some unique challenges that feel impossible to tackle. Our contribution is that we cycle when we can and we love that there are so many opportunities here to do that.

Thank you for choosing to take these challenges on and for hearing my families opinions about them.

-Amy [REDACTED] Brett [REDACTED] Alberta [REDACTED] Clark [REDACTED]

From: Andrew Crawford [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 3:00 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Hi,

I'd like to lend my comments as someone use used the path as a recreational cyclist and additionally who has friends and family that commute between Marin and the East Bay.

- Paramount is maintaining 24/7 car-free access between the East Bay and Marin
- A additional traffic lane would only serve to increase pollution and move the congestion to further downstream (e.g. on Sir Francis Drake or the exit to the RSR bridge)
- In general we should devise ways to optimize travel to be inclusive for all user groups (pedestrians, cyclists, public transit and cars) and not just cars/trucks
- Funds could be diverted to increasing bus/transit service between the East Bay and Marin

Thanks for taking the time to hear my thoughts.

Best,

From: Andrew L [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, November 5, 2023 9:15 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Keep the bike lane on the Richmond San Rafael Bridge

External Email

To the BATA Oversight Committee Members,

Thank you for taking the time to read another email supporting the Bike Laned on the Richmond, San Fafaeo I request that you consider keeping the bike/pedestrian access open on the Richmond San Rafael Bridge. It provides much needed access across the Bay to cyclists and pedestrians alike. Taking this lane away to provide 3 lanes of car traffic will not help to ease congestion in the commute directions across this span. I urge you to consider keeping this lane open to pedestrian/bicycle traffic.

Kind regards,
Andrew Lie

From: Andrew Seigner [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 1:32 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

My name is Andrew Seigner, I live in San Francisco, 94102.

I cycle everywhere in the bay area. Connecting Marin to the East Bay is a critical part of our bike network. The bay area should be leading the way in non-auto transportation, for safety and climate. We need to aggressively shift off of personal autos.

Thank you for your time,
Andrew

From: ben burbridge [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 5:23 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee Agenda Item 5a - 23-1234

External Email

To the Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee:

I am an avid user of the Richmond - San Rafael Bridge bike path, and strongly encourage you to extend the pilot program or (better yet) make it permanent.

Sincerely,

Ben Burbridge

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Ben Thomas [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 12:06 PM

To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>

Subject: Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee - Agenda Item Number 23-1234

External Email

Hi my name is Ben Thomas I am a resident of El Cerrito, CA.

I would like to submit an extremely enthusiastic endorsement of keeping the protected bike lane on the Richmond Bridge.

The bike lane has had a tremendous positive impact on my access to the north bay on my bike. I would like the opportunity to go to Marin in an environmentally friendly and fun way on a bike rather than in a car.

My son is young now but I am very excited for the day when he is old enough to join me in exploring all the bay trail has to offer someday soon.

Thanks so much,
Ben

From: Bill Brier Jr. [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 4:55 PM

To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>

Subject: 11/8/23 Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee meeting comment, item 5a Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Updates

External Email

I would like to express my support in keeping the RSR bridge bike and pedestrian path permanently. This is vital infrastructure for multi-modal access with benefits for everyone.

Thank you,

Bill Brier

From: Blisseth Sy [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, November 5, 2023 10:06 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: San Rafael bridge bike lane

External Email

Greetings,

I support keeping the San Rafael Bridge bike/pedestrian lane as a permanent option for cyclists & pedestrians. It serves as a well-used recreational option to travel between East and North Bays, and makes the Bay Area a more attractive location for non-car-friendly self-propelled options.

Best regards
Blisseth Sy
Alameda County resident

From: Brett Morrison [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 9:00 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Please save the RSR bike/pedestrian path!

I ride the path 2-3 times a week in order to commute from West Oakland to downtown San Francisco. It's the only continuous route option and I love it. I can't afford to live in Marin County, but I can afford a bicycle and the RSR path allows me to visit communities, parkland, and friends all over Marin. I use the path to get to world-class cycling around Mt. Tam.

Adding more car traffic lanes to the RSR bridge is not an investment in the future. Those funds should be allocated to improve mass transit options and availability and would benefit a wider range of citizens and communities than yet another investment in single occupancy vehicular traffic.

Best,
Brett

From: Brian Koss [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 2:00 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Richmond San Rafael Bridge Bike Access

External Email

Having heard that there is a possibility of cyclist losing access across the bridge, I am forced to write to give my opinion of why that would be a HUGE mistake. I do not own a car and rely on my bicycle and mass transit to get around the bay area. It isn't easy but having the ability to traverse longer distances with my bike allows more control over the mismatched and under supported mass transit (really commute transit) options. America has been car centric but we are quickly realizing it cannot keep going the way it has. Everybody is expecting Automation to allow automobiles to become more adaptable. It may happen but we have been waiting for the Jetson's Flying cars for 70+ years. We need to provide options for people to show that life is possible without an automobile. Not everybody will or needs to adopt this mindset but the more that do will make a contribution to what is necessary to keep the Bay Area livable while also helping reduce the dangers of global warming.

Installing another car lane on the Bridge would be a short sighted move. That money would be better spent changing Commuter transit into a working Mass Transit system that connects people to their neighborhoods in a reliable and reasonable fashion. Most people will not like this option because they may be inconvenienced with longer transit times but the truth it will happen eventually anyway if we keep relying on auto centric transportation. Stop kicking the can down the road and make the necessary sacrifices to make sure our kids have options.

Start by keeping bicycle access across the Richmond San Rafael Bridge. Even though I live in the South Bay I have traversed this bridge several dozen times in its 4 year trial phase. Not having access across all the Bay area bridges is similar to the way freeways have divided poorer neighborhoods for decades. The underserved or under represented seem to shoulder the burden more often than not. Please don't make us go back to what was but forward to what can be.

Thank You,
Brian Koss

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Caitlin Trahan [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 1:02 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: 11/8/23 Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee meeting comment, item 5a Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Updates

External Email

To the Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee,

Please preserve the multiaccess lane on the top deck of the Richmond San Rafael Bridge as is. It is imperative that access is not a right strictly for motor vehicle traffic. Vehicles are among the highest polluters in the area, why would we want to increase their speed and allow more traffic with the creation of a third lane? If the multi use path is removed, you literally remove the ability of certain groups from mobility across the bridge; those who are not polluting. Why not reverse that thought and remove the ability to drive over the bridge since this would solve the pollutants from cars.

Thank you,
Caitlin

-----Original Message-----

From: Catherine [REDACTED]

Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 4:08 PM

To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>

Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Hello and I support continued bicycle access for using the Richmond San Rafael Bridge. Please don't take that away from us; continuing to include bikes alongside cars is critical for our Bay Area health, wealth and long-term climate change resilience.

Sincerely,
Catherine Cole
Mill Valley

-----Original Message-----

From: chasblackford [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 8:29 AM

To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>

Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Dear BATA

It is distressing to hear that the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge bike lanes are in jeopardy. This is a vital east west connector route for non vehicular users. The alternative routes required are impossibly difficult to utilize in any practical form.

Why are we even considering this when the destructive nature of continued automobile use is well documented?

Policies to promote ebiking should be at the forefront of local transportation efforts.

Please consider the future when making these policy decisions.

Respectfully, Chas Blackford

-----Original Message-----

From: Cheryl ZLonginotti [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 3:27 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item 5

External Email

I am a resident of Marin County writing to support the bicycle and pedestrian track on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. I use the Bridge crossing to visit sites on Pt Molate, Moller-Knox Park and beyond to Berkeley.

E-bikes make the 5.5 mile bridge crossing more viable for more riders and e-bikes are the fastest growing part of the bike market. However, current usage of the track is limited by unsafe access conditions in Marin.

I urge BATA to maintain 24/7 car-free access between the East Bay and Marin.
Thank you for your consideration.

Cheryl Longinotti
[REDACTED]

From: Christina Galitsky [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 12:28 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Re: RSR Bridge access for bicycles

External Email

Hi,

This is in regards to the BATA Meeting about the RSR Bridge - Wednesday, 11/8 @ 9:35.

I am writing to express my support for the bike lane on the RSR bridge. I use this path almost weekly to get to Marin, providing enjoyment for myself, and a car and pollution-free way to access Marin County. It's very important to me. Maintaining 24/7 car-free access between the East Bay and Marin is important to me. Studies have shown that adding another lane of traffic only changes the patterns of commuters, and often results in increased traffic, which means increased increase pollution and congestion. Any improvements (and I've seen studies that show improvements in commute times at best to be less than a minute!) would be short-lived. As environmental leaders in this country, I hope our counties agree that a bike lane is a far better use of the space on the bridge than a car lane.

If that is not evidence enough, the bridge is not retrofitted to be strong enough to hold the heavier weights of cars, and the costs to retrofit if a third lane is added could be exorbitant. As a former engineer, I shudder at this idea.

Please put money into transit and bike lanes, not into cars. We need to think about the future.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Sincerely,
Christina Galitsky

From: Christine B

Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 2:40 PM

To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>

Subject: 11/8/23 Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee meeting comment, item 5a Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Updates

External Email

Please keep the Richmond-San Rachel Bridge open for bikers and Hikers.

Christine Bartlett

[REDACTED]

From: craig flax [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, November 5, 2023 1:38 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

Dear Folks,

I live in San Rafael but very soon will have an office at the UCB Field Station in Richmond, where my nonprofit will be parking and charging our electric fleet of buses and shuttles for the Richmond community. I have been looking forward for years to this time, where I'll be able to ride my bike across the bridge to and from work, all while keeping my promise to the historically under-represented city of Richmond by NOT ADDING to the massive amounts of pollution that have been thrust upon the community.

This car-free access is vital not only for the opportunity that it gives to commuters and recreational riders, but to all the other places where transit options are being considered.

On top of all of this, there has been incredible work done by the citizens and nonprofits of Richmond to create greenways, parks and safe routes for bikes. Keeping this safe route from Richmond to Marin opens up a massive amount of cycling opportunities, that would otherwise be unavailable.

Please do your best to keep a viable bike lane for these and many other reasons.

Thanks for your time and consideration.

my best,
craig flax

Craig Flax
Founder, CEO
[Youth Transportation Organization](#)

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



-----Original Message-----

From: dwaldt1 [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, November 5, 2023 9:25 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Open the Richmond Bridge NOW

External Email

Enough already with the FAILED so-called "4 year test" of that bike lane on the Richmond Brdge. Even with more worker-priced housing being built as we speak, Marin is still becoming more & more desperate for essential workers to staff our hospitals, schools, & senior communities!! MTC & that ignorant Bicycle Coalition are completely to blame for the congestion car commuters must endure every weekday. Its just downright cruel treatment of so many hard-working people just trying to make their basic living expenses, or for people to get to an appt, or any reason to travel between East/North Bay locales. Even using public transportation doesnt get one over the bridge any faster or more efficiently. The insanely stubborn, myopic attitude of MTC is a huge FU to the daily commuters on the bridge. Its way past time for MTC to just admit their obvious failure & OPEN THE 3RD LANE PERMANENTLY! You're not fooling anyone (but yourselves) —& you also appear to have the attitude that the commuting public is just a bunch of stupid rubes. You're not even convincing any taxpayers that MTC should even exist.
Hang it up MTC.

From: Darren Davis [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 9:22 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Cc: Darren Davis [REDACTED]
Subject: Richmond-San Rafael Bridge

External Email

Dear Bay Area Metro,

I am writing to express my strong support for maintaining the current bicycle lane on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge and to urge you to consider the importance of preserving car-free access between the East Bay and Marin County. I firmly believe that this decision is vital not only for environmental reasons but also for the long-term sustainability and efficiency of our transportation system. I do not have the opportunity to ride the bridge path daily, but it's crucial to have the option available.

Maintaining the bicycle lane is crucial for several reasons:

Environmental Preservation: Adding another car lane to the bridge would inevitably increase pollution and further contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. We are at a critical juncture in addressing climate change, and it is our responsibility to prioritize sustainable transportation alternatives.

Congestion Concerns: While it may seem tempting to alleviate congestion in the short term by adding another car lane, it is well-documented that such improvements are often short-lived. Studies have shown that widening roads and adding lanes can lead to induced demand, where more cars fill the space, ultimately perpetuating congestion problems. (The Iron Paradox)

Cost-Efficiency: The money required to construct an additional lane could be put to more efficient use, such as improving public transit services. By investing in public transportation, we can provide sustainable alternatives that reduce the number of cars on the road, ease congestion, and decrease overall pollution.

I urge you to consider these factors and support the recommendation of your staff not to initiate a project to add another car lane on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge at this time. Instead, let's prioritize the preservation of the bicycle lane and explore solutions that enhance our public transportation network, reduce pollution, and create a more sustainable future for our region.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I hope you will make the right decision for the environment and the well-being of our community.

Darren Davis
[REDACTED]

From: David Larson [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 11:26 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Dear BATA Oversight Committee Members,

The bike/pedestrian lane across the Richmond San Rafael Bridge is a crucial addition to the non-vehicular infrastructure of the Bay Area. I am an avid cyclist--I bike for both recreation and for transportation regularly, and enjoy the personal and societal benefits of cycling, including its positive effects on health, air quality, vehicular congestion, etc. I fully intend to use the bridge path soon--my hesitation has been the awkward negotiation of city streets on the Marin side of the bridge.

There are many reasons I support continuing (and enhancing) the bridge path, but most important is the very high likelihood that eliminating the path will not relieve vehicular congestion around the bridge, and consequently, the extraordinary cost of adding a third vehicular lane likely would be a colossal waste of money. It seems clear that adding lanes to freeways almost never relieves congestion in the long run, because the very existence of a new lane changes people's behavior--more lanes encourage more use, at least up to the level of "pain" commuters are willing to endure, which inform decisions about where to live, where to work, and whether to drive.

The significant funds needed to add a third lane to the RSR Bridge would have a much better impact, both short-term and long-term, if directed to public transit and other measures that reduce vehicle use.

I agree with the staff's recommendation not to begin this project now.

Thank you for your consideration and your service.

-David Larson
Point Reyes Station

From: David Walton [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 3:44 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

I use the bike bridge on a regular basis. Please keep it open

David Walton

From: Dorothy McQuown [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 9:17 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Dear Committee Members,

As a senior who cycles regularly, I strongly urge you to keep the bicycle path across the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. Riding over it was an incredible respite during the pandemic and it is a beautiful and easy way to get from Marin to the East Bay and back without causing further degradation to our environment here. Also there is no other means to cross at any time without using a motor vehicle of some sort.

Another lane on the bridge will increase pollution and any congestion improvements for cars is very likely to be short-lived.

Also the funds used to create that lane could be put toward increasing other, less-polluting transit options for commuters.

Please support staff's recommendation not to initiate a project at this time.

Thank you very much for your consideration of these comments.

Dorothy McQuown

From: Drew Levitt [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 8:53 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Dear commissioners,

As the four-year pilot nears its end, I write to urge you to preserve bike/ped access across the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.

First, a disclaimer/disclosure: I work for MTC. My work at MTC (land use and travel modeling in the Regional Planning Program section) has no connection to or influence on this decision, and I write today exclusively in my capacity as an interested private citizen.

I am a frequent user of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge (RSRB) bike/ped path, both for recreational and commute trips, both on weekends and weekdays. I believe you should preserve bike/ped access because the RSRB path is an utterly essential link in the region's bike/ped network. Furthermore, I believe the primary proposed alternative use for the space currently occupied by the path (another westbound car travel lane) is actively undesirable and incompatible with the Bay Area's stated climate goals.

With the RSRB path in place, a walking or bike trip from downtown Richmond to downtown San Rafael takes 11 miles. No short trip, to be sure, but fundamentally a feasible trip, especially by e-bike. Without the RSRB path, that same trip would take 82 miles - one way. The RSRB path is the difference between a bike/walk trip that is possible, and one that is literally impossible. Nor would replacing the path with an extra vehicle travel lane, even a transit-only lane, satisfy the already demonstrated demand for bicycling across this bridge. Even if the hundreds of bicyclists that today cross the bridge every day were evenly spread out across the service span of the Golden Gate Transit 580 bus, the bike racks on that bus route would carry only a small fraction of those bicycles. Even substantially improved transit service (which is a good idea!) would be wildly insufficient for the observed bike demand. I should also note that the RSRB path is a critical link in the San Francisco Bay Trail, an important and longstanding regional project.

Now - I'm a utilitarian, and I get it, the current bike and ped volume over the bridge isn't exactly sky-high. Meanwhile, cars traveling westbound across the bridge sometimes encounter congestion - or rather, they themselves contribute to congestion. ("You're not in traffic; you ARE traffic.") It's not hard to see why it **seems** like a more efficient use of limited bridge space to replace the RSRB path with a third westbound car travel lane. Yet I posit that this is a mistake, for the following reasons:

1. The bridge deck itself is not even the bottleneck in the I-580 westbound corridor. I-580 in Marin County has only two car travel lanes. So "widening" the bridge would merely shift the bottleneck to further downstream. (Yes, there are proposed projects that would widen these other bottlenecks, but they would cost hundreds of millions of dollars and we should reject them; also, see #4 below. In any case, a much more effective congestion-reducing strategy would be to eliminate the toll plaza, whose lane additions and drops create heavy slowdowns, and replace it with electronic gantry tolling.)
2. Even if adding a travel lane on the bridge would actually increase the car capacity of the corridor (which it wouldn't), that capacity would be rapidly consumed by latent demand for westbound car travel, such that corridor travel times would quickly return to pre-project levels, if not worse. You are doubtless familiar with this phenomenon, which is commonly known as induced demand and demonstrated by countless real-world examples such as the I-405 Sepulveda Pass in Los Angeles. Cars are simply so space-inefficient that you cannot widen your way out of congestion.

3. Building on #2, the phenomenon of induced demand reveals how unwise (if not outright insincere) the claim offered by several RSRB path opponents is, namely that the bike/ped path is causing congestion that exacerbates mobile-source air pollution experienced by Richmond residents. I would love to see a sober-minded emissions calculation that compares existing vehicle volumes and congestion levels to substantially higher-than-existing vehicle volumes (because of induced demand) and congestion levels similar to today. Simply put, the solution to car-caused air pollution is not and cannot be ever more space for cars - let alone if that means removing a critical link in the region's non-auto network. High-minded business types who wring their hands loudly over "the poor people of Richmond" (many of whom support the RSRB path, incidentally) would do better to turn to housing policies that could help address Marin County's notorious jobs/housing imbalance.

4. Finally, it is incoherent and incompatible with numerous regional plans and policies, including Plan Bay Area 2050, to continue to expand car capacity in the inner Bay Area. Our region is threatened not only by rising seas but by raging wildfires, all propelled by anthropogenic climate change, to which car pollution is a major contributor. Regional planners are working overtime (to judge by the timestamps on some of the Slack messages I receive) to figure out how to help the region move toward an equitable, livable, lower-carbon future. The last thing we should be doing in the face of this existential threat is doubling down on the all-cars-all-the-time mentality that got us into this mess to begin with.

It is my understanding that the staff report before you today recommends not initiating a project at this time. I urge you to concur with that recommendation.

Thank you for your consideration of my comment.

Sincerely,
- Drew Levitt

PS. I've heard some whispers of a concept to install a second bike/ped path on the lower deck of the bridge, and to vary which path is open by the time of day. That idea seems like a terrible waste of tens of millions of dollars of capital funds, to say nothing of the exorbitant and ongoing operating costs it would entail. A single, permanent bike/ped path is the user-friendly, cost-effective, climate-conscious choice for the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.

--

Drew Levitt

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Pronouns: he/him/his

From: Erik Schmidt [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 1:01 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Dear BATA -- Thank you for the opportunity to comment during the planning process for the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge bike and pedestrian path project, following the four-year pilot period's close.

I have been using this path since it opened to the public, and rode with many hundreds of other cyclists across the bridge at the opening celebration ride, a momentous occasion for a key Bay Area transportation link that had no access for anything but vehicles since its construction 65 years earlier. In the four years since that event, I've crossed the RSR bridge countless times at all hours of the day and evening, for work commutes, visiting friends in the East Bay, and recreational rides. It is a joy to ride this span, with its views of the Bay in both directions, but more importantly, the path allows me to leave my car at home and get to where I need to go, in a safe, separated bikeway. I always see other riders and sometimes people on foot, and on weekends, encounter many folks like me using this facility.

If this transportation corridor is closed to bike access, even part of the time, a vision of the future where cars are not the only option will have been lost. Of course the ridership isn't as high as we'd like it to be -- this shift takes time, after 65 years of no access. And the Marin side is terribly dangerous and terrifying for a short but critical distance, so all but the most confident riders continue to avoid the bridge because getting there is so difficult. Even so, the data show that many tens of thousands of trips have been made by bike in the pilot period. This is great, and should be the basis for completing safety projects to link the bridge to downtown San Rafael, Larkspur and beyond, and downtown Richmond, drawing more people, including families and a large new constituency, those on e-bikes, to the RSR Bridge bikeway. With safe, protected pathways and lanes on both sides of the bridge, many more people will take advantage of this world class, linear recreational resource in the coming years and decades.

Alternatively, converting the bike lane to another auto traffic lane will improve traffic flow for a short distance (when the bridge narrows to two lanes on the Marin side) and a short few years, until it fills up again as added lanes always do. Did 10 and 12 lane freeways in Los Angeles clear up congestion there? Then we will have a congested bridge of three lanes, and no bikeway, or one few people use because it is too hard to keep track of open and closed hours and directions.

Smart planning requires foresight and being willing to change the paradigm. When the RSR Bridge was built, bicycle transportation and access was left out. This wasn't good planning. Decision makers in 2023 must do better for the citizens of the Bay Area today and long into the future. I hope you will make the RSR Bridge bikeway permanent, and support continued access improvements on both sides of the bridge so folks in Richmond, San Rafael and beyond can enjoy and take advantage of this public resource. Thank you.

Erik Schmidt
[REDACTED]

From: Everett [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 3:44 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Please keep the bike lane.

External Email

Dear MTC,

On November 1st the Marin Independent Journal reported,
"At the workshop, the board focused most of its support for projects around bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, transit and school bus programs. There were virtually no comments about prioritizing increased freeway capacity or connections.

Specifically, the board said its highest priorities for the plan include... closing the gaps in existing bicycle and pedestrian network and focusing on transit ridership growth." Now there is a plan to convert the bike/pedestrian lane on the Richmond Bridge into another car lane.

Planners have a choice. Either the MTC can encourage alternative modes of transportation or you return to an automobile based system. It will take time to develop non-automobile alternative systems.

Please keep the Richmond Bridge bike and pedestrian lane

Thank you.

Andrew Allen. Marin County bike rider who works in Emeryville. [REDACTED]

From: Izaak Sunleaf <izaak.r.sunleaf@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 9:39 AM

To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>

Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Please keep the bike lane bridge path on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge! I both love using it and also love to see others use it as a means to connect between Marin and East Bay! My favorite bike rides involve that bridge path, and I want to maintain the ability to travel between Marin and East Bay without a car.

Furthermore, as the attachments in the meeting agenda describe, removing the bike lane bridge path both goes against California's state climate goals and does not have a meaningful impact on improving traffic. So please, keep the bike lane bridge path!

-----Original Message-----

From: Jack Hunt [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 11:27 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

As an employer in San Rafael we are challenged to get employees for our company and since Marin has a very high cost of living we often draw from areas with a less expensive cost of living. I currently have one employee living in Richmond. He drives to San Rafael in mornings and home evenings. Since the bicycle lane was installed he is late in the morning on average of three times a week. He tells me the problem is often caused by stalls or accidents and since there is no where to go as the bicycle lane takes up the shoulder the traffic is stopped or severely impacted

I asked him if he ever sees any bicycle riders on the bridge and he says very few. I wonder how many people use the lane to commute or if it's just a tourist attraction of feather in the cap of they bicycle lobbies As a licensed Gold Shield smog station we realize that vehicles pollute the most under acceleration and de acceleration. In other words stop and go traffic which is what you get in traffic jams

As a member of the San Rafael Chamber of commerce I am aware that that group is solidly against the Bicycle lane I have written to and talked to State Assemblyman Damon Connolly and am aware that he is against the Bicycle lane I have talked to San Rafael Mayor Kate Colin and she is against the Bike Lane Most of my customer base thinks it is a bad idea

As a bicycle rider I receive the emails from the Marin Bicycle Council and am aware that many of their talking points for keeping the bicycle lane are either not true or bend the facts I believe they speak loudly for a small minority of constituents

I hope that you take the common sense approach and will side with what I believe is a strong majority of elected officials, civic leaders, commuters and vote to end the failed experiment of the bicycle lane on the Richmond San Rafael that has benefited very few, enhanced vehicle emissions on a regular and caused untold economic losses in our area

Sincerely Yours

Jack Hunt III
Jack L Hunt Automotive

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Jake B [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, November 5, 2023 7:22 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Dear Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee,

I'm writing to express my support for maintaining car-free access on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge pathway. As an avid cyclist, I frequently use the bridge path to ride between the East Bay and Marin. Having a safe, pollution-free route is so valuable for recreation and encouraging people to use active transportation.

Adding another car lane to the bridge would significantly increase air and noise pollution, provide only temporary congestion relief, and take away a multi-use path that has become a real asset to the community.

I understand the desire to reduce traffic, but urge you to refrain from initiating a project to add a vehicle lane at this time. The bridge pathway has quickly become a beloved community resource that promotes healthy lifestyles and environmentally friendly transportation options.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to improving transportation for all in the Bay Area. I appreciate you taking the time to weigh the community's diverse perspectives as you make decisions about our infrastructure.

Sincerely,
Jacob Beaudin

-----Original Message-----

From: James Kinney [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 10:53 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Hello!

I am writing to comment about RSR bridge bike access. I live in Berkeley and ride the bridge 5-10 times per month. Being in the East Bay, it is incredible to be able to access the additional outdoor space available in Marin via bike. It makes Richmond and the surrounding areas much more appealing. There is a lack of nature in the area directly around Richmond and to have access to China Camp, the Mt Tam Watershed, and areas further northwest makes it a much more active and outdoorsy place to live. There is a lot of discussion around protecting the historically disadvantaged residents of Richmond. I believe that adding a new lane, would both increase pollution due to induced demand over time and continue to depress the value of Richmond due to cutting off easy access to these natural areas.

I am open to the solution of allowing bike access on the bridge 24/7 by switching the bike lane from the upper to lower deck based on traffic flow patterns. I don't think that should be done without first getting the significant funding required to create a third lane on the Marin side of the western direction and to build bike pathways to allow bikes to safely reach and exit the lower deck. I also think that the money would be significantly better spent investing in further bike infrastructure on the Marin side of the bridge. One reason people don't bike the bridge is that once you get to Marin you need to navigate busy roads with fast moving cars and small shoulders.

As a society we should be working towards a future of bike transportation and public transit. Car traffic does not need to be solved by allowing more cars. There is a lot of work to be done to make cyclists feel safe on the roads, but building protected pathways and making biking a feasible method of transportation is the first step!

Thanks so much for listening,
James Kinney

-----Original Message-----

From: Jan Heinemann [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 5:14 PM

To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>

Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

My family and I all use the bike lane over the Richmond bridge and urge you to keep it moving forward. Please don't make any changes. We love it.

Jan Heinemann

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: Janet Furman [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 1:47 PM

To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>

Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

I am a 77 year old retired woman who regularly bikes across the RSR Bridge. I go from my home in Corte Madera to the home of my best friend in Pt. Richmond. Sometimes she rides to my house. We are both trying to avoid using a car as much as possible.

Please keep the bike lane open!

Thank you

Janet Furman

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Jason Mehrens [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 10:54 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment on SR-Richmond Bridge Bike Path

External Email

Hello,

As a Marin resident and employee in the East Bay, I am in strong favor of keeping the bike path on the San Rafael-Richmond Bridge. I believe the benefits are well known, so I'd like to send this email to address and counter the main arguments against the path. As I've read in the local news, the main arguments against (and my counter arguments) are the following:

- Opening up the 3rd Westbound lane will ease traffic.
 - W-580 will still condense to 2-lanes on the Marin side of the bridge. The impact will be negligible at best. At worst it will actually make traffic worse. There is a terribly-designed onramp/offramp overlap with the Sir Francis Drake Blvd/W-580 merge. Having that so close to a 3-to-2 lane convergence will only increase cluster and congestion. As long as there are still 2 lanes, then main traffic convergence is merely being reallocated from one side of the bridge to the other.
- Hardly anyone uses the bike lane.
 - This is a skewed metric as the lane's existence has coincided with the Covid Pandemic and (diminishing) work-from-home trend. Even as office work in person returns, and the epidemic wanes, we are still in the infancy stage of the ebike revolution. Unlike the 1.6 mile span of the Golden Gate Bridge and close proximity of Marin residential cities and SF neighborhoods, the SR-Richmond bridge bike commute requires significantly more mileage to get to any residential or work areas through Richmond. The skyrocketing adoption of ebikes as a mode of transportation will undoubtedly increase the bike lane's usage in the years going forward.
- Just use it for traffic during commute hours.
 - As I argued in my first bullet point, providing the lane to traffic whilst still having a merge down to 2 lanes will not provide any real benefit to, or ease of, traffic. The cause of the congestion is, and always has been, the horrible overlapping Sir Francis Drake Blvd offramp and the W-580 onramp. As long as this exists, and the merge down to 2 lanes still exists, the quantity of lanes available to car traffic ON the bridge is irrelevant.....Furthermore, reliably open and accessible bike lanes during commute hours is exactly when bike lanes are needed most in order for the delayed adoption of use to take place.

An alternative, and costlier, solution that would satisfy everyone would be to install a 2nd moveable barrier on the bottom deck (eastbound). This way, a 3rd lane could open up to whichever direction is most impacted by commuters, and the bike lane would alternate top and lower decks depending on the time of day. But there would always be an available method of pedestrian access across the bridge.

Thank You,
Jason Mehrens, MSE, PE

From: Jason Watkins [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 3:46 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Hello Committee,

I am writing in interest about the RSR Bridge's bike lane. I live in San Rafael and work in Emeryville. I have ridden the bridge and really appreciate the connection to the older Bay Area Trail that goes into Emeryville. Before the Pandemic, I used to drive across the bridge, park in the Marina, and ride my analog bike in from there.

I am very interested in commuting the entire distance from home to work on an e-bike, but am hesitant to purchase the e-bike in fear that you will shut the bike lane down. Can you please let me know if this might happen? If the lane stays open, I would purchase an e-bike and be one less car on the road.

Thank you for your time,
Jason Watkins

From: Jeff Candrian [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 4:20 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

I'd like to voice my support in keeping the bike lane open on the RSR Bridge. I've used it to commute and also for fun (with my young son in tow) mid-week. It's great to have that option and would be sad to lose access, especially as we should be prioritizing alternative means of transportation and not just cars, as is still often the case.

Thanks!
Jeff

From: jim zahradka [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 12:09 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Dear folks,

I am 80 years old and live in Richmond. I ride the RSR Bridge bike path for my physical/mental health and to attend adult education classes at Dominican.

I am an advocate for social and environmental justice for our Richmond kids living in the zip codes most impacted by air pollution.

Regarding using the RSR bridge hike/bike path for vehicles during weekday morning rush hours I respectfully suggest the following:

- * become familiar with research re: congestion on highways when additional lanes are added

- * contact ContraCosta County Epidemiologist, Lisa Diemoz, MPH re: recent research on numbers of youth living in zip codes in Richmond and Pinole who were admitted to local emergency departments for asthma attacks. Compare these numbers with youth residing in the rest of Contra Costa County.

Bottom line, I believe that no matter how you slice it, adding congestion on I-580 during the time of day our Richmond kids are walking and biking to school is unconscionable.

Thank you for listening,

Jim Zahradka
[REDACTED]

From: Joseph Swain [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 10:12 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

To the Oversight Committee:

I'm writing to support the staff's recommendation to NOT initiate a project on the existing RSR Bridge pathway.

Since the pandemic, I have been riding and commuting across the bay via this RSR pathway on average twice per month. It is the only human-powered way to cross the bay outside of the Dumbarton bridge, and it is critical for those of us who do not drive.

Maintaining at least one human-powered means to cross in the North Bay is important to many of us on both sides, and replacing it with another lane of traffic would only induce more automobile demand, not improve drive times in the long run.

Thank you for your consideration to NOT implement changes to the current pedestrian and bike pathway.

Thank you,

Joe Swain
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Barzegar, Kareem [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 8:53 AM
To: info@bayareametro.gov
Subject: Cyclist against bike lane on Richmond bridge

External Email

Hello,

I'm lifelong cyclist and lifelong Marin County resident. My wife's family lives in Concord. The bike lane has caused so much traffic on weekdays and weekends that there is traffic backed up for over an hour on some weekends. This bike lane is a terrible idea and is causing way too much traffic. I am a cyclist, and I am AGAINST this bike lane on the Richmond San Rafael Bridge. Please forward these comments to whom ever should see them.

Thank you!

Best regards,

Kareem A. Barzegar, CCIM
Senior Vice President, Tenant Advisory

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Karen S. Canady [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 11:25 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Dear Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee,
Thank you for gathering input on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Pathway. This pathway is an excellent example of the kind of protected bikeways needed in order to provide safe routes for those of us who commute by bicycle. This bridge is a crucial car-free connection between Marin and the East Bay.

I support the staff recommendation to not initiate a project at this time. Adding another lane of car traffic has been proven over and over again to induce demand and result in more traffic congestion and pollution. Folks often think adding lanes will ease congestion, but the reality simply does not bear that out. Funds for adding a car lane would be much more wisely spent on improving transit service. We need to support the modes that move more people per mile/dollar spent. Such strategies address both the optimization of transportation and the climate crisis.

In addition to improving daily commuter access for cyclists, routes such as this can also spur tourist and leisure travel, which carry many benefits for both local cyclists and businesses. It's a smart way to make the entire area more livable and appealing.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments.

Sincerely,
Karen Canady

From: Kary McElroy [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 9:16 PM
To: Kimberly Ward <KWard@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Bay Area Toll

External Email

Dear Ms Ward,

I was born and raised in San Francisco and basically lived here all my life.

I looked for a way to give feedback on this website and could not find it so I'm emailing you here.

The supposed freeway toll I find it absolutely ridiculous we already are being priced out of our home here in the Bay Area and for those of us who have called this our home our entire lives can't even afford to live in her own home anymore I find it absurd that they're finding yet another way to price gouge us I understand some of the reasons but really!

This is too much on top of that we pay the highest gas taxes in the nation and where is that money going why is that not being used to revitalize our roads and highways and can't we find another way then price gouging the people that live here who were born and raised here and you can't afford yet another toll for trying to spend their life and the only home they've ever known?

I find this to be a punitive measure against those of us that want to stay in our home yet find it Evermore unaffordable with inflation, food prices, gas prices and of course are ever overwhelming housing costs this is just a step too far.

Please find another way.

Kary McElroy

From: Kester Allen [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 2:14 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: 11/8/23 Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee meeting comment, item 5a Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Updates

External Email

Hi, I'm a frequent user of the bike lane on the RSR Bridge, and am writing to support it. It's a great way to be able to get from the East Bay to Marin for fun bike rides. Thanks!

Kester Allen

[REDACTED]

From: Kevin Hout [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 9:10 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

I am an avid bicyclist, but I believe that a third traffic lane Westbound on weekday mornings makes far more sense than keeping the bike lane. The impact of lost time and pollution from the cars backed up through the Richmond is significant. In my opinion that outweighs the benefits of a bike path. It would be nice, if technically feasible, to have the bike lane available during the middle of the days, from perhaps 10-3, or even 10 onward, once the morning commute is over..

Thank you,

Kevin Hout
[REDACTED]

From: Lori C [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, November 5, 2023 7:16 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Hi

I live in Marin and like to ride for recreation over the Richmond San Rafael bridge.

I think it would be very short sighted to remove pedestrian and bicycle access to the bridge.

I think money, time and energy should be used to help people get out of the cars or to carpool or to improve public transit.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lori Chudacoff
[REDACTED]

From: lou Nordrum [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 10:41 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Hello, Bay Area Toll Oversight Committee,
Thank you for your continuing efforts to provide a reliable transportation corridor between San Rafael and Richmond. I began working in Richmond in 1982 and commuted over the bridge 5 days a week for the next 34 years.

I remember many of the changes and improvements along the way. The earthquake upgrades and deck replacement projects were certainly some of the more difficult. I remember many years when a water pipe blocked one lane as the pipe sat empty while people in Marin hoped it wouldn't ever be needed again. I also remember thinking how seldom the closed third lane was used for emergency vehicles and how nice it would be to reopen it. I did use it once when my vehicle ran out of gas at the top of an arch heading East. My daughter, in middle school then, was scared to get within 4 feet of the edge of the bridge, but the view looking out and down is something she tells people about to this day, and she says it was better than from the Golden Gate bridge.

Oh, how I cheered upon hearing the news that you were opening a bike/hike lane. On my daily commute over and back, I dreamt of commuting over the bridge via bike. I worked just on the other side, at Chevron, an easy 12 mile ride. I did commute to work via bike several times, using the shuttle you provided which was okay, but unpredictably delayed. Another hope was to run across the bridge like when several of my friends ran over the bridge in 1982 in a race that I couldn't make. How special we all thought that was.

Now the opportunity to bike or run or walk across is open and available 24/7. With the advent of e-bikes, multiple more people have the ability to enjoy this opportunity. It is a Bay Area treasure and should be more widely advertised (parking at each end is a bit limited, though).

Please don't slide backward and remove the bike lane. Maybe you can replace the heavy barrier with plastic poles that would allow distressed vehicles to cross into the bike lane in an emergency. Also, I realize that there are West bound backups at the toll booth as the lanes funnel down to two. I think removing this throttle will only move the problem downstream as cars already back up on the West end as they make the single lane exits. Traffic congestion at the West end appears far more dangerous as there aren't all the available lanes like at the toll booth for people to react, slow down, and merge. Look at how the Larkspur bridge exit on 101 N in Marin backs up 3 out of 4 lanes for miles as cars squeeze down to one lane, blocking the North bound traffic that is not exiting. There is no reason to let cars onto the bridge faster than they can get off on the other side. Please don't kick the can down the road.

Most importantly, please keep this route open to bikes and feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this spectacular biking privilege further.

Thank you, again, for providing a safe and reliable route,
Louis Nordrum

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Lucas Lux [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 8:00 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Hi,

I am writing in support of staff's recommendation not to initiate a project at this time. One of the benefits of living in the Bay Area is the ability to make lots of everyday trips without using a car; the bridge pathway has expanded the types of trips families like mine can use a bicycle to make rather than contribute to car traffic and pollution. Please keep this critical link to give people safe transportation options.

Thanks for your time and consideration.

Best,
Lucas Lux

From: Marissa Axell [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 11:04 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Hi!

The RSR bike path is a super important bike path for me to get from my home in El Cerrito to all my rides, errands and friends in Marin. I use it to commute so I can leave my car at home.

Maintaining car-free access between the East Bay and Marin is important to me. I feel we need to consistently link car free commute options, decrease emissions, pollution and help me completely ditch cars ... many people in the bay area wish to ditch cars altogether.

Countless studies point out that adding more traffic lanes just exacerbate traffic and pollution. Another lane would increase pollution, and remove any opportunities to ditch cars.

The money it would cost to add a lane could be used to increase car free transit service, make it more attractive and cheaper for bay area citizens to take public transit like bikes, ferries and trains. I'd LOVE trains and bike lanes to be prioritized over cars. PLEASE!

Thank YOU for your time and consideration

Marissa Axell
20+ years of cycling in the bay area
MCBC and East bay bike coalition member.

From: Mark [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 2:33 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

- I am a recreational rider who uses the path 5-6 times a year as part of rides that include East Bay and Marin locations. As a former bicycle commuter (now retired) I appreciate that when facilities are properly constructed and connect to work destinations, they will be used. It is important to maintain car-free access for both recreational riders and for potential commuters, whose numbers will increase as more people have access to electric bikes and as infrastructure improves at both ends of the bridge. As has been seen over and over again, in locations throughout the country, adding lanes to highways increases use of the highway and ends up causing more air pollution and traffic congestion in the long run. Convenient public transportation, such as rail or bus that connects with other public transportation systems at both ends, will have much more of a beneficial long-term impact on congestion and air pollution on and near the bridge. Using funds to provide such service is a much better use of funds than the creation of more auto lanes. Adding an auto lane on the bridge will only move the center of traffic congestion west by a few miles, as opposed to speeding things up, since the San Rafael end of I-580 only has two lanes. The support staff recommendation, with which I concur, is to not initiate a project at this time, pending further study of these and other issues.

Thank you for your consideration of these public comments.

Sincerely,

Mark Birnbaum

From: mark taylor [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 9:58 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: 11/8/23 bay area toll authority oversight committee meeting comment item 5a

External Email

Hello,

I am writing in support of continuing the Bike lane on the upper deck of the Richmond- San Rafael bridge. I am a Berkeley resident and have regularly used the bike lane on the bridge in both directions over the past few years. I cycle mostly for recreation, but these are trips I had previously taken a car to Marin to do. Before the opening of the path I would regularly drive with my bike to Marin (San Rafael, Mill Valley, Fairfax) park it there, go for a ride, and drive back. I haven't done that once since the opening of the bridge. Recreation may at first not seem a worthy use of commuter focused resources but how many thousands of car trips are made from the East Bay to Marin for recreation alone? Is it not better to have some of those trips made by bicycle if possible?

I have also patronized bars and cafes in Point Richmond that I would never visit if it weren't for the bike lane passing through.

I feel that if anything the bike lane on the bridge should be improved. The movable barrier is currently so low that it feels like a cyclist could easily be injured if something fell off of the fast moving cars. Many cyclists I've spoken with feel nervous cycling eastbound next to the traffic, perhaps less experienced cyclists have been discouraged from using the bike lane for this reason.

Also, the cycling infrastructure at the ends of the bridge may have affected use of the lane during the pilot period. Richmond has done a wonderful job with the infrastructure they provided on the east side, but the Marin side is bare bones, requiring cyclists to ride on a busy access road next to the freeway.

There is about a half mile between the end of the bike lane on the bridge and the separated path at the Sir Francis Drake exit. Inexperienced cyclists and children would never feel safe using the infrastructure as it is currently. Beyond that there is no separate safe bike lane from the Sir Francis Drake exit and the bike lanes in Larkspur.

I greatly value the bike lane across the bridge as a forward looking solution to our transportation needs. Thank you. -Mark Taylor

From: Matt Hochstetler [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 3:39 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Richmond San Rafael bridge

External Email

Asking you to distribute this to all commission members with a cc to staff

I suggest you open the bike lanes to traffic but provide a van that can carry the bikes (using a bike rack) and bikers across the bridge during peak hours. Seems like a win/win. Bikers can bike and less traffic for poor citizens.

-----Original Message-----

From: Matthew Barger [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] November 4, 2023 9:05 PM

To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>

Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

I support maintaining a full time bike lane on San Rafael bridge. Both for me as a bicyclist who has rode the bridge numerous times and as an environmentalist who supports carbon free transportation, this position is a “no brainer”.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Megan Arnold [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, November 5, 2023 9:28 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

To: Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee

The Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Pathway has been a great addition for Bay Area bike connectivity, giving a much easier, more direct link between the north and east bays. I have used it for transit - taking the SMART train to Larkspur, then riding over the bridge to catch Amtrak, as well as for recreational rides.

Another car lane, while it may give temporary satisfaction or the optics of congestion reduction, is not a sustainable long-term solution. Over and over it has been shown that the "easier" it is to drive, the more people drive, and, no matter how many lanes are built, eventually they all get jammed. The staff report recommendation is NOT implementing a third westbound lane, mentioning additional factors such as there only being two travel lanes when the bridge touches down in Marin. We need to focus on making car-free access - both human powered and transit - a realistic option for more people.

Thank you for your consideration in keeping the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Pathway.
- Megan Arnold
[REDACTED]

From: Michael Barnes [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, November 5, 2023 9:23 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

RE: comments on Richmond San Rafael Bridge bike path.

To the reviewers:

My perspective has more facets than most, so first here is a bit about me: Back in 1991, I placed 2nd in the masters 35+ category in the Berkeley Hills Road Race. In 2022, I placed 1st in the 65+ category in the Mt. Diablo Challenge. In the 31 years in between, I rode my bike many miles in several different countries. I also served eight years on the Albany City Council, where cycling paths were often an issue. I also commuted for 11 years, rain or shine, to the UC Berkeley campus, where I was a science editor and writer.

As a cyclist, I personally don't like the Richmond San Rafael (RSR) bike path, and I don't use it. It is extremely noisy and the air quality is poor. However, I know several cyclists who ride the bike path a few times each week. As a former elected official, I question the value of a bike path that is used so seldom--a serious cost-benefit analysis might find that there is no good reason to extend the life of the bike path. These are some of the messy issues I would like to discuss.

But first I would like to remind readers of a death on the bike path that was never mentioned in the local press. In December 2019, just a few months after the bike path opened, an older cyclist, a Chinese-American male from Daly City, was traveling eastbound just before the bike path slopes downhill and to the right to pass under the freeway as it approaches Pt. Richmond. To conform with ADA requirements, a series of flat sections were built into the pavement in the downhill section of the path. There were no warning signs at that time, and the cyclist build up too much speed in the downhill section, lost control in the wavy pavement, missed the turn and hit the fence on the outside of the turn, which slammed him down hard enough that he suffered a fatal head injury--even though he was wearing a helmet.

I read about this accident on Strava and in some online bike newsgroups, but I could not find any references to it in the local press. Finally, after several weeks, I called the Contra Costa Coroner's office, which confirmed that they were working on a death certificate. The coroner told me that they typically only contacted the Highway Patrol with their information. I sent an email to the MTC lead engineer on the bike path project to inform him of this death and to request that better signage be installed to warn eastbound riders about the right hand turn. I got the impression that he hadn't heard of the fatality before. Cycling friends reported to me that the signage was installed. This death might have been avoided had proper signage been in place at the time of the accident. Caltrans and MTC should keep this death in mind as they consider different redesigns of the bike path.

I drive across the RSR bridge probably twice a week. I seldom see more than a handful of riders on the bridge. I did cross it last Sunday morning, on a warm beautiful day. I counted about a dozen riders on the bridge. Is the bike path really worth maintaining for so few riders? Of course, the cycling advocates will blame poor access or other issues for the low usage, but in my experience, bike advocates always find some excuse for low ridership. Never does it seem to occur to them that the demand just isn't there. I say this knowing of a handful of riders that do use the bridge often. But public policy should not be designed around the desires of a small group of users.

The use of the zipper barriers is an intriguing idea. On the Golden Gate (GG) bridge the barrier is moved twice a day. However, there is only one 6,000 ft long deck on the GG bridge. The RSR bridge has two 4-mile long decks. I doubt if it would be practical to move the barrier twice a day. Moving it twice a week might be a better target--no bike lane on weekdays, perhaps one two-way bike lane on weekends. Although westbound traffic on the bridge on sunny summer mornings can be as heavy as during weekday peak commute hours.

I have also read that using all three lanes on the bridge for westbound traffic would require widening the westbound exit to three lanes. This was estimated to cost millions of dollars. Cycling advocates have noted that moving more autos across the bridge faster would only result in worse backups along the Sir Francis Drake connector between westbound 580 and southbound 101. However, some traffic does continue northbound on 101, and these drivers would benefit from a faster commute across the bridge. I'll note that last weekend I was traveling northbound on 101 from the Marin Headlands to the RSR bridge, and SIRC instructed me to pass exit 430B, which puts riders on the Sir Francis Drake connector. Instead SIRC directed me to the next exit, 431, which puts riders onto the SRS onramp at the Bellam Blvd intersection. I wonder if a similar connector could be built in the opposite direction so that northbound drivers on 580, having exited the RSR bridge, could continue northbound and connect to southbound 101 where the roads intersect near Bellam, bypassing the Sir Francis Drake connector.

Finally, the larger question is whether it is worth spending millions to retrofit a bridge which may need to be replaced in the next several years. Just how long is the bridge expected to last? A new bridge with bike lanes built-in from the start would solve many problems.

This concludes my comments, thank you for providing an opportunity to respond.

Regards,

Michael Barnes
City of Albany councilmember (2012-2020)

From: m_fretz [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 10:26 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee - Wednesday, November 8, 2023 - Public Comment - Item 5a

External Email

Dear Committee Members:

I understand that an evaluation of the pilot program for bridge access improvements at the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge is underway.

I urge you to support the continued access that was provided under this pilot program. I cannot think of any other improvement made to Bay Area transportation access that has more profoundly improved my life than this pilot program.

Over the last several years, I have taken up cycling and used the bridge to access the trails in Marin County. I live in the East Bay but love to ride in Marin. The trails and roads in Marin County are the finest in the state and were previously not accessible to me.

Cycling has changed my life over the past several years. It has allowed me to drop my weight to a normal BMI, while improving my mental health and connecting me to a community of other cyclists. I often ride from Berkeley to San Francisco with friends who work there. While they are commuting, I just ride along for the pure enjoyment of the ride. After a brief stop in San Francisco, I will take BART back to the East Bay. Similarly, a ride from Berkeley to Tiburon and back is a special experience that I enjoy at least once each month.

I understand that the staff review of this program has been positive and includes a recommendation to extend the access provided under this program. I truly hope that will happen.

Sincerely,
Michael Fretz

From: Mike Ghaffary <newmike@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 8:12 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Adding another lane at the expense of any bike lanes would be very misguided. You can never add enough car lanes to magically remove traffic. Spend the money on transit and encouraging more people to bike instead of drive the bridge.

I bike the bridge frequently.

From: Mike Ghaffary [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 8:12 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Adding another lane at the expense of any bike lanes would be very misguided. You can never add enough car lanes to magically remove traffic. Spend the money on transit and encouraging more people to bike instead of drive the bridge.

I bike the bridge frequently.

-----Original Message-----

From: Mike Hrast [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 4:20 PM

To: info@bayareametro.gov

Subject: 11/8/23 Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee meeting comment, item 5a Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Updates

External Email

To whom it may concern

First I would to say thanks to whoever set up the bike lane on the Richmond/San Rafael bridge. I would like to voice my wish to keep this bike lane as a permanent fix to alternative transportation. I use this bike lane quite often.

I realized that a lot of people who commute by car against this bike lane, but the sad thing is that while I'm riding across the bridge I see a lot of single occupant cars. How do these people help the environment? How do these people help the air quality, especially on spare the air days?

Isn't time to start getting these people out of their car and at least carpool. I've seen comments from some who say they're physically unable to ride a bike. I'm willing to bet that half of these people are able to ride a bike or could manage on an electric bike. I've heard complaints that some drivers need their car to carry equipment necessary to do their jobs. Obviously these people haven't explored the multiple types of electric bikes that can accommodate them.

If we close our eyes to what's happening in our environment by allowing gasoline powered vehicles to continue to dominate our transportation system then we are all to blame for consequences climate change.

Please think and act environmentally

Mike Hrast

Sent from my iPhone

From: Nelson Branco [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 12:47 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Hello,

As a resident of Marin who cycles for leisure and transportation, I would like to advocate for maintaining a bike lane on the Richmond Bridge so that there is 24/7 car-free access between Marin and the East Bay.

While another traffic lane may seem like the solution to the congestion that occurs frequently on the bridge, those improvements will likely be short-lived and it would likely worsen pollution and traffic. The amount that would be spent on the third lane could be used, instead, to improve transit options between Marin and the East Bay. I would like to express my support for staff's recommendation not to initiate a project at this time.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Nelson Branco

Nelson Branco, MD, FAAP
he/him/his

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Noah Swartz [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 11:19 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: 11/8/23 Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee meeting comment, item 5a Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Updates

External Email

Hi, I wanted to write in to share my support for the bike lane on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. Over the last two years, since moving to Oakland, the bridge has been essential for me as a way to access San Rafael and the larger marin area. I've ridden and organized countless rides crossing the bridge to commute to San Francisco, enjoy the roads on Mt Tamalpais, and even bike through Santa Rosa to Sacramento. The connection across the bridge is essential for bikes, as the alternatives to get to the areas in the north bay would require riding either to the south through San Jose or over the Dumbarton bridge, or north through Vallejo and around west.

This may sound extreme, but this is not in jest! I am serious about commuting by bike and would view those as my only options if I wanted to reach places in Marin and Sonoma. But the bridge access has allowed for a lot of rides that wouldn't be possible otherwise! I've done two loops of the bay utilizing the Dumbarton, Golden Gate, and RSR bridge. I also maintain two routes Randonneurs USA that utilize the bridge to access Point Reyes and Mt Tamalpais - which would have to be deactivated if the bike lane on the bridge went away. And it's not just long distance rides that it promotes - just the other week I led a ride of 10 friends to Mill Valley for burritos and then continued to San Francisco where we visited the exploratorium and took the ferry back.

I very much cherish the ease of access that the bridge path provides, and would dearly miss the ability to pop over to Larkspur, Fairfax, San Rafael, and beyond if it went away. Thank you for your consideration and time spent hearing the comments of those who use the pathway.
Noah

From: Odin [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 11:09 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

As a low-income individual who lives car-free because I cannot afford the cost of a car, keeping the bike path across the Richmond Bridge is vital to me because it allows disadvantaged people without a car to cross the bay.

Adding another car lane in its place would increase pollution, due to a concept known as “induced demand,” which has been studied throughout the state for decades. Adding more lanes for cars causes more people to drive, increasing the amount of Vehicle Miles Traveled and car trips made. Within a few years of a third lane, the traffic and pollution would be even worse than before due to more drivers using the bridge who would’ve avoided it before. So do you want your same, heavy traffic in 2 lanes or 3 lanes - with increased pollution?

Another appealing alternative to allow cyclists, pedestrians, and low-income individuals alike to cross the bridge easily, is adding a transit-only lane in both directions. Combined with increasing frequency of the 580 bus across the bridge, this would take many cars off the road and reduce traffic greatly. Additionally, cyclists could use the bike racks on the bus to continue cycling on the other side of the bay.

Reminder that transit and carpool lanes are not transit lanes, as the buses still get stuck in traffic. A dedicated and enforced bus lane in each direction would be best for this, even if it is only during peak or high-traffic hours.

Don’t add a 3rd car lane to the Richmond bridge - it will only increase congestion. Keep the bike lane or turn it into a dedicated bus lane in each direction instead to reduce traffic and greenhouse gas emissions.

Sincerely,
Odin Palen

[REDACTED]

From: Parker Day [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 1:16 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

BATA Oversight Committee:

I grew up in the north bay, crossing the Richmond Bridge in a car. I understand its importance in the fabric of connecting communities across the bay. It's been transformative to my life to be able to make this crossing without a car, since I now do not drive. It is essential that this connection continues to be possible for people like me, who walk, bike, or scoot for transportation. **That is why I'm urging you to keep this essential pedestrian, bike, scooter, and mobility device access to the RSR Bridge.**

A third car lane on the bridge will not not improve traffic on the bridge, and according to staff reports, has the potential to increase pollution. It also would break an important connection where there is **no alternative route** for people who do not have a car. For these reasons alone, a 3rd car lane on the bridge should be a non-starter.

However, pollution, traffic, and equity aren't the only reasons to oppose a third lane. The staff report and recommendation have made it clear that it would be fiscally irresponsible to add another car lane to the bridge at this time. The use of funds would be better spent to increase the capacity of the bridge by improving and increasing transit service. Transit from the north bay to the east bay has long lagged compared to other corridors of the Bay Area metro, which should be a real focus going forward and a much better use of resources.

I hope you will support the staff recommendation to not initiate a project at this time. Thank you for your consideration and hearing my thoughts.

Parker Day
[REDACTED]

From: Patricia Tostenson [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 11:13 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

The bike lane experiment has been a disaster for Richmond and East Bay residents trying to get to work, doctors appointments etc. This bridge was built by taxpayers to accommodate workers, commuters and people trying to cross the bay for any reason. By removing one lane it has caused terrific backups for people west bound. The numbers of people that have been affected are much greater than the few (recreational) bike riders.

The bike riders could easily be accommodated by having a shuttle service take them across the bridge and return. They currently do not contribute to the cost of the bridge. A small fee for the shuttle - similar to the bridge toll would cover the costs of the shuttle.

Please return the bridge third lane for use by cars and trucks.

Thanks for your consideration.

Patricia Tostenson, [REDACTED]

From: Bauer, Peter [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 8:33 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

- I'll like to Mention that I've used the bridge path!
- & Maintaining car-free access between the East Bay and Marin is very important (FYI/ many of the twenty something's in the workforce use e-bikes (& not cars) to get to work)
- Another lane may increase pollution, and congestion improvements will likely be short-lived
- The money it would cost to add a lane could be used to increase transit service
- & I Support staff's recommendation not to initiate a project at this time
- Thank you for your time and consideration!

Peter Bauer,
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Peter Mueller [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 11:27 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

I use the rsrb for recreational cycling and access between marinas & communities on both sides.

Bicycle, cargo-bike and pedestrian access is also important for equity, social justice, health + environmental improvement, infrastructure preservation and regional resilience.

Maintaining an ample, complete, uninterrupted bike lane at all times on the rsrb and its approaches is all the more necessary due to incomplete Bay Bridge bike access, Bay Trail, flooding and lane + shoulder degradation on hwy 37.

In addition to exhaust, motor vehicle tires and brakes produce toxic pollution that far exceeds per person bike emissions since cars and trucks are so much heavier. That pollution is killing some children & other vulnerable populations and building up in our bodies, impairing the health of all life forms. Therefore action is needed now to encourage biking and other alternatives and discourage motor vehicle use.

Public transit, improved bike access and carpooling signage of and education about existing assets should be offered to alleviate commuter car congestion since adding motor vehicle lanes will trigger more single occupant car & SUV abuse of our environment and dangerous overburdening of that old rickety bridge. This is a more achievable step than new civil engineering projects.

Alternatively:

1. the public shall consider surface improvements, slowing and enforcing motor vehicle speed limit to 14 mph, reduced truck emissions, size & weight limits and allow bikes and cargo-bikes full use of lanes.

For the above reasons and since the bridge does not actually meet standards for a freeway, do not close or limit bike lanes on the rsrb until bikes roam free & safe in all lanes.

Thanks,

Peter

[REDACTED]

From: Philip Mooney [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 9:00 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Dear Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for maintaining the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge (RSR Bridge) Pathway for cyclists and pedestrians. The upcoming discussions about the bridge's future are of great importance to me, as I regularly utilize the bike lane for both practical and recreational purposes.

As a resident of San Rafael, I rely on the bridge pathway to access businesses in Point Richmond conveniently. It serves as an essential link between my home and the local community, allowing me to reduce my carbon footprint and enjoy a healthy mode of transportation. Additionally, the bridge pathway provides a unique opportunity for recreation, enabling me to explore the beautiful East Bay by bicycle without the need to drive across the bridge.

Maintaining a car-free access option between the East Bay and Marin is crucial, not only for myself but for many other residents who appreciate the eco-friendly and health-conscious lifestyle this pathway supports. Adding another lane to the bridge would inevitably lead to increased pollution and temporary congestion relief, which is unsustainable in the long run.

Rather than investing in an additional lane, I urge you to consider reallocating the resources to enhance transit services. By bolstering public transportation options, we can address the issue of congestion more effectively while also reducing the environmental impact of increased vehicular traffic.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly support the staff's recommendation not to initiate a project that would compromise the integrity of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Pathway at this time. I believe this is the most sustainable and responsible approach, considering the unique benefits the current bridge pathway provides.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee for your time and consideration of this important matter. Your dedication to preserving and improving our community's infrastructure is greatly appreciated.

Thank you once again for your efforts in maintaining the accessibility and sustainability of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Pathway.

Sincerely,

Philip Mooney [REDACTED]

From: Redberg, Rita [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 8:26 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Dear Oversight Committee,

I am writing because I (and many friends and neighbors) are regular users of the bridge path. In support of our goals to reduce carbon emissions, I do not own a car and depend on my bike and this path to get from Marin to the East Bay and back. Adding another lane would increase pollution, make our air worse and slow our progress to reducing emissions. And would only encourage more cars, instead of more alternatives to automobiles, which would be better for everyone. And with more cars, any reduction in congestion would be short-lived, as has been seen many times before when lanes are added to roads, bridges and highways. The money would be better spent on public transit which would benefit all, not just who can afford cars and who drive them. I support the staff's recommendation NOT to begin a project at this time.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

RITA F. REDBERG, M.D., M.Sc., F.A.C.C.

From: Geoff Hastings [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 1:46 PM
To: san-francisco-randonneurs-announcements+owners [REDACTED]
Cc: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>; SF Randonneurs [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: [San-Francisco-Randonneurs-Announcements] 11/8/23 Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee meeting comment, item 5a Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Updates

External Email

Hi Rob

Thanks for this. As you know I also highly value that bike path. I see you have notified us about the committee meeting but what can we do to make our feelings known to the committee?

Thanks

Geoff

On Nov 7, 2023, at 9:08 AM, Rob Hawks [REDACTED] wrote:

I write to you as a fairly regular user of the bike path on the Richmond San Rafael Bridge. I want to convey to you how vital I feel that path is to east bay and Marin residents to cross the bay. Personally this has accounted for countless trips that I would not have undertaken if I had to drive across the bridge. Please keep in mind that businesses in Point Richmond and San Rafael benefit from this path allowing cyclists to visit each of those communities and I frequently have spent money in these communities that I would not have spent if not for the bridge allowing me now to travel by bicycle. As I visit each of these communities, parking my bicycle takes a fraction of the space a car would take, so this type of travel benefits communities in more than one way.

On the flip side of this, I have cycling friends that use that bike path specifically for commuting and in their case they are taking a car off the bridge. I want to point out too, that some of my trips have been commutes that have also taken a car off the bridge, each of us reducing congestion even if a little bit at a time. The cumulative effect of that is not insignificant.

rob hawks
Richmond resident
President, San Francisco Randonneurs

From: Roberta Hoffman [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, November 5, 2023 4:55 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: AGAINST bicycle lane on RSR Bridge

External Email

I am a cyclist and resident of San Rafael. Three times per week I travel across the RSR bridge to Richmond. It is painful to see the huge back up from the bridge on to HWY580 through Richmond and other areas of Contra Costa County. THERE ARE THREE REASONS I WANT THE BICYCLE LANE **REMOVED:**

1. It is painful to witness the huge amounts of pollution going into the air from the automobiles with their engines idling.
2. I work at Marin Hospital Medical Center and several people commute to Marin from the East Bay. The commute adds hours to their commute each day.
3. the bicycle lane is impractical. The space has a better use as a traffic lane.

As a cyclist, I cycle at least one day per week 15-18 miles. In the years the bike lane has been on the bridge, I have on only three occasions cycled across the RSR bridge. Why? it can be terribly windy, there is nothing in Richmond that I need to or want to cycle to.

PLEASE REMOVE THE BICYCLE LANE

Roberta Hoffman

From: Malone, Ruth [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 12:01 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Dear Oversight Committee Members,

I am writing in support of maintaining the existing bicycle access on the Richmond-San Rafael bridge. It is shocking to think that in this moment anyone would think that adding more lanes for cars ANYWHERE is a good idea. We cannot car our way out of the problems cars have created, and they are many. We need to increase non-driving options of every kind, not curtail them. As senior citizens, my husband and I drove cars for years, but now have transitioned to e-bikes and no longer have a car. Our e-bikes and public transportation are how we get around the Bay Area and yes, we do ride to Marin and the East Bay. Thank you for protecting and expanding safe bike access.

Ruth Malone and Terry Sayre
San Francisco

From: Sean Camden [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 10:21 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Lifelong Marin County resident here. Dreamed of being able to ride my bike across the Richmond/San Rafael Bridge when I was a teenager in the 80s. Now I'm 56 and still an avid bicyclist and I love this path! Please don't take it away!

Surely no one really believes we could add more cars to the bridge *and* reduce air pollution at the same time, right? I know there was a recent article in the IJ that implied the bike lane was causing pollution, but you'd have to be crazy to believe that. Bicycles causing pollution? Makes no sense. Cars cause pollution. Add a lane, add more cars... it's not complicated. If you truly care about the environment you must preserve alternative transportation options.

And besides, if adding lanes was a solution for traffic congestion Los Angeles would be a transportation paradise. Do you want to be remembered for making Marin more like Los Angeles?

Thank you for taking the time to read my comments.

Sean Camden
[REDACTED]

From: susan george [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 8:09 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

To whom it may concern,

My husband and I are bike riders, do not own a car, have friends in Marin, but live in San Francisco. The Richmond-San Rafael bridge provides a vital link for us, much easier and shorter than riding through the city to the GG bridge and up north. The bike lane may encourage more people to ride, decreasing traffic and pollution. It will be a step backward to close the bike lane and open it up to more car traffic. Please consider all users for this decision.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Susan George

-----Original Message-----

From: Susann Nordrum [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 1:38 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee Item #5

External Email

Hello Bay Area Toll Oversight Committee, Thank you for your continuing efforts to provide a reliable transportation corridor between San Rafael and Richmond. I began working in Richmond in 1986 and commuted over the bridge 5 days a week for the next 30 years.

I remember many of the changes and improvements along the way. The earthquake upgrades and deck replacement projects were certainly some of the more difficult. I remember many years when a water pipe blocked one lane as the pipe sat empty while people in Marin hoped it wouldn't be needed again. I also remember thinking how seldom the closed third lane was used for emergency vehicles and how nice it would be to reopen it. I did use it once when my vehicle ran out of gas at the top of an arch heading East. My daughter, in middle school then, was scared to get within 4 feet of the edge of the bridge, but the view looking out and down is something she tells people about to this day, and she says it was better than from the Golden Gate bridge.

Oh, how I cheered upon hearing the news that you were opening a bike/hike lane. On my daily commute over and back, I dreamt of commuting over the bridge via bike. I worked just on the other side, at Chevron, an easy 12 mile ride. I did commute to work via bike several times, using the shuttle you provided which was okay, but unpredictably delayed. Another hope was to run across the bridge like when several of my friends ran over the bridge in 1982 in a race that I couldn't make. How special we all thought that was.

Now the opportunity to bike or run or walk across is open and available 24/7. With the advent of e-bikes, more people have the ability to enjoy this opportunity. It is a Bay Area treasure and should be more widely advertised (parking at each end is a bit limited, though).

Please don't slide backward and remove the bike lane. Maybe you can replace the heavy barrier with plastic poles that would allow distressed vehicles to cross into the bike lane in an emergency. Also, I realize that there are West bound backups at the toll booth as the lanes funnel down to two. I think removing this throttle will only move the problem downstream as cars already back up on the West end as they make the single lane exits. Traffic congestion at the West end appears far more dangerous as there aren't all the available lanes like at the toll booth for people to react, slow down, and merge. Look at how the Larkspur bridge exit on 101 N in Marin backs up 3 out of 4 lanes for miles as cars squeeze down to one lane, blocking the North bound traffic that is not exiting. There is no reason to let cars onto the bridge faster than they can get off on the other side. Please give bikers a chance. Each bike means one less car and a little less pollution.

Most importantly, please keep this route open to bikes and feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this spectacular biking privilege further.

Thank you, again, for providing a safe and reliable route for bikes.

Susann Nordrum
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Ted Joseph [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 2:10 PM
To: info@bayareametro.gov
Subject: Agenda Item 5a. 23-1234 Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Updates

External Email

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my support for the bike lane on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. I am a teacher for 12 years who lives in the East Bay and works in Marin because the cost of living is cheaper in the East Bay and the pay is better in Marin. I prefer to ride my bike to work and I am very thankful for the existence of the bike lane. I feel great after the exercise and I like that I am reducing the number of miles I travel alone in my car. On the days I can't bike and I have to drive, I am still thankful for the bike lane knowing that others have the opportunity to take advantage.

I don't think that adding another lane for car traffic would make sense. I have read studies that show that with the more car lanes you add, the more cars drive which eventually fill those lanes. I believe the information from those studies because I have noticed that even though the eastbound portion of the RSR bridge has opened up a 3rd lane, there are more cars using it now and soon the traffic will be slow. With the problem of climate change we should be encouraging cleaner ways to commute. Bike infrastructure is comparatively cheap and is healthier.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Ted Joseph

-----Original Message-----

From: Thomas Martell [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 12:59 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: open up the bridge

External Email

I cannot attend the meeting. However I hope that we can open up that third lane and it can take less than an hour in the morning to get to Marin county. I'm sure you can figure out another way to have the so few you bicycles that are there take a truck with the bicycles on the back or get a detour but you're not saving any gas they're having people sit in a row idling their engines for an hour and a half every morning. Thank you for your interest.

From: Tim Gilbert [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 12:55 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

I waited years for a bike route to and from my Berkeley office from my home in San Rafael. I used it regularly until I recently retired. Now I use it for recreation.

From: Travis Ruth [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 11:49 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: 11/8/23 Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee meeting comment, item 5a Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Updates

External Email

Hello,

I am writing in support of keeping the bike lane along the Richmond - San Rafael Bridge. As an El Cerrito resident, I have used this path as a recreational cyclist and also to run errands in Marin. I would like to be able to continue to do this.

I do not understand why the bike lane would not be kept. My understanding is that prior to the bike lane there were still only two lanes of traffic on the upper deck. Additionally even if the upper deck had a third lane, there are only two lanes once you get over the bridge so there's not real gain in traffic capacity.

Allowing bicycle travel reduces the number of cars using the bridge. It allows a healthy and environmentally friendly way to get from the East Bay to Marin and it should be celebrated.

Regards,

Travis Ruthenburg

From: Tyler Comann [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, November 5, 2023 12:14 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Public Comment - 11/8 BATA Oversight Committee - Item #5

External Email

Hello:

I am emailing you in strong support of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Pathway.

I use the bike path regularly and feel that it is a critical component of bicycling in the Bay Area. Adding a third lane is costly and takes away from money that could be spent on public transit. It is our obligation to reduce pollution!

I support the staff's recommendation not to initiate a project at this time.

I am a resident of Tiburon.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Cheers. Tyler.

Tyler K. Comann
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]