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Frequently Asked Questions
About BATA's 2026 Toll Increase and HOV Policy Change
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BATA Bridge 2026 Toll Increase

1. What is BATA?

The Bay Area Toll Authority was created by the California Legislature in 1997 to administer the base toll revenue generated by the Bay Area's seven state-owned toll bridges. BATA has the same governing board as the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the transportation planning, financing and coordinating agency for the nine-county region. BATA now manages all toll revenue on the state-owned bridges as well as the Bay Area's FasTrak® electronic toll collection program.

BATA collects toll funds and uses that money to fund major projects that support bridges, highways and the Bay Area transit network. BATA also funds voter-approved projects (Regional Measure 1, Regional Measure 2 and Regional Measure 3), including highway and transit improvements, reducing congestion and more.

2. What is Caltrans' role in toll bridge operations?

BATA works in partnership with Caltrans, which owns and operates the California state highway system, including all seven of the Bay Area's state-owned toll bridges, but BATA is responsible for toll collection.

3. Why are tolls being raised on the state-owned bridges? *(San Francisco-Oakland Bay, Antioch, Benicia-Martinez, Carquinez, Dumbarton, Richmond-San Rafael and San Mateo-Hayward bridges)?*

BATA is required under state law to fund projects to preserve and protect bridge structures. BATA is collecting over $200 million less toll revenue each year than was expected pre-COVID. This drop in revenue directly impacts funding available to maintain the bridges in a state of good repair.

- Tolls eligible for on-bridge use have not increased since 2010. Due to inflation, the purchasing power of these dollars has dropped by about one-third.
- Construction costs have increased 30% to 40% since 2020.
- Construction costs likely will continue to rise faster than inflation, making it harder each year to "catch up."

4. How is my current $8 toll spent?
The current $8 toll is spent on bridge, highway and transit projects around the Bay Area: After covering administration and toll collection costs, each dollar is spent as follows:

- First Dollar: bridge operations and maintenance, Regional Measure 1 projects, transit capital and transit operations
- Second Dollar: toll bridge seismic retrofit work
- Third Dollar: Regional Measure 2 investments
- Fourth Dollar: toll bridge seismic retrofit work
- Fifth Dollar: toll bridge seismic retrofit work
- Sixth Dollar: Regional Measure 3 investments
- Seventh Dollar: Regional Measure 3 investments
- Eighth Dollar: Regional Measure 3 investments

5. How much of my toll goes towards bridge maintenance?
Since 2010, $4 of the $8 toll is available for on-bridge purposes — worth $2.80 today.

6. What will happen if tolls are not raised?
BATA is now borrowing to fund bridge preservation ($360 million in 2021; $200 million in 2024) to ensure the bridges remain in good condition, but borrowing to fund bridge preservation is expensive and interest expenses will ultimately require a toll increase. As an example, if BATA borrowed $600 million in projects over the next five years, it would result in approximately $690 million in interest costs down the road, more than doubling the cost.

7. What is the approved toll increase?
The toll increase will be phased in over five years (similar to how the Golden Gate Bridge has approached toll increases) to avoid a larger increase in a single year. Specific toll rate changes include:

- Tolls for all regular two-axle cars and trucks will rise by 50 cents per year for five years, with the first increase taking effect Jan. 1, 2026. This will be followed by 50-cent hikes each year through January 2030.
- For larger commercial trucks and other vehicles with three or more axles, tolls will increase by 50 cents per axle each year, beginning Jan. 1, 2026, and continuing through Jan. 1, 2030.
- To encourage electronic toll payment with FasTrak tags and to help recoup the increased costs of collecting tolls via license plate accounts and invoices, tolls on Jan. 1, 2027 will rise by another 25 cents for customers who pay with a pre-registered license plate account and by $1 for tolls paid by invoice.

8. Why are different toll amounts planned for FasTrak customers, pre-registered license plate accounts, and customers who pay by invoice?
The tiered rate structure helps to recoup the increased cost of collecting tolls via license plate accounts or invoicing compared with collecting tolls via FasTrak transponder. The tiered rates will establish a premium for using a pre-registered license plate account or for invoiced tolling. To give customers ample time to sign up for FasTrak, this premium will not begin until 2027.

9. How do I get FasTrak?
Customers may sign up for and order **a FasTrak tag** online at bayareafastrak.org; by phone (toll free) at 877-229-8655; by printing out the FasTrak application form and mailing it to the FasTrak Customer Service Center, P.O. Box 26926, San Francisco, CA 94126; or in person at the FasTrak Customer Service Center at 375 Beale Street in San Francisco. Customers can also obtain a FasTrak tag at a Northern California Costco membership warehouse and select Walgreens locations.

10. Why did cash toll collection end?
Cash toll collectors were removed at the start of the pandemic to protect the health and safety of the toll collectors. In 2021, the toll system was upgraded to all-electronic tolling.

FasTrak currently accounts for 74% of toll payment transactions.

High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Policy

1. What changes will occur for the high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes (carpool lanes) at the BATA Bridge Toll Plazas?
BATA's existing toll schedule allows vehicles with three or more occupants (HOV 3+) a discounted toll (half-price), with a two-person (HOV 2+) occupancy requirement for the discounted toll at the Dumbarton and San Mateo-Hayward bridges. To provide regional consistency and to support the future deployment of open-road tolling at the state-owned bridges, a uniform three-person occupancy requirement will be implemented for the discounted toll during weekday commute periods at all seven bridges. The discounted toll rate is available weekdays from 5 to 10 a.m. and from 3 to 7 p.m.

The policy changes will also allow vehicles with two occupants to use the carpool lanes on the approaches to the Antioch, Benicia-Martinez, Carquinez, Dumbarton, Richmond-San Rafael and San Mateo-Hayward bridges. These two-occupant vehicles will not receive the discounted toll but will be able to use the carpool lanes to save time traveling through the toll plazas. No changes will occur at the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, where volumes of vehicles with three or more occupants are much higher than those at other bridges. Use of the carpool lanes on approaches to the Bay Bridge still will require a minimum of three occupants.

In addition to establishing region-wide consistency for the carpool toll discount, the policy changes are designed to:

- Improve safety on the toll bridge approaches by minimizing “weaving” between lanes.
- Optimize lane configurations as now-obsolete toll booths are removed as part of the bridges’ transition to open-road tolling.
- Increase person-throughput by prioritizing access for buses and carpools.

2. Do the bridges have capacity to allow vehicles with two occupants in the carpool lanes?
Existing traffic counts from the toll plazas show that all but the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge have capacity in the carpool lanes to accommodate vehicles with two or more occupants, including during peak hours.

3. Why is the HOV policy not being implemented at the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge?
Carpool lanes approaching the Bay Bridge are well utilized and are congested even during the peak hours. Allowing two-occupant vehicles to access the carpool lanes would degrade the lanes’ performance, increasing both congestion and travel times. Carpool lanes on the approaches to other bridges can accommodate additional vehicles.

4. Why is the discount for vehicles with two occupants at the Dumbarton and San Mateo-Hayward bridges being removed?
Making carpool policies more consistent throughout the Bay Area will help drivers remember the rules and assist the California Highway Patrol with HOV enforcement. Under the policy changes, vehicles with two occupants will still be able to use the carpool lanes and benefit from the travel time savings.

5. Why are vehicles with two occupants allowed to use the carpool lane if they don’t get a discount?
This policy is designed to encourage carpooling by rewarding two-occupant vehicles with the travel time savings available in the carpool lanes. Also, on the westbound approach to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, not allowing vehicles with two occupants would reduce the operational efficiencies of a new carpool lane that will be established as part of the upcoming Richmond-San Rafael Forward project and would negatively impact the general-purpose lanes.