

From: [Martha Silver](#)
To: [Martha Silver](#)
Subject: Response to Comments: October 22, 2024 MTC Policy Advisory Council Meeting Packet (925+Staff)
Date: Tuesday, November 12, 2024 4:31:26 PM

From: Gabriela
Sent: Monday, October 21, 2024 4:47 AM
To: Martha Silver <MSilver@bayareametro.gov>; Pamela [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: October 22, 2024 MTC Policy Advisory Council Meeting Packet (925+Staff)

Hi Martha and Chair Campos,

Unfortunately I will not be able to join this month's meeting. I have a work retreat that conflicts with the timing of Tuesday's **MTC PAC Council** meetings. Below are questions/feedback I have for items on the Equity and Access Committee agenda. **What is the recommended way for me to submit these so that they get expressed in the meeting?** (I don't have Chair Fitzgerald's contact info or else I would have included her too).

Item 4b : Proposed Toll Increase for Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA) Bridges

- I appreciate the data around Equity Priority Communities. I am concerned that the outreach for this is limited to one virtual meeting. By the looks of your timeline on slide 23, it seems as though approval for this proposal is expected and therefore the public comment period is more of a "check the box" item in the process. I hope I am wrong. With regards to outreach for this public comment period, can you share how you're leveraging existing outreach efforts such as that which was used by the Plan Bay Area 2050+ CBO engagement effort (my contact has been Anna Liu). If you are not leveraging this existing strategy, what would it take for you to do so at this point in the process?

BATA is required to hold a public hearing, but we feel that does not serve our constituents by itself. In response, we are undertaking a comprehensive public affairs approach to let people know about the proposal and the public hearing. That includes news releases sent out in multiple languages, legal notices placed with multicultural newspapers and a 44-day public comment period so people have plenty of time to provide feedback. To help people understand the proposal, we are also holding a webinar to educate the public at the beginning of the comment period.

- I would propose leading with the straight fact of the matter and speaking in more plain language, even when you come to this body: It's a \$2.75 toll increase over

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a 3 year period starting in 2026 until 2029. That really makes it tangible and easier to process as a concept for everyday folks who are feeling the impact of everything going up in price. There is definitely sticker shock here when stated so plainly but I feel that in the spirit of transparency and respect for people's time and intelligence, stating it more plainly is necessary.

Thank you for the feedback.

- Initially, I was taken aback and confused at the idea of more increases to tolls because I am aware that the GGB also just had an increase, I didn't realize until going through this presentation that the GGB is separate. For everyday commuters and people like me who travel from the north bay to the east bay and to the city for pleasure and for work, it's hard to keep up with this detail.

Thank you for the feedback.

- I suggest that part of understanding who uses bridges should also include information on how much of people's monthly budget goes towards bridge tolls, especially for EPC bridge users. Since you're able to identify those 284k EPC bridge toll customers, I would like to see your staff take it further and identify if there are daily commuters in this population. By doing that, we could paint a more nuanced picture as to how this increase would impact a daily commuter from a household within an EPC.

We estimate about 21,000 daily bridge users. Customer data does not include information such as income, therefore it is not possible to identify which EPC customers are low income.

- I'd like to hear more about how you're building the partnerships mentioned in slide 16. It seems that part of those partnership strategies could/should include focus groups with participants within those programs as part of your outreach.

We conducted seven focus groups as part of the design of the program and got considerable feedback about how to promote the program. As part of our evaluation of the next phase, we will consider more focus groups.

- Another suggestion for outreach would be to tap into the Promotora/Community Health Worker/Representative workforce. I'd be happy to provide more information and contacts for this workforce if desired.

Thank you. We would appreciate your contact information for this group.

Thank you,
Gaby