

Bay Area Infrastructure Financing Authority (BAIFA)

July 22, 2020

Agenda Item 4a - 20-1012

I-680 Express Lanes Extension and Proposed BAIFA Toll Facility Ordinance Amendment

Subject: Update on the I-680 Express Lanes southbound extension including proposed changes to BAIFA's existing Toll Facility Ordinance to apply existing tolling rules for I-680 Contra Costa Express Lanes to the I-680 extension, and the public education process for the opening of the lane.

Overview: BAIFA has partnered with the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) to complete the high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane on I-680 southbound from Marina Vista Avenue in Martinez to Rudgear Road in southern Walnut Creek, by closing the gap through Walnut Creek, and to convert the entire length from Martinez to Walnut Creek to an express lane. BAIFA planned to begin tolling on this extension in fall 2021, but the project is well ahead of schedule due to the collaborative efforts of CCTA, BAIFA, Caltrans and our contractors. CCTA delivered the civil construction faster than expected, and the lane will be ready for traffic by early September 2020. BAIFA's toll system integrator will complete toll system installation and testing before tolling can begin in winter 2021. BAIFA, CCTA, Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol have agreed to operate the extension as an HOV lane until tolling begins.

In July 2016, BAIFA adopted a toll ordinance, as required by statute, so that it could enforce toll violations on its I-680 Express Lanes in Contra Costa County, which presently run between Walnut Creek and Dublin. In January 2020, BAIFA amended this toll ordinance to include the I-880 Express Lanes in Alameda County as well as to update the I-680 Express Lanes toll policies for consistency. Now, BAIFA needs to amend its toll ordinance again to enable tolling on the I-680 Express Lanes southbound extension from Martinez to Walnut Creek since it is likely to be ready for tolling six to nine months earlier than expected.

Operational policies approved by Caltrans for this I-680 Express Lanes extension are consistent with the existing policies on BAIFA's I-680 Express Lane as well as the I-580 and I-680 express lanes in Alameda County. They include:

- Hours of operation - 5 am to 8 pm (change from existing HOV lane hours of 5-9 am and 3-7 pm); and
 - HOV eligibility - 2 or more persons (no change from existing HOV lane eligibility).
- These policies will be in effect when the extension opens to traffic early as an HOV lane.

Proposed tolling policies for the extension are consistent with those in the approved BAIFA Toll Facilities Ordinance for the existing I-680 Express Lanes as well as those planned for the I-580 and I-680 express lanes in Alameda County. They include:

- FasTrak® required - All vehicles would be required to use FasTrak®, including vehicles eligible for reduced tolls as on all other Bay Area Express Lanes.
- Tolls – Solo drivers would pay the full toll. Clean air vehicles (CAVs) would pay a half-price toll. Eligible HOVs with 2 or more persons would pay no toll. A minimum toll of \$0.50 per toll zone would apply. [In January 2020, BAIFA

approved half-price tolls for CAVs on its 680 Express Lanes beginning when the I-880 Express Lanes open in September 2020.]

- Enforcement and Toll Violation Penalties - Toll enforcement would be automated using license plate cameras as on BAIFA's existing express lanes and all others. If a vehicle does not have a FasTrak[®] account, a violation notice would be issued by the toll system. Toll violation penalties would be set equal to those charged by BATA, currently \$25 for the first notice and \$70 for the second notice. CHP would enforce vehicle occupancy requirements, illegal crossing of double white lines and other rules.

Staff recommends the following approach and schedule for public comment on the toll ordinance amendment, based on statutory requirements and MTC's Public Participation Plan:

- 30-day public comment period to start upon newspaper publication of BAIFA's intent to amend its toll ordinance;
- Website information about the approach to opening the lane and the intent to extend existing rules, plus the option to email comments;
- Public hearing at September 23 BAIFA meeting, followed by an adoption vote; and
- Toll ordinance amendment effective 30 days after adoption.

The public information process for the toll ordinance is the initial step to educate potential customers about how the new I-680 Express Lane extension will work. It provides an opportunity to hear from the public about the tolling rules which, given our emphasis on regional consistency, are ultimately about the express lane system as a whole. Public comment provides important direction to staff on which toll policies need to be monitored and analyzed, to make sure they perform as planned, or reviewed in context of the regional network. As a result of public comments in fall 2019 about tolling rules on the I-880 Express Lanes and half-price tolls for CAVs on the I-680 Express Lanes, staff will pilot a means-based toll for low-income individuals on BAIFA's express lanes. In addition, Commissioners requested early and more frequent performance reporting; staff will report to BAIFA within four to six months of the start of tolling on the I-680 Express Lane extension, just as it will for I-880.

Customer education will continue through the start of tolling on the extension. Since the 680 Express Lane southbound extension will open as an HOV lane before tolling begins, BAIFA and CCTA will partner on two public information campaigns. The first campaign, beginning in July 2020, will focus on the new lane capacity and lane striping; the second will focus on how to use the express lanes, and will begin about two months before tolling.

Attachments: Presentation Slides



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