

Resolution of the San Francisco Bay Trail Project Board of Directors in Support of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Trail

WHEREAS, staff of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Caltrans have proposed that the Richmond-San Rafael (RSR) Bridge Trail be shutdown four days/week in order to provide a breakdown lane for motor vehicles; and

WHEREAS, bicyclists and pedestrians have enjoyed over 375,000 trips on the RSR Bridge Trail since it opened in November 2019; and

WHEREAS, the Bay Area Toll Authority's presentation to the Contra Costa Transportation Authority on December 20, 2023 stated that for motor vehicles traveling on I-580 there has been "no increase in westbound congestion" and that there have been "comparable incidents and safety response" to motor vehicle incidents on the RSR Bridge since the trail opened; and

WHEREAS, in 1999 pursuant to Section 5850 of the California Public Resources Code, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) adopted a plan for a biking and hiking route that would encircle San Francisco and San Pablo bays, providing connections to existing parks, open space and other recreation facilities and creating links to existing and proposed transportation facilities, while avoiding adverse effects on the environment of the bays; and

WHEREAS, the plan for this route--which became known as the Bay Trail--was developed over a two-year process by an advisory committee of ABAG that included representatives from a broad range of interests, including Federal, State, regional and local government agencies, environmental and recreational organizations, private landowners and business interests, included a multi-use trail across the RSR Bridge; and

WHEREAS, The RSR Bridge Trail is a keystone section of the Bay Trail linking the East Bay and North Bay; and

WHEREAS, the Plan Bay Area regional transportation plan and sustainable communities strategy adopted by ABAG & MTC for a more sustainable, equitable and economically vibrant future designates the Bay Trail as a one of the 100 regionally significant Priority Conservation Areas; and

WHEREAS, the Plan Bay Area 2050 Transportation "strategy includes investments in regional multi-use trails, such as the San Francisco Bay Trail, that are important assets for commuting or recreation"; and

WHEREAS, the Bay Conservation & Development Commission's Bay Plan Transportation Policy No. 4 states in part "transportation projects on the Bay shoreline and bridges over the Bay ... should include pedestrian and bicycle paths that will either be part of the Bay Trail or connect the Bay Trail with other regional and community trails"; and

WHEREAS, Caltrans Complete Streets Director's Policy DP-37 states:

1. "Verify that proposed projects are in alignment with local, regional, and state planning documents detailing pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and passenger rail needs on or across the SHS" (State Highway System)
2. "The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) recognizes that walking, biking, transit, and passenger rail are integral to our vision of delivering a brighter future for all through a world-class transportation network. Accordingly, in locations with current and/or future pedestrian, bicycle, or transit needs, all transportation projects funded or overseen by Caltrans will provide comfortable, convenient, and connected complete streets facilities for people walking, biking, and taking transit or passenger rail unless an exception is documented and approved."
3. "Opportunities for complete streets exist in all phases of project development from planning and design to construction, operations, and maintenance. Complete streets projects should prioritize underserved communities that have been historically harmed and segmented by the transportation network and should serve people of all ages and abilities. Furthermore, Caltrans commits to removing unnecessary policy and procedural barriers and partnering with communities and agencies to ensure projects on local and state transportation systems improve the connectivity to existing and planned pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities, and accessibility to existing and planned destinations, where possible."; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order N-19-19, signed by Governor Newsom to accelerate climate action on transportation states "The State Transportation Agency shall leverage the more than \$5 billion in annual state transportation spending for construction, operations, and maintenance to help reverse the trend of increased fuel consumption and reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with the transportation sector".

NOW, THEREFORE, BE RESOLVED that the San Francisco Bay Trail Project Board of Directors opposes closure of the multi-use Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Trail and authorizes each member of the Board to employ this resolution in advocating for keeping the RSR Bridge Trail open.