

Metropolitan Transportation Commission

April 28, 2021

Agenda Item 11a - 21-0426

Regional Express Lanes Strategic Plan

Subject: Adoption of a Bay Area Express Lanes Strategic Plan, which links the broader Express Lanes Network purpose, goals, and strategies to the regional strategic goals of Plan Bay Area 2050 and other MTC initiatives. Based on over a year of research and collaboration with Bay Area express lane partners, staff proposes recommendations and near-term actions that represent concrete steps to move the Express Lanes Network forward and link it to regional strategic goals.

Background: Over the last year, a working group of Bay Area Express Lanes partners, Caltrans, and California Highway Patrol has regularly met to work on the Bay Area Express Lanes Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan). The Strategic Plan includes:

1. An express lane network to be built over 30 years that reflects key policies and goals of Plan Bay Area 2050; and
2. A detailed narrative that sets forth agreed upon goals, policies, and strategies to guide implementation of the network.

Staff presented the Express Lanes Strategic Plan at the April 9, 2021 Operations Committee meeting. The Committee unanimously approved the Plan under two conditions:

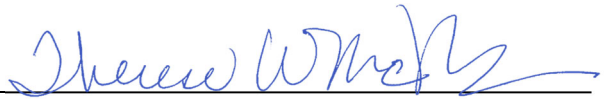
1. That the Strategic Plan be updated to state in the Strategic Investment Principles section that leveraging opportunities to garner more significant funding through partnerships with local project delivery entities enhances a project's merit and readiness; and
2. That, upon completion of the recommended strategies from the Blue Ribbon Transit Task Force and Plan Bay Area 2050's Implementation Plan, staff will update the express bus section of the Express Lanes Strategic Plan, update its supporting white paper, and return to this Committee to present updated express bus strategies.

Attachment 1 to this memo details the edits that staff have made to the Regional Express Lanes Strategic Plan in response to the Committee's direction. Attachments C and D are the updated documents that reflect the edits in Attachment 1.

Issues: None identified.

Recommendation: Staff recommends the Commission adopt the Regional Express Lanes Strategic Plan.

Attachments: Attachment 1 – Regional Express Lanes Strategic Plan Edits to April 9, 2021 Version
Attachment A – Regional Express Lanes Strategic Plan Recommendations and Near-Term Actions for Express Lane Partners
Attachment B – PowerPoint
Attachment C – *Connecting the Bay Area; Express Lanes Network 2021 Strategic Plan*
Attachment D – Appendices to the Regional Express Lanes Strategic Plan



Therese W. McMillan

Regional Express Lanes Strategic Plan Edits to April 9, 2021 Version

Staff has made the following edits to the Regional Express Lanes Strategic Plan in response to the Commissioners' direction at the April 9, 2021 Operations Committee meeting. All edits are underlined. The Strategic Investment Principles edits are intended to emphasize that adding local funds to a project can reinforce both investment principles of merit and project readiness.

1. In Strategic Investment Principles section – bottom of page 25:
“The strategic investment principles framework in Figure 7, below, can incentivize projects to align with regional goals and to include local or other funding sources as part of its funding application.”
2. In Strategic Investment Principles section – page 26
“A key motivation of producing this framework is to more strongly emphasize the importance of a variety of project merits in considering project eligibility for funding. However, project readiness, from completed environmental analysis to a project being fully funded through local or other sources outside of the current request, will continue to be considered in various contexts. In this regard, the structure of the framework allows enough flexibility to change emphasis depending upon the requirements of specific funding sources.”
3. In Strategic Investment Principles section – page 26
Update to Figure 7: See highlighted edit in black, bold, underlined text. Staff made similar edits to the Strategic Investment Principles white paper.

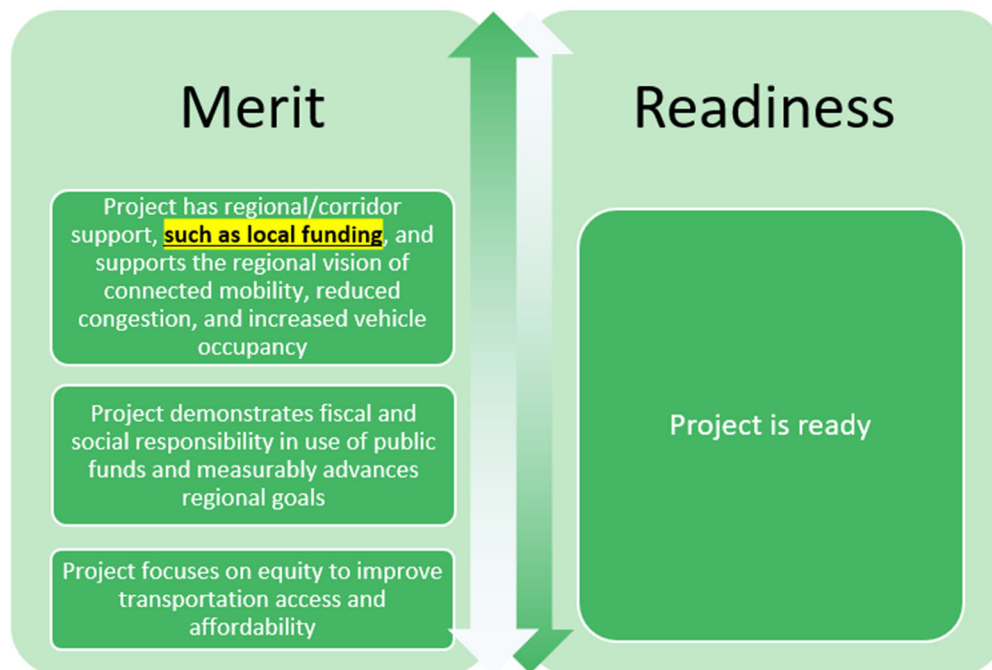


Figure 7: The strategic investment principles framework allows merit-based principles to be more strongly emphasized, while maintaining flexibility if certain funding sources prioritize readiness

4. In Section 1.1, Overview, page 6.

Staff stressed more explicitly how the Express Lanes Strategic Plan is a living document with expected updates to it.

“As a living regional document, the Strategic Plan is meant to be updated over time by a collaboration of all express lane partners, particularly in reference to near-term actions and regional developments on the topics of equity, regional consistency, enforcement, transit priority, and the concurrent development of a more robust regional transit and express bus network.”

5. In Section 4.2.5, Plan Bay Area, page 45.

The edit is another reference to how the Express Lanes Strategic Plan is a living document with expected updates in the future.

“This Strategic Plan is being released in advance of the Plan Bay Area 2050 Implementation Plan. As an immediate next step, MTC plans to leverage these findings, recommendations, and actions to further inform, integrate with, and advance regional strategic goals. Additionally, as Plan Bay Area 2050 concludes and strategies start to become operationalized, MTC will continue to update this Strategic Plan in collaboration with regional partners and the Commission. This living document is intended to serve as an up-to-date reference on critical forthcoming developments in the region, particularly strengthening the regional transit and express bus network and other near-term actions described above.”

6. In Section 4.3, Conclusion, page 45.

We added one final update in relationship to the need for future updates to the Strategic Plan.

“By creating a consistent strategy for implementing the network over the next thirty years, and continually updating this Strategic Plan to document these strategies, the region can create a network that delivers significant benefits to users while also reducing GHG impacts, increasing transit and carpool use, and promoting transportation equity in the Bay Area.”