

Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee

May 14, 2025

Agenda Item 4b-25-0417

BATA Resolution No. 186 - Richmond-San Rafael Forward - Open Road Tolling and Interstate 580 Westbound High Occupancy Vehicle Lane Project: Project Study Report – Project Report Approval Recommendation and Direction to Staff to file a Notice of Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Subject:

A request to refer BATA Resolution No. 186 to the Authority to delegate the discretionary authority to designated BATA staff to sign a recommendation to Caltrans to approve the Project Study Report – Project Report (PSR-PR) for the Richmond-San Rafael Forward Open Road Tolling and Interstate 580 Westbound High Occupancy Vehicle Lane Project (Project) and to direct staff to file a Notice of Exemption documenting BATA’s determination that there is no substantial evidence that the Project will have a significant effect on the environment and is exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guidelines sections 15301(c) for Existing Facilities (Class 1) and 15302(c) for Replacement or Reconstruction of existing facilities (Class 2).

Background:

The RSR Forward Project seeks to provide safety and operational improvements on the westbound Interstate 580 (I-580) approach to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge by replacing the existing toll plaza and its electronic tolling with Open Road Tolling (ORT) and reinstating the previous High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane along westbound I-580 approaching the RSR Bridge. The HOV lane will begin at Regatta Blvd and end at the ORT gantries. The HOV lane occupancy requirement is HOV 2+ and will operate from 5AM to 10AM and 3PM to 7PM, Monday through Friday. The Project’s improvements will improve transit and carpool reliability, which could lead to less overall single occupant vehicles.

On October 13, 2023, BATA entered into a Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans for the Project Initiation Document (PID), and Project Approval and Environmental Document (PA&ED) phases of the work, referred to as the PID/PA&ED Cooperative Agreement. Under the PID/PA&ED Cooperative Agreement, BATA is the California Environmental Quality Act

(CEQA) lead agency and is responsible for preparing a PSR-PR and environmental documents for the Project. BATA completed the environmental studies and determined the project is categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA under the Class 1 and Class 2 categorical exemptions (CEQA Guidelines sections 15301(c), 15302(c)). A Notice of Exemption (NOE) was previously filed for the Project on February 23, 2024. Since publication of the NOE, the Project was refined to change hours of operation for the proposed HOV lane and to install a temporary ORT structure which will be removed once the final ORT gantries are in place. With these changes, the project remains categorically exempt. The CEQA environmental documentation and findings have been incorporated in the PSR-PR.

Staff requests that BATA delegate to the Executive Director or his designee, the discretionary authority on behalf of BATA to sign a recommendation to Caltrans to approve the PSR-PR for the Project. The approval of the PSR-PR will allow the Project to complete the final design and advance to construction phase. The construction phase is scheduled to start in Summer of 2025 once the PSR-PR and final design are completed subject to reaching agreement on price with the Construction Manager / General Contractor. Staff also seeks BATA direction to staff to file a Notice of Exemption under CEQA.

Issues:

None identified.

Recommendations:

Staff requests that the Committee refer BATA Resolution No. 186 to the Authority for approval to delegate to the Executive Director or his designee the discretionary authority on behalf of BATA to sign a recommendation to Caltrans to approve the PSR-PR of the RSR Forward Project to allow this Project to advance and to direct staff to file a Notice of Exemption documenting BATA's determination that there is no substantial evidence that the Project will have a significant effect on the environment and is categorically exempt from CEQA under Guidelines sections 15301(c) and 15302(c).

Attachments:

- BATA Resolution No. 186, Richmond-San Rafael Forward Open Road Tolling and Interstate 580 Westbound High Occupancy Lane Project - Project Study Report – Project Report Approval Recommendation and Direction to Staff to file a Notice of Exemption under CEQA.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andy Fremier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Andy" and last name "Fremier" clearly distinguishable.

Andrew B. Fremier