

**Proposed BAIFA Toll Facility Ordinance Amendment: Detailed List of Written Public Comments Received (August 9 - September 9, 2020)**

No.	Date Rec'd	Comment	COMMENT CATEGORIZATION - Use 'x'! (by MTC staff)												
			Tolls & Pricing	Clean Air Vehicles	HOV & Carpool	FasTrak	Enforce-ment	Access	Hours	Lane Perf.	Equity	Taxes	Other		
1	8/10/2020	I approve and support the existing ExpressLanes policies being applied to the I-680 Southbound ExpressLanes Project because this will generate revenue for the Bay Area and the Foothills.													Revenue Use
2	8/11/2020	This is complete nonsense. In the seventies we added a gas tax which made our gas much more than anywhere else to ensure that our freeways stays free. Over the years that tax went up and up. Along the way our bridge tolls were to disappear after the bridge was paid for. Instead the bridge tolls went from .35 to 5.00 for most. Stop raping californians. We can barely afford to live here while you have a 16 billion dollar rainy day fund. Take your pick: drop the gasoline tax and keep your tolls or keep the gas tax and drop your tolls. Your double dipping days are over, the generation of bosses has arrived and your circus needs to come to an end.												x	
3	8/11/2020	Express Lane People, My concern for the Walnut Creek/Martinez Express Lane debut (and existing lanes on 880, 580, 680, 237) are: 1. Motorcycles should not have to carry a transponder at 3+, makes no sense as they are obviously motorcycles 2. The transition between "the fast lane" and "the express lane" creates a huge gap as the roads are obviously not poured/laid/created at the same time. This creates a problem (and even a recent death on 242; same issue no express lane). Please eliminate/decrease the gap between the lanes as the roads erode 3. The lane is slightly wider than a normal lane? It would be great to see "stay left for motorcycles" stenciled in the lane for the cars. I would suggest an "M" on the right side of the lane, but anything painted becomes slick in the rain and reduces traction. Reminding drivers to stay to the left of the lane for motorcycles is helpful. Even a stenciled image of a car and bike side by side every so often would be helpful 4. Trucks are in every lane except the express/fast lane. Tire debris is everywhere. Can we keep them to the two far right lanes? Lastly, where does all this 511.org Fastrack money go? We have paid for the lanes and the improvements with tax money. Nothing in the last proposal for funds showed a return on this investment, or who (or how) the money is managed. You took our money to build and you take our money to use. What is in it for us? From a citizen point of view, we have more expensive bridge tolls, more expensive gas tax, ever increasing toll roads, but the roads and bridges are rough, uneven, and in the case of motorcycles, unsafe resulting in death. Fix the roads. Manage the costs. Be transparent about who is profiting off the backs of the people. Thank you.				x							x	Motorcycles; Pavement Quality; Trucks	

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4	8/11/2020	I am a resident along the portion of I-680 that will be subjected to the new express lanes and tolls. I strongly oppose the plan. It is a benefit exclusively for the wealthy who can afford the cost of using the luxury lanes, and it is an unfair burden on the residents of less advantaged neighborhoods who cannot afford such luxuries. How did you decide it was a good idea for the poor sit idle in the slow lanes while the privileged rich get to speed by in their own lane? Government has the obligation of providing equally for all constituents. When government begins favoring one group over another, and telling the poor what lanes they are restricted to, then government has become too big and too oppressive.											x		
5	8/12/2020	While I have always applauded the use of HOV lanes; local authorities probably don't drive past the gates of San Francisco. It is counter productive to use express lanes during non-peak hours (9:30 am - 2:30 PM) particular where there aren't enough open lanes (4-5) such as the CA 680. It slows down commutes and creates anger when you are competing for space with semi's, old ladies and bad drivers - there is no fast lane; just SLOW LANES. Open up the lanes is my mantra during non-peak hours. I've tried getting access to revenue based on hours or any revenue from the toll lanes without having to storm their offices. I can bet the \$0.50 collected is negligible while those who transit the road during non-peak hours get frustrated. I suggest you leave the ivory towers and take a ride and see what you think. PS the CCTA did a terrible job asking for input on the work being done on the I680 corridor.								x	x			Outreach	

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6.1	8/15/2020	<p>Dear MTC Infrastructure Financing Authority, Please accept these comments on the proposed Toll Facility Ordinance amendments. I oppose the proposed expansion of tolling rules now in force for I-680's San Ramon–Walnut Creek segment to Martinez. These rules seem archaic and inappropriate in their design and implementation; harmful in their environmental effects; and Orwellian in their proposed enforcement mechanisms.</p> <p>1. Inappropriate Design At the design level, the very idea of opening carpool and low-emission vehicle (HOV) lanes to paying single-occupant vehicles is a relic of the pre-pandemic era. It now seems obsolete and inappropriate. Bay Area traffic volumes, including in the I-680 corridor, have fallen by about 20% from their pre-pandemic peaks. This congestion relief might well be long-enduring, given:</p> <p>(a) The likely extension of shelter-in-place orders for at least a year, as Covid-19 vaccine development slowly drags on; (b) The likelihood of permanent restrictions on large gatherings – including in workplaces – to control future global pandemics; and (c) Long-term migration away from population and commuting centers, as health concerns and remote work become firmly established.</p> <p>Given these uncertainties about long-term congestion relief, the whole "Lexus Lanes" notion seems obsolete. Why degrade traffic flow for people who are doing the right things for the planet – carpooling, and investing in clean and efficient vehicles – to benefit selfish high earners who want to simply pay for a faster, inefficient single-occupant commute? Therefore, I urge the MTC to:</p>					x		x		x			COVID19 Traffic Impacts; Environmental Concern

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6.2		<p>[CONTINUED] Adopt a moratorium of at least 1 or 2 years on any expansion of current tolling rules – to see whether long-term changes in commuting patterns and congestion have removed the rationale and the demand for Lexus Lanes.</p> <p>2. Environmentally Insensitive Implementation The proposed Hours of operation - 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. – are overly broad. While Bay Area roads long ago lost well-defined "rush hours," these hours include a mid-day trough of low congestion from approximately 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Therefore, I urge the MTC to: Cut back the hours of operation to (a) 5 a.m. to 11 a.m., and (b) 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. Returning the HOV lanes to general circulation from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. would allow traffic to spread out and reduce overall congestion. This would allow vehicles in all lanes to operate at more-efficient speeds, reducing pollutant emissions and improving the region's carbon footprint.</p> <p>3. Creepy, Repressive, Automated Enforcement The proposed automated toll enforcement, using license plate cameras, seems right out of a George Orwell or dystopian science-fiction novel. The inherent privacy violation is that these plate readers will facilitate tracking individuals' movements. Just as important is the likelihood of errors: Machines and algorithms make mistakes that humans do not. It seems virtually certain that some legitimate carpoolers will be harassed by mistaken "false-positive" violation notices triggered by the robots. Therefore, I urge the MTC to: Minimized automated enforcement and tracking, and rely on competent, knowledgeable, human enforcement by an ample, well-trained deployment of CHP officers. Thank you for considering these comments. Respectfully yours,</p>												
7	8/14/2020	<p>This is a stunning example of wealth inequality in our society. If you have money you can get to work on time, if you don't, too bad for you. Closing off an entire lane to the have-nots and causing more congestion and delays is just fundamentally wrong. We all pay gasoline taxes and we should have equal access to the roads.</p>										x	x	

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8.1	8/18/2020	<p>I am a very unhappy consumer right now, having just read the article about your intention to have all lanes on some of our freeways designated as toll roads.</p> <p>I have lived all my 69 years in the Bay Area. When I first started driving, all the roads were paid for through taxation - typically gas taxes but also through bond issues. The first time a toll road initiative appeared on a ballot in California, I voted against it. And I voted against every successive ballot initiative for the next 30 years, but that never stopped them from appearing on the next ballot. The greed of the California Toll Road people was unchecked, and they were willing to spend any amount to get their gold mine open and producing, and now they have it. And you are enabling them.</p> <p>There are few issues that affect me emotionally as much as this one. I am exhausted by the intense feeling of hatred that I have for the proponents, designers, builders, and fat cat lobbyists who create toll roads in California.</p> <p>Over the years, poor city planning and graft allowed unlimited encroachment on our public lands. Unchecked home builders blanketed the former farm and ranch lands with subdivisions and high-density apartment complexes. Mega-corporations have been allowed to create a vision of Hong Kong in our formerly beautiful Bay Area. Rich people can weave and drive fast while they endanger the slow, poor people in the adjacent non-paying lanes. After all, rich people are important, and poor people are not. The great Class Divide as administered by MTC: when you get all the lanes generating tolls, the poor people will just go away, which is probably what you wanted in the first place. Oops! There's that hatred spilling out.</p>											x	x	All-Lane Tolling
8.2		<p>[CONTINUED] I commuted to workplaces on Bay Area freeways for more than 30 years and paid taxes all that time, some of which went to freeway maintenance. And I saw those freeways get wider and wider and more and more congested. And I paid for extra maintenance and repair for my car, when it was damaged by poor road conditions due to inadequate maintenance. And now you want me to pay again to drive on the highways I've already paid for these past decades.</p> <p>There is certainly a large problem here. It is the inability of the State, the Counties, the Cities, and governing bodies like yours to say "No" to developers and corporations, and to prepare adequately and manage the population density and resultant traffic flow. Anybody with big bucks can buy their way in. iDEA: Let's just defund the MTC and send the money saved to Cal Trans.</p> <p>So you want feedback? Move your operation to Iowa. Lots of open land to build on, but the folks there may not take kindly to your taking over their farms and ranches to build your roads and then charge them a toll to drive there. Neither do I.</p>													

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9	8/21/2020	<p>Bay Area Metro,</p> <p>As a home health worker, I am obliged to travel solo on Bay Area freeways on a near-daily basis. Many others are in similar situations - their jobs just don't allow them to carpool or take public transportation. Because I am paid per job rather than an hourly rate, every minute I spend on the road is money lost. The proposed toll Express Lanes concern me. Although these Lanes are advertised as improving overall traffic congestion without negatively impacting travel speeds in the HOV lanes, there is reason to doubt those claims. In other areas after millions of dollars were spent to institute express lanes, traffic improved only over the short-term. By five years out, congestion had returned to previous levels. Furthermore, after introducing the Express Lanes in the Bay Area on the I-680 corridor in 2010, the speed of traffic in the HOV lanes was found to actually decrease.</p> <p><a href="https://usa.streetsblog.org/2016/09/27/the-mythology-of-hot-lanes/">https://usa.streetsblog.org/2016/09/27/the-mythology-of-hot-lanes/</a></p> <p>Besides this, keeping these lanes reserved for toll-paying drivers during all daylight hours (5am - 8pm) rather than just at heavy commute times will serve to unnecessarily clump vehicles together into the open lanes, creating more congestion at a time when traffic should be able to flow freely.</p> <p>I'm all for improving the flow of traffic, but have serious concerns that the toll Express Lanes will not do so after a few years, may have negative impact on travel speeds in the existing HOV lanes, and will cause unnecessary headaches and congestion during non-commute times, all at great expense to taxpayers. As an essential worker at a job providing a necessary service to the community, I fear I will be penalized by the conversion to express lanes, despite having no option to carpool.</p> <p>Thank you for opening this issue up to public comments.</p>								x	x			GP Lane Impacts	
10	8/28/2020	<p>Not SO SURE these are helping everyone on the freeway. And charging to use express lanes is just a money maker for the top and rich. We already vote for money projects for the freeways/roads...and all the time you are getting funds from whomever can afford to use the charge for express lanes. Disappointed with all of this...have been for a while...just does not seem best for "all". But then again America has shown, more during the pandemic that the Top are always covered for most services in our country. Tax them more to help over all...tax appropriate to income made.Best of luck and health to all.</p>											x	x	
11	8/28/2020	<p>I want to know when the first meeting is to discuss turning most of the highway lanes into toll roads as I want to voice my opinion against it. This is just another way to drive low income people out of the bay area. I am from back east and the poor suffer the most when it comes to toll lanes and high gas taxes. The rich don't care but to someone just getting by it's just another kick in the gut.</p>											x		All-Lane Tolling

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12	8/28/2020	Dear Bay Area Metro Staff; Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Express Lane Toll Policies. The issues are manifold; • Our Express Lanes stand out as enlist in stark contrast to the concept of public transportation. I find it unusual that we have underfunded BART since it's inception, yet are willing to upend public finance to provide an avenue to those with means; with all the technology to enable it. So, automobile commuting works for those who can pay for it. • The MTC, in sponsorship of Plan Bay Area 2050, proposes that one overarching distinction in our infrastructure going forward should be sustainability. From every angle, enabling the continuity of automobile commuting is not sustainable for the vast majority of us, especially if we strive for livable cities. Even Express Lanes cannot accomplish the task of putting 10 pounds of sugar in a 5 pound bag. From a planning standpoint; I believe our task is to remove vehicles from the commute, not enable them. We can shorten our work days, improve our health, retain more if our earnings, improve our families; and build in areas currently dedicated to parking if we focus on better alternatives for public transportation, decentralization of employment and communities. I embrace long range, sustainable, attainable alternatives to automobile commuting.											x		Public Transportation; Environmental Concern
13	8/31/2020	I have driven the south bound express lane on several occasions and find the number of lane monitoring fast track reader/ camera locations to be insufficient to deter lane cheaters. The double lines through several areas stretches need some signage that entering and exiting in these areas in not permitted. I have seen several cars cross over the double lines to exit the freeway. The express lane passing under highway 4 crossover do not seem safe as the lane jogs and is very narrow					x								Signage; Geometric Design
14	9/7/2020	Dear Gentlepersons:Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed tolling for the Express Lanes on Southbound Interstate 680 from Martinez to Walnut Creek.I strongly disagree with a minimum charge for use of the Express Lanes.As I understand, the majority of the Express Lane in this corridor are former High Occupancy Vehicle/Carpool Lanes (HOV). These HOV lanes had specific hours when access was limited, generally during either the morning or evening commute hours.To convert those lanes to require a fee to use outside of the original HOV lanes, I believe does a disservice to those who are less financially secure and should be considered a violation of any environmental justice social equity program.Fees on converted HOV lanes should only be charged during those hours that the converted HOV lane used to operate under.Further, why should there be a minimum fee to use the Express Lane if the usage of the overall freeway is less than 50% of capacity?I would like to know why does this definition include this section of the California Vehicle Code, "Authorized emergency vehicle" means a vehicle satisfying all of the conditions specified in Vehicle Code section 21655.5?"								x		x			

<b>SUBOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>PERCENT (OF COMMENTS)</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>64%</b>
<b>TOTAL COMMENTS REC'D</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>