

Carsie Bonner

From: Bruce Beyaert <baytrailtrac@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 5, 2024 8:39 AM
To: Federal Glover; Margaret.abe-koga@mountainview.gov; Cindy Chavez; vfleming@srcity.org; bosdist4@acgov.org; Gina Papan; Hillary Ronen; officeofthemayor@oaklandca.gov; Dina El-Tawansy; Dina El-Nakhal
Cc: Andrew Fremier; Lisa Klein; Carsie Bonner; Bruce Brubaker
Subject: BATA Oversight Agenda Item 3.a. RSR Bridge
Attachments: RESOLUTION in support of the RSR Bridge Trail043024.pdf; Richmond-San Rafael Bridge path coalition letter.pdf; SFBT BoardReso0402624.pdf

External Email

Chair Glover and Commissioners,

The staff proposal to shut down the [Richmond San Rafael \(RSR\) Bridge Trail](#) four days/week has provoked an unprecedented wave of opposition, including the attached:

- resolution of the Richmond City Council,
- letter signed by 68 local, regional and national organizations and
- resolution of the San Francisco Bay Trail Project Board of Directors.

This email briefly summarizes the importance of the trail, the lack of justification for closing it and an alternative to shutting down this important regional trail four days/week to provide a breakdown lane for cars.

Importance of the Trail:

The RSR Bridge Trail is a key section of the multi-use San Francisco Bay Trail linking the East Bay and North Bay. Bicyclists and pedestrians have enjoyed 380,000 trips across the bridge for transportation and recreation since it opened in November 2019. Of BATA's five bridges, it is the most heavily used by cyclists.

The trail enables healthy, active transportation to recreational sites, as well as to places of employment. North Bay residents have access to 36 miles of San Francisco Bay Trail in Richmond linking a necklace of 12 local, regional, state & national parks, as well as the Point Richmond Historic District with its many dining options. East Bay residents have access to the scenic Bay Trail running the length of Starkweather Shoreline Park in San Rafael, China Camp State Park, Marin Country Mart & more.

Keeping this key section of the San Francisco Bay Trail open 365 days/year is necessary for consistency with Plan Bay Area, the San Francisco Bay Trail Plan, BCDC's Bay Plan, Caltrans Complete Streets Director's Policy DP-37 and Executive Order N-19-19, signed by Governor Newsom to accelerate climate action on transportation as detailed in the attached resolution of the San Francisco Bay Trail Project Board of Directors.

Lack of Justification for Closing the Trail:

The May 2 BATA/MTC/Caltrans "Report on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Access Improvement Pilot Project" contains no compelling justification for such a drastic move as closing the regional San Francisco Bay Trail four days/week for a year or more. It contains only broad generalizations such as "suggests there is more to learn about the impact on bridge operations of not having an emergency shoulder during the congested peak period". However, no program is presented for gathering data to satisfy the desire for "more to learn".

Existing data should be analyzed and information presented on the number, types and duration of incidents on the upper deck of the bridge where traffic flows relatively smoothly on two lanes versus the westbound approaches where motorists deal with three lanes expanding to seven and back down to two. Where are the side-swipe and rear-ender collisions occurring and what will be the effect the RSR Forward conversion to Open Road Tolling?

The report states on page 7 a "relatively small number of incidents that have occurred on the upper deck of the bridge since 2016". Thus, there is only at most only a "small" justification for going back to a breakdown lane at the cost of losing a key section of Bay Trail. Existing Caltrans Freeway Patrol logs need to be reviewed and analyzed to provide data about incidents. We've been told that these logs have been "hard to get". They should be "got" and analyzed before doing anything so disruptive and radical as shutting down this key section of the San Francisco Bay Trail.

An Alternative Path Forward:

Please defer decision-making on changes to the RSR Bridge Trail (other than improvements) until after late 2025 when Open Road Tolling and the extended HOV lane are operating on the approaches to the bridge where congestion now occurs. This will be the new norm and baseline for I-580 westbound on both the approaches to and across the bridge. BATA and Caltrans also will be better informed at this time via the Westbound Upper Deck DAA and evaluation of bridge structural strengthening needs associated with a moveable barrier. These improvements and studies will provide a sound basis for decision-making. Shutting down the RSR Bridge Trail now would be precipitous, unjustified and the antithesis of BCDC's mission to provide "maximum feasible access" to the shoreline of San Francisco Bay.

Bruce

Bruce Beyaert, Chair of TRAC ,Trails for Richmond Action Committee
baytrailtrac@gmail.com
tel. 510-235-2835
<http://www.pointrichmond.com/baytrail/>
<http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/109/TRAC>

**RESOLUTION Affirming Richmond's Support for the Richmond San Rafael Bridge Trail
CITY OF RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA**

WHEREAS, the City of Richmond is proud to promote connections between communities via the Richmond San Rafael Bridge; and,

WHEREAS, the council recognizes that the Richmond San Rafael Bridge Trail is a keystone section of the 500-mile regional San Francisco Bay Trail linking the East Bay and North Bay; and,

WHEREAS, the Council by unanimous vote adopted resolution 94-99 stating "that the City of Richmond endorses the Bay Trail Plan"; and,

WHEREAS, the Council recognizes that active transportation allows people to be physically active in everyday life by enabling them to walk, bike or roll to their destinations; and,

WHEREAS, the Council recognizes that an increase in the number of vehicle miles driven to and on the bridge increases pollution affecting our communities; 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 Richmond San Rafael Bridge Trail will provide access to the Point Molate Bay Trail to be built this year along the shoreline from the bridge to Point Molate Beach Park and past the Winehaven Historic District; and

WHEREAS, the Richmond City Council recognizes that a closure of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Trail would cause individuals who currently rely on this trail to drive for more trips, and if they don't have access to a car they could be left with no other options; and,

WHEREAS, the Richmond City Council recognizes that improvements to reduce traffic on the bridge can be achieved via sustainable alternatives including improved public transit as well as increased housing availability and affordability; and,

WHEREAS, the Richmond City Council recognizes that access to transportation is a human right and reliable mobility options for those unable to afford or drive a car, should be available;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Richmond, on April 30, 2024, does hereby support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week access to the Richmond San Rafael Bridge Trail for pedestrians and bicyclists.



El Cerrito/Richmond Annex
WALK & ROLL



SAN LEANDRO 2050

SAVE THE BAY OuterSpatial

TRANSBAY COALITION



FFBC

May 1, 2024

Re: Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Public Pathway Pilot Project

Dear San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission Members:

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to reject the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Caltrans staff's BCDC permit amendment request to close the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Trail all day every Monday through Thursday, for conversion to a car breakdown shoulder. Please join us in supporting permanent, 24/7 access for all between the East Bay and the North Bay by keeping this pathway open.

The opening of this multi-use trail in November 2019 was a joyous occasion, marking the culmination of decades of advocacy, and completing a critical 6-mile link in the Bay Trail between Contra Costa and Marin counties. Since then more than 377,000 biking, walking, and rolling trips have been made on the pathway for exercise, recreation, commuting, socializing, and more.

Report data on the four year pathway pilot project, shared by the Bay Area Toll Authority to the Contra Contra Transportation Authority at their December 2023 meeting, showed that as of Fall 2022 there was no increase in westbound car congestion compared to prior conditions in 2019. The report stated that the duration of the morning commute congestion was on average 30 minutes shorter in 2022 than 2019, with car traffic at 90% of pre-pandemic levels.

With regard to traffic safety the draft report showed that the number of crashes decreased slightly after the pathway was installed compared to before. Incident response times increased by 1.3 minutes on average, while the duration of incident impacts on bridge traffic went down by 2.5 minutes on average.

The draft report also showed that the pathway did not negatively affect air quality, which is primarily impacted by vehicle miles traveled, not by traffic congestion. Road dust, tire wear, and brake wear make up 83% of PM2.5 emissions from vehicles, compared to running exhaust which makes up 17%.

We recognize the hardships imposed on individuals from bridge congestion, many of whom are forced to drive great distances to access employment in the North Bay due to a lack of workforce housing options and robust public transit. Some mitigations to the congestion issues are already in the works at the main pinch-points including the toll plaza, the Richmond Parkway interchange, and the 580/101 interchange.

We also recognize hardships imposed on those who rely on public transit, but are currently only provided with a single bus line across the bridge with headways between buses of up to an hour, and no service after 10pm. And we recognize hardships on those who rely on bicycles, ebikes, and other devices who will have no crossing option at all if the pathway is closed.

Equitable and sustainable solutions to the bridge congestion issues involve addressing land use and housing affordability imbalances so as to not force people into arduously long commutes in the first place, and to significantly increase public transit service on the corridor to move more people without harmful increases in vehicle miles traveled. Closing the pathway for a breakdown shoulder as currently proposed, or for a third westbound car lane, will not contribute toward progress on these underlying causes.

Keeping the pathway open is in alignment with numerous adopted plans and policies on the regional and state level including the San Francisco Bay Trail Plan, the Plan Bay Area regional transportation plan and sustainable communities strategy, the Plan Bay Area 2050 transportation strategy, BCDC's Bay Plan Transportation Policy No. 4, the Caltrans Complete Streets Directors Policy DP-37, and Executive Order N-19-19 signed by Governor Newsom.

We appreciate and share BCDC's goals of increased equity, climate resilience, and access to the Bay shoreline, and we look forward to continuing to work together on real solutions to these issues.

Sincerely,

Robert Prinz
Advocacy Director
Bike East Bay

Najari Smith
Executive Director
Rich City Rides

Abigail Montejo
Friends of the Richmond Greenway (FORG)

Kendra Ramsey
Executive Director
California Bicycle Coalition

Ken McLeod
Policy Director
The League of American Bicyclists

Doria Robinson
Executive Director
Urban Tilth

Dani Lanis
Chair
Richmond BPAC

Eris Weaver
Executive Director
Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition

Christopher White
Interim Executive Director
San Francisco Bicycle Coalition

Coordinating Committee
El Cerrito / Richmond Annex Walk & Roll

Preston Jordan & Nick Pilch
Co-Founders
Albany Strollers & Rollers

Cyndy Johnsen
Board Member
Bike Walk Alameda

Michael C. Williams
Trails Program Manager
Hayward Area Recreation and Park District

Jeff Lyon
Bike Orinda

Warren Wells
Policy & Planning Director
Marin County Bicycle Coalition

Bruce Beyaert
Chair
Trails for Richmond Action Committee

Jesse Voremberg
Trail Development Manager
Rails to Trails Conservancy

Joshua F
President
National Youth Bike Council

Dave Snyder
Senior Director of Infrastructure
PeopleForBikes

Toody Maher
Executive Director
Pogo Park

Emily Seelenfreund
Executive Director
BORP Adaptive Sports and Recreation

Kara Vernor
Executive Director
Napa County Bicycle Coalition

Clarrissa Cabansagan
Executive Director
Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition

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Board President
Walk Oakland Bike Oakland

Andreas Kadavanich
Co-Organizer
Bike Fremont

Alejandro Ramirez Jasso
President
Bike Hayward

Kristin Tennessen
Bike Walnut Creek

JoAnne Lauer, Bruce Dughi
Co-Founders
Bike Walk Castro Valley

Kristi Marleau
Bike Dublin

Colleen Barclay & Pete Gang
Safe Streets Petaluma

Walter Niederberger
Move! Healdsburg

Dave Rhoads
Co-Chair
Walk/Bike San Rafael

Alexa Forrester
Co-Lead
Bikeable Santa Rosa

Nick Hoeper-Tomich & Elise Fortin
Head Coach & Team Director
Berkeley High Mountain Bike Team

Joe Grondahl
Head Coach
El Cerrito High School Mountain Bike Team

Liz Kroboth
President
Grizzly Peak Cyclists

Scott Bartlebaugh
Advocacy Director
Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay

Maya Wolf
President
Berkeley Bicycle Club

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Knackered Tyres bicycle club

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Transform

Bryan Culbertson
Traffic Violence Rapid Response

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President
Families Advocating for Chemical and Toxics Safety

Carleen Culled
Executive Director
Cool the Earth

Laura Lent
El Cerrito Trail Trekkers

Michael Gustafson
Valley Spokesmen

Sonoma County Climate Activist Network
(SoSoCAN)

Eric Aaholm
Executive Director

David Lewis
Executive Director

YES Nature to Neighborhoods

Juliana Gonzalez
Executive Director
The Watershed Project

Sarka Volejnikova
Parks for People Program Director
Trust for Public Land

Pam Stello
Co-Chair, Point Molate Alliance
Point Molate Alliance

Dan Cohen
President
Full Court Press Communications

Save The Bay

Jon Spangler
Chair
BART Bicycle Advisory Task Force

Zoe Siegel
Senior Director of Climate Resilience
Greenbelt Alliance

Nora Vargas-Dye
Collaborator
California Field School

Anna Thiel
Bad Business Model Bikes

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.

ADOPTED: April 26, 2024 with 9 Ayes, 0 Nays and 5 Abstentions

Carsie Bonner

From: Carrie Hobbs [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 26, 2024 10:40 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info
Subject: 5/8 Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee: Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Path

You don't often get email from carrienews@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

External Email

Hello,

I'm saddened to hear that you are considering closing the bike lanes on the Richmond Bridge. We are in a climate crisis. We should be doing everything we can to encourage people not to drive, not taking away bicycle routes.

The Richmond Bridge provides the only active transportation route between the east and north bay. This is especially critical during commute hours when people frequently and regularly travel long distances. Taking away the ability for people to do their commutes by bicycle is moving backwards.

I realize that there are more people using car lanes than bike lanes, but we are not talking about taking away the ability for people to drive. We also know that there is not a significant increase in pollution from people sitting in traffic. What does cause a significant amount of pollution is each person you force to drive because you have taken away the bike lanes.

Thank you for doing everything you can to improve our communities and our planet. Thank you for making the Richmond Bridge bike lanes permanent.

Thanks,
Carrie Schulman
[REDACTED]

Carsie Bonner

From: Eris Weaver <eris@bikesonoma.org>
Sent: Tuesday, May 7, 2024 1:35 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info
Subject: Public Comment - 5/8/24 BATA Oversight Committee - Item 3a
Attachments: BATA comment on RSR Bridge.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

You don't often get email from eris@bikesonoma.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

External Email

Dear Oversight Committee Members:

The Richmond-San Rafael Bridge bike path is an important active transportation connection between the North Bay and the East Bay. I've ridden it several times for both work and leisure, sometimes combining it with a SMART train ride. The trip is not much longer than driving during rush hour, but is far more pleasant – and it's satisfying to know that I'm contributing to climate change!

There currently aren't reasonable alternatives to cross from the North to the East Bay without a car – buses across the bridge are few and far between.

Last year, opponents of the pathway claimed that it was increasing pollution and should be turned into another motor vehicle lane. When that didn't work, they turned to the current proposal: to make it a breakdown lane during the week and only allow cyclists and pedestrians to use it on weekends.

Research has shown over and over that adding lanes does not reduce congestion. The only thing that reduces congestion (too many cars) is to get people OUT of their cars by making other forms of transportation safer and more convenient. Caltrans and MTC have both adopted Complete Streets policies, which mandate consideration for ALL road users. Reducing bicycle and pedestrian access to the bridge completely contradicts your own policies.

If we're to ever meet our climate goals, we HAVE to stop this autocratic nonsense!

On behalf of the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition, I urge you to make the pathway permanent.

Thank you for your consideration.





Eris Weaver, Executive Director
Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition
eris@bikesonoma.org
707-545-0153 office • 707-338-8589 cell
www.bikesonoma.org
[Book time to meet with me](#)



I'm riding 120 miles to raise money
for SCBC – [DONATE HERE](#)



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May 7, 2024

Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee

Bay Area Metro Center

375 Beale Street, Suite 800

San Francisco, CA 94105-2066

Dear Oversight Committee Members:

The Richmond-San Rafael Bridge bike path is an important active transportation connection between the North Bay and the East Bay. I've ridden it several times for both work and leisure, sometimes combining it with a SMART train ride. The trip is not much longer than driving during rush hour, but is far more pleasant – and it's satisfying to know that I'm contributing to climate change!

There currently aren't reasonable alternatives to cross from the North to the East Bay without a car – buses across the bridge are few and far between.

Last year, opponents of the pathway claimed that it was increasing pollution and should be turned into another motor vehicle lane. When that didn't work, they turned to the current proposal: to make it a breakdown lane during the week and only allow cyclists and pedestrians to use it on weekends.

Research has shown over and over that adding lanes does not reduce congestion. The only thing that reduces congestion (too many cars) is to get people OUT of their cars by making other forms of transportation safer and more convenient. Caltrans and MTC have both adopted Complete Streets policies, which mandate consideration for ALL road users. Reducing bicycle and pedestrian access to the bridge completely contradicts your own policies.

If we're to ever meet our climate goals, we HAVE to stop this autocratic nonsense!

On behalf of the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition, I urge you to make the pathway permanent.

Thank you for your consideration.

Eris Weaver

Eris Weaver, Executive Director

Carsie Bonner

From: Jon Spangler <goldcoastjon@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 6, 2024 7:55 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info
Cc: Jeremiah Maller; Tyler Morris; Bill Pinkham; Cedar Makhijani; Estrella Sainburg; Francisco Muñoz; Marc Hedlund; Maya Chaffee; Phoenix Mangrum; Rick Goldman; Heath Maddox; Warren Wells AICP; Robert Prinz; Dani Lanis
Subject: BATA Oversight Committee Meeting, May 8, 2024: Public Comment on Item 3a (RSR Bridge Path Changes)
Attachments: 2024-05-06_SIGNED BBATF-BATA RSR PATH LETTER SENT.pdf

You don't often get email from goldcoastjon@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

External Email

Chairman Glover, Vice-chair Abe-Koga, and Members of the Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee,

Attached below, in PDF, is the signed letter from the BART Bicycle Advisory Task Force (BBATF) in opposition to the proposed reduction in public access to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Multi-use Path under Item 3a-i on your May 8 agenda.

I intend to make separate and additional comments representing our position during public comment at the meeting on Wednesday.

Please call or text me at 510-846-5356 if you encounter any problems with the attachment.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Spangler
Chair, BART Bicycle Advisory Task Force (BBATF)
League Cycling Instructor #3175
CEL 510-846-5356
goldcoastjon@gmail.com
www.LindaHudsonWriting.net
www.linkedin.com/in/jonmspangler

BART Bicycle Advisory Task Force

May 6, 2024

TO: Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee (BATA)
Metro Center
375 Beale Street, Board Room
San Francisco, CA 94105

FROM: BART Bicycle Advisory Task Force

RE: Proposed Closure of Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Bicycle Path Is Unjustified
(MTC BATA Oversight Committee, May 8, Item 3)

The Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA) and Metropolitan Transportation Committee (MTC) propose to replace the multi-use path on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge (RSR Bridge) with a westbound breakdown lane/shoulder every week from Monday through Thursday. This will leave people who walk or ride bicycles without a safe and direct path of travel between Marin County and the East Bay for four work days every week. **The BART Bicycle Advisory Task Force (BBATF) strongly opposes this proposal. Instead, the BBATF urges the BATA Oversight Committee to support a permanent RSR Bridge multi-use path that is open all day, every day (24/7/365) to walkers, bicyclists, and others. There are better ways to reduce traffic congestion and auto collisions.**

The proposal is inappropriate and seems premature, considering that:

- 1) The final evaluation of the four-year pilot project will not even be available until late May;
- 2) The two-way bike-pedestrian path and associated bridge changes have not significantly affected traffic congestion, collision rates, or incident-related delays (Phase 1 After Study) and there is no proof that the changes made to the bridge actually increased collision rates;
- 3) Bicyclists and pedestrians combined made 368,206 trips (326,902 were by bike) across the RSR Bridge since the path opened in 2019. About half of all bicycle and pedestrian trips occurred on weekdays, per My Sidewalk: <https://reports.mysidewalk.com/3374a0ca74>;
- 4) Restricting sustainable commute options such as walking and bicycling will drastically reduce carbon-free weekday transportation options across the bridge, increasing both automotive pollution and greenhouse gas production;
- 5) Closing the bike-ped path appears to violate Bay Conservation and Development (BCDC) Transportation Policies 1 and 4 as well as Public Access Policies 2, 5, and 8;
- 6) Marin County needs to build its fair share of affordable, multi-family workforce housing so its restaurant workers, firefighters, teachers, and nurses can have shorter commutes.

Acting to restrict path access — especially before the final evaluation report is available — runs counter to MTC's goals and policies to reduce traffic congestion and foster green, carbon-free, and equitable transportation and housing solutions. Alleviating the long-term shortage of affordable and multi-family housing in Marin County is a far better — and much more sustainable — solution to westbound morning traffic congestion in the long run.

Ample evidence shows that driver behavior — especially increases in driver aggression and collision rates — has changed since the COVID epidemic. Because of this, BATA and MTC should not ascribe the increase in bridge and approach collision rates solely to the opening of the multi-use path in late 2019. Without further research into post-COVID driver behavior changes as a concurrent cause of rising collision rates, **attributing the increase in collisions on and near the RSR Bridge to only the physical changes made to the bridge before the COVID epidemic is not justified.**

Furthermore, MTC's apparent rush to close the multi-use path during the work week seems to be driven by vocal claims from motorists and business groups — claims that are, overall, not supported by the available traffic data on the Pilot Project. In any case, **building more affordable housing in Marin County is a far better way to reduce commute times.**

Bicyclists, pedestrians, and users of e-bikes, scooters, wheelchairs, and other mobility devices need and deserve the access to San Francisco Bay and the connectivity offered by the RSR Bridge multi-use path. The path should be permanently open to everyone who relies on sustainable transportation and remain accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Please support sustainable Bay access and the RSR Bridge's direct connection between Marin County, the East Bay, and BART for everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Jon Spangler, Chair

BART Bicycle Advisory Task Force

<https://www.bart.gov/about/bod/advisory/bicycle>

510-846-5356 mobile

goldcoastjon@gmail.com

Carsie Bonner

From: Lee V Larsen [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, May 7, 2024 9:15 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info
Subject: Public Comment - 5/8/24 BATA Oversight Committee - Item 3a

You don't often get email from leevlarsen@aol.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

External Email

Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee:

I am writing to oppose the proposal to modify the upper deck pilot on the Richmond San Rafael Bridge. I ride the bike/ped path for social and medical appointments in lieu of driving my car and treasure this access to the bay! Please do not proceed to convert this valuable bike/ped path for use as a shoulder 4 days a week.

Thank you for your consideration.

--Lee Larsen

Carsie Bonner

From: Robert Prinz <robert@bikeeastbay.org>
Sent: Monday, May 6, 2024 1:37 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info
Subject: 5/8/2024 Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee - Bike East Bay public comment
Attachments: Richmond-San Rafael Bridge path coalition letter.pdf

You don't often get email from robert@bikeeastbay.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

External Email

Hello,

Please accept this public comment from Bike East Bay to the Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee for their May 8, 2024, meeting, agenda item 3a. 24-0354 "Richmond-San Rafael Bridge: i. Richmond-San Rafael (RSR) Bridge Pilot Project Recommendations".

Attached to this email is a coalition letter previously submitted to the BCDC for their May 1st meeting, in support of keeping the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Trail open 24/7, and in opposition to a proposal to convert it to a car breakdown shoulder all day every Monday through Thursday.

This letter has been co-signed by 68 individual active transportation, environmental, and sustainability organizations on the local, state, and national levels. Between them, these organizations represent 10s of thousands and possibly 100s of thousands of Bay Area residents.

For the May 1st BCDC meeting a total of around 265 written comments were submitted by individuals in support of keeping the bridge trail open 24/7 versus around 190 in support of converting the lane (although most of those letters were about converting the path to a third car travel lane, which is not currently on the table). All 15 of the in-person comments made at the meeting were in support of keeping the bridge trail open 24/7, as were all but 5 of the several dozen virtual comments made via Zoom.

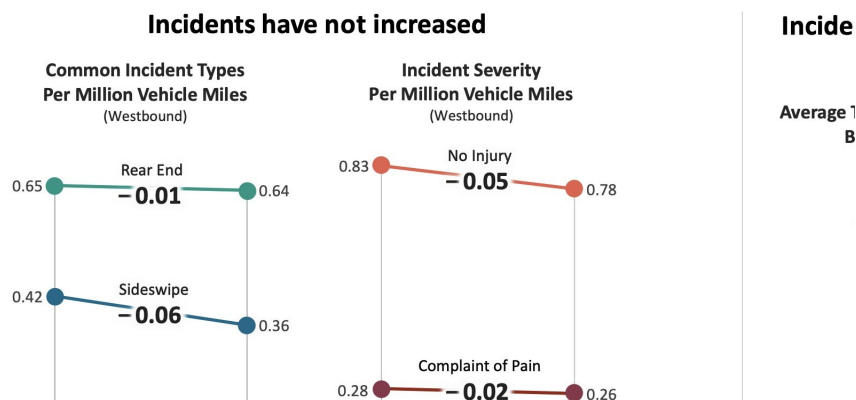
Instead of restricting access to the bridge path, we support alternate experiments to help address traffic issues including:

- **Bridge congestion pricing** in the form of an off-peak toll discount, to help encourage drivers with flexibility to commute at less busy hours.
- **Public transit service increases** - The Line 580 bus currently has headways up to an hour, and no service after 10pm - This low level of service makes it much harder for individuals to rely on transit as a primary commute mode.
- **E-bike share expansion to San Rafael** - After Richmond's bike share operator went out of business, the city rescued the bikes from a warehouse and restarted it themselves - Expanding this service to Marin County in conjunction with a Line 580 service increase would help make a combined bus + bike multimodal commute feasible for more people.

MTC has 37 years of experience operating the bridge with a breakdown shoulder, from 1982 to 2019, so the justification that they now need to close the trail in order to understand how the bridge operates with a shoulder is invalid. The staff report's suggestion that vehicle crashes are impacting traffic now more than prior to the trail installation is also invalid, as their data shows the number of crashes is down, and real impact should be measured by the number of incidents not the rate.

Data reported by MTC staff to the Contra Costa Transportation Authority in December 2023 also showed that the full duration of incident impacts went down by 2.5 minutes on average. But this detail was left out of the staff report to BATA, which only refers to incident response times but not total duration (eg impact on traffic congestion).

Comparable Incident & Safety Respo



But ultimately the bridge congestion issues are a function of increasing land use and affordability imbalances between Marin and the East Bay, resulting in commuters forced to drive ever farther to reach employment opportunities in Marin.

A recent Marin IJ article (<https://www.marinij.com/2024/05/02/californias-great-exodus-finally-slows-as-population-increases-after-3-year-decline/>) detailed how Marin County population has dropped while Contra Costa County population has seen the largest growth in the Bay Area. At the same time, Contra Costa is seeing the largest percentage of "extreme commuters" travelling an hour or more to reach their jobs every day (<https://eltecolote.org/content/en/extreme-commutes-sf-bay-area/>).

Attempting to "fix" these congestion issues via car capacity increases will only result in more sprawl and more pollution. Instead, the sustainable focus needs to be on how to move more people without adding to vehicle miles travelled, and by eliminating more arduous transbay commutes altogether by requiring workforce housing and land use changes in Marin County.

Thank you for receiving these comments,



Robert Prinz | Advocacy Director

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FFBC

May 1, 2024

Re: Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Public Pathway Pilot Project

Dear San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission Members:

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to reject the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Caltrans staff's BCDC permit amendment request to close the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Trail all day every Monday through Thursday, for conversion to a car breakdown shoulder. Please join us in supporting permanent, 24/7 access for all between the East Bay and the North Bay by keeping this pathway open.

The opening of this multi-use trail in November 2019 was a joyous occasion, marking the culmination of decades of advocacy, and completing a critical 6-mile link in the Bay Trail between Contra Costa and Marin counties. Since then more than 377,000 biking, walking, and rolling trips have been made on the pathway for exercise, recreation, commuting, socializing, and more.

Report data on the four year pathway pilot project, shared by the Bay Area Toll Authority to the Contra Contra Transportation Authority at their December 2023 meeting, showed that as of Fall 2022 there was no increase in westbound car congestion compared to prior conditions in 2019. The report stated that the duration of the morning commute congestion was on average 30 minutes shorter in 2022 than 2019, with car traffic at 90% of pre-pandemic levels.

With regard to traffic safety the draft report showed that the number of crashes decreased slightly after the pathway was installed compared to before. Incident response times increased by 1.3 minutes on average, while the duration of incident impacts on bridge traffic went down by 2.5 minutes on average.

The draft report also showed that the pathway did not negatively affect air quality, which is primarily impacted by vehicle miles traveled, not by traffic congestion. Road dust, tire wear, and brake wear make up 83% of PM2.5 emissions from vehicles, compared to running exhaust which makes up 17%.

We recognize the hardships imposed on individuals from bridge congestion, many of whom are forced to drive great distances to access employment in the North Bay due to a lack of workforce housing options and robust public transit. Some mitigations to the congestion issues are already in the works at the main pinch-points including the toll plaza, the Richmond Parkway interchange, and the 580/101 interchange.

We also recognize hardships imposed on those who rely on public transit, but are currently only provided with a single bus line across the bridge with headways between buses of up to an hour, and no service after 10pm. And we recognize hardships on those who rely on bicycles, ebikes, and other devices who will have no crossing option at all if the pathway is closed.

Equitable and sustainable solutions to the bridge congestion issues involve addressing land use and housing affordability imbalances so as to not force people into arduously long commutes in the first place, and to significantly increase public transit service on the corridor to move more people without harmful increases in vehicle miles traveled. Closing the pathway for a breakdown shoulder as currently proposed, or for a third westbound car lane, will not contribute toward progress on these underlying causes.

Keeping the pathway open is in alignment with numerous adopted plans and policies on the regional and state level including the San Francisco Bay Trail Plan, the Plan Bay Area regional transportation plan and sustainable communities strategy, the Plan Bay Area 2050 transportation strategy, BCDC's Bay Plan Transportation Policy No. 4, the Caltrans Complete Streets Directors Policy DP-37, and Executive Order N-19-19 signed by Governor Newsom.

We appreciate and share BCDC's goals of increased equity, climate resilience, and access to the Bay shoreline, and we look forward to continuing to work together on real solutions to these issues.

Sincerely,

Robert Prinz
Advocacy Director
Bike East Bay

Najari Smith
Executive Director
Rich City Rides

Abigail Montejo
Friends of the Richmond Greenway (FORG)

Kendra Ramsey
Executive Director
California Bicycle Coalition

Ken McLeod
Policy Director
The League of American Bicyclists

Doria Robinson
Executive Director
Urban Tilth

Dani Lanis
Chair
Richmond BPAC

Eris Weaver
Executive Director
Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition

Christopher White
Interim Executive Director
San Francisco Bicycle Coalition

Coordinating Committee
El Cerrito / Richmond Annex Walk & Roll

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Co-Founders
Albany Strollers & Rollers

Cyndy Johnsen
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Bike Walk Alameda

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Trails Program Manager
Hayward Area Recreation and Park District

Jeff Lyon
Bike Orinda

Warren Wells
Policy & Planning Director
Marin County Bicycle Coalition

Bruce Beyaert
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Trails for Richmond Action Committee

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Rails to Trails Conservancy

Joshua F
President
National Youth Bike Council

Dave Snyder
Senior Director of Infrastructure
PeopleForBikes

Toody Maher
Executive Director
Pogo Park

Emily Seelenfreund
Executive Director
BORP Adaptive Sports and Recreation

Kara Vernor
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Napa County Bicycle Coalition

Clarrissa Cabansagan
Executive Director
Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition

Coordinating Committee
Walk Bike Berkeley

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Bike Fremont

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Colleen Barclay & Pete Gang
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Walter Niederberger
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Bikeable Santa Rosa

Nick Hoeper-Tomich & Elise Fortin
Head Coach & Team Director
Berkeley High Mountain Bike Team

Joe Grondahl
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El Cerrito High School Mountain Bike Team

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Grizzly Peak Cyclists

Scott Bartlebaugh
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Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay

Maya Wolf
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Dan Leaverton & Alec Flett
Knackered Tyres bicycle club

Angela Navarro
Board Vice President
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Sean Brandt
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Dolce Vita Cycling

Glenn Kirby
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Fremont Freewheelers Bicycle Club

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Transform

Bryan Culbertson
Traffic Violence Rapid Response

Carter Lavin
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Taylor Peliska
Co-Founder & Head of Design
Movemint

Neil Flock
Bimotal Inc

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Founder and Executive Director
SEI - Strategic Energy Innovations

Tim Oey
ZeroW.org

Nick Peterson
Founding Member
Albany Climate Action Coalition

Ryan Branciforte
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Lauren Weston
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Acterra: Action for a Healthy Planet

Lendri Purcell
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Carleen Culled
Executive Director
Cool the Earth

Laura Lent
El Cerrito Trail Trekkers

Michael Gustafson
Valley Spokesmen

Sonoma County Climate Activist Network
(SoSoCAN)

Eric Aaholm
Executive Director

David Lewis
Executive Director

YES Nature to Neighborhoods

Juliana Gonzalez
Executive Director
The Watershed Project

Sarka Volejnikova
Parks for People Program Director
Trust for Public Land

Pam Stello
Co-Chair, Point Molate Alliance
Point Molate Alliance

Dan Cohen
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Save The Bay

Jon Spangler
Chair
BART Bicycle Advisory Task Force

Zoe Siegel
Senior Director of Climate Resilience
Greenbelt Alliance

Nora Vargas-Dye
Collaborator
California Field School

Anna Thiel
Bad Business Model Bikes

Carsie Bonner

From: Bradley Justice [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, May 7, 2024 9:54 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info
Subject: Public Comment - 5/8/24 BATA Oversight Committee - Item 3a

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External Email

In attending the May 2nd BCDC meeting I was struck by the disconnect between the first part of the meeting and the second. At the beginning of the meeting there was significant discussion regarding the crisis of rising sea levels. The second half was devoted to the elimination of zero emission transportation across the bridge in favor of carbon emitting vehicle traffic.

From a societal point of view the best scenario is that elimination of the bike lane will not improve traffic throughput, triggering induced demand. Then the negative result will be limited to the elimination of zero emission alternative transportation. This result is in fact the result that current evidence supports. Unfortunately this still eliminates a critical link for current and future Bay Area residents who choose to live their lives with consideration of the crisis we are facing.

The RSR Bridge bike trail is an important part of a system of bike friendly transportation routes that encourage an alternative to automotive transportation. It is important to my wife and I as bikers - senior bikers - who are willing to make the commitment to change our lives for the good of society, for the good of the planet. We use this resource in ways that cannot be accomplished with a path that is open a few days a week. Please do not take this away from us, or from future Bay Area residents who may be encouraged to join us.

Bradley Justice
Susan Justice

Carsie Bonner

From: Ted Joseph [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, May 7, 2024 1:20 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info
Subject: Public Comment - 5/8/24 BATA Oversight Committee- Item 3a

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External Email

Hello there,

I hope you are doing well today. I am writing to encourage you to keep the multi-use path on the Richmond San Rafael Bridge open 24 hours a day 7 days a week. I live in Contra Costa and work in Marin as a high school teacher. I use the path on the bridge to get to and from work whenever I can. Even on days that I am forced to drive across the bridge, I am thankful that the multi-use path is there for those who need it. We should continue to encourage people to not drive to get to where they are going. Just like how having more space for cars encourages more people to drive, having more safe space for walking and biking encourages more people to walk and bike. I can't afford to live where I work. Forcing me to drive there everyday would just be more expensive for me and worse for our planet. Please keep the multi-use lane there at all times, just like the other bridges that have them.

Thank you,

Ted Joseph